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THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

1440

THE

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY THE REV. T. MORELL,

OF COWARD COLLEGE.

E.L.E.SSLIE & SONS TORONTO, U.C.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE name of DODDRIDGE must ever be dear to all who cherish a cordial attachment to practical Christianity. His character and writings may be depreciated by the zealot, who can only breathe in the turbid element of theological controversy; or by the sectarist, who cannot look beyond the pale of his own narrow enclosure: but assuredly they will long continue to be revered and honoured by all who prefer Scriptural truth to human systems, and in whom fervent piety is combined with the benignant spirit of the gospel. Though attached, both by education and principle, to one denomination of Christians above the rest, this distinguished philanthropist may be regarded as the property of the universal church, on every portion of which he has conferred incalculable benefits. To estimate correctly the nature and full extent of those benefits, it is requisite not merely to view attentively his individual character, and the varied productions of his pious and enlightened mind, but these must be contemplated in connexion with the moral and religious aspect of the times in which he lived, the then state of our British churches, and the influence exerted by his life and writings, (in conjunction with other causes,) both on his contemporaries and successors —an influence, which perhaps was never greater or more apparent than in the present day. This will be attempted briefly in the present Essay, and the writer hopes that such a sketch, however imperfectly executed, will not be deemed an unappropriate introduction to the new edition of his works, now presented to the public.

Whatever opinion may be formed of the political events of the seventeenth century, it will be admitted on all hands that it constitutes a memorable era in the religious history of our country. During the greater part of that period, there lived, and laboured, and suffered for conscience' sake, an illustrious band, "of whom the world was not worthy;" men whose genius had caught its noblest inspiration from intimate converse with the Deity; who drank copiously and constantly from the hallowed fount of divine revelation; and who devoted energies of no ordinary kind to the instruction and edification of the church of Christ. These mighty champions of the Christian faith pursued their high career with unwearied diligence and unconquerable zeal, amidst tumultuous scenes of political contention, and in defiance of the lawless terrors of arbitrary power. Undismayed, and even invigorated, by long-continued sufferings, they still pressed forward to new and nobler achievements; apparently gathering strength from the opposition they encountered, and the privations they endured. The talents of these modern confessors were various, as had been

the circumstances of their birth and education. Some were characterized by original and inventive genius, others by the clearness and comprehension of their reasoning powers; some by profound research into the import of the sacred oracles, and others by a genuine pathos, a holy fervour of spirit, which have seldom been equalled, and perhaps never excelled. But diversified as were their intellectual endowments and literary attainments, one spirit seems to have animated them all. They were inflexible in their adherence to the great principles of evangelical truth, undaunted in their defence, and, above all, most solicitous to bring them to bear upon the consciences and hearts of men. That such was the character of their official instructions, and such the design and tendency of their invaluable writings, is sufficiently evident from the substantial memorials of their piety and talents, with which our libraries are enriched. If those ponderous volumes are not decorated with all the graces of composition which modern refinement may demand, they are confessedly replete with sound learning, scriptural knowledge, and genuine Christian eloquence; qualities which infinitely outweigh mere rhetorical ornaments, and more than compensate for an occasional quaintness of thought and expression.

The moral influence of the labours of these great and holy men was manifest at the time in which they flourished, in no inconsiderable degree. A vigorous stand was made, by the truly pious of that age, against the unparalleled profligacy and licentiousness which then prevailed amongst all classes of society. Not a few persons of elevated rank and noble birth were then numbered with the humble and devoted followers of Christ; men of science and erudition the most profound, were not ashamed of the doctrine of the cross; a leaven of fervent and active piety was widely, though secretly, diffused through the great mass of society; numerous and flourishing churches were gathered, and overspread the face of the land, many of which, though planted amidst the storms of persecution, and afterwards subjected to the yet more withering influence of worldly prosperity, still continue to flourish, and are at once the ornament and bulwarks of our land.

But scarcely had the latest of this illustrious band of Christian advocates, who had so nobly maintained the fight against irreligion, intolerance, and infidelity, ceased from their labours and entered into rest, when a melancholy reaction took place, into the nature and causes of which it is requisite to institute a brief inquiry. The outward condition of the church was tranquil, and, to a mere cursory observer, might even seem prosperous. Liberty of conscience, under the name of religious toleration, was conceded to the various denominations of Protestant Dissenters, though under restrictions, which neither sound policy nor impartial justice could approve. Some liberal and enlightened churchmen, among whom were included several distinguished members of the hierarchy, were prompted, by a spirit of liberality and forbearance that did them the highest credit, to attempt the removal of the causes of separation, by a measure of general comprehension: on the other hand, some influential members of the dissenting body manifested a disposition to meet the wishes and second the exertions of their brethren of the Established Church, by at least equal concessions on their part. A hope began to be cherished by the moderate and liberal of both parties, that the period was not far distant, in which former divisions would be effectually healed, and unity and peace restored to the Protestant Church.

Yet amidst these circumstances of external prosperity, it soon became but too evident, that the glory had departed from our British churches, and that instead of the spiritual vigour by which they were formerly characterized, a moral decay preyed upon their vitals. The truly pious, both within and without the pale of the national church, could not but perceive that the internal symptoms were most alarming. Religious apathy and indifference, under the specious names of liberality and candour, pervaded and paralyzed the far greater portion of the

community. A cold system of ethics, scarcely superior to the morality of the pagan world, superseded the faithful and energetic preaching of former times. A spirit of daring speculation, betrayed many into pernicious errors, or disposed them to universal scepticism. The "watchmen on the walls of Zion," instead of sounding an alarm at this perilous crisis, for the most part, either slumbered at their posts, or basely deserted them; and even where the trumpet of alarm was heard, it gave but an uncertain sound. The congregations which had been accustomed to listen, with devout attention, to the evangelical doctrine and truly Christian eloquence of their late pastors, were now either scattered and broken up, as sheep having no shepherd; or they also, being infected with the moral contagion of the time, yielded to the same spiritual torpor and deadly lethargy of soul. While this cold and heartless semblance of Christianity was substituted, by the great majority of its professors, for vital and spiritual religion, there were others, who, justly apprehensive of danger from the latitudinarian spirit which then prevailed, rushed to the contrary extreme, which proved in its results scarcely less injurious. They cherished and diffused around them a controversial spirit; they contended with equal zeal and bitterness for the circumstantials, as for the essentials, of the Christian faith; for dogmas of human invention, and the distinguishing peculiarities of human systems, as for the great principles of revealed truth. The war of words was fiercely carried on, both in the pulpit and from the press; whilst, in the mean time, the spirit of Christianity, which is that of meekness and love, deserted the combatants on either side.

That this is no overcharged representation of the state of religion in our country, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, might be proved by a mass of incontrovertible evidences. Two or three credible witnesses will suffice, who are not only appealed to in confirmation of the preceding statements, but because they address a solemn warning to future ages, and may serve to illustrate the remarks to be made hereafter, on the life and writings of Doddridge.

The venerable Burnet, in the preface to his excellent treatise on "The Pastoral Care," thus bitterly laments the decay of vital religion, in that church of which he was a distinguished ornament. "I cannot look on," says he, "without the deepest concern, when I see imminent ruin hanging over this church, and by consequence over the whole reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears, rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen."—Then, after alluding to the gross ignorance of those who applied for ordination, and the want of piety and Scriptural knowledge in those who had already entered upon the sacred office, he adds, "these things pierce one's soul, and make me often cry out, 'O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.' What are we like to grow to? In what a case are we to deal with any adversary, atheist, papist, or dissenters, or in any sort to promote the honour of God, and carry on the great concerns of the gospel, when so gross an ignorance in the fundamentals of religion has spread itself among those who ought to teach others, and yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God."* In yet more pathetic language, does the seraphic Leighton, in various parts of his invaluable writings, bewail the acrimony, the dissension, the secularity, the apathy, the declension and apostasy, of many both of the clergy and laity, holding communion with the episcopal churches of England and Scotland.

Nor was the condition of the Dissenting Churches at that period much better, as is evident from several tracts, written by distinguished members of that body, in which the fact of a lamentable decay of religion is assumed, and the causes of that general declension are investigated. Within a short period were published, among other treatises on this subject,

* Burnet's Pastoral Care, prel. p. n. w. See also the conclusion of the History of his Own Time, vol. v. p. 170—180, Oxford edit. 1823

"Watts's Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion," —"Gough's Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest," —"Doddridge's Free Thoughts on the most Probable Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest," —and "Neal's Free and Serious Remonstrance to Protestant Dissenting Ministers, on occasion of the Decay of Religion."—in all of which complaints are made of the declining state of the congregations, and still more of the decay of vital religion throughout the kingdom. A yet more decisive proof of this melancholy fact, together with some important information respecting the causes to which these evils were attributable, may be gathered incidentally from the private correspondence and diaries of some of these eminent men. As one illustration, out of many which might be selected, the following extracts from letters addressed by a learned and eminently pious Dissenting Minister,* resident in the Metropolis, and who possessed ample means of information, to Dr. Doddridge, in the year 1744, graphically describe the state of the Dissenting Churches at that time. "The Dissenting Interest is not like itself. I hardly know it. It used to be famous for faith, holiness, and love. I knew the time, when I had no doubt into whatever place of worship I went among Dissenters, but that my heart would be warmed and comforted, and my edification promoted. Now I hear prayers and sermons which I neither relish nor understand. Evangelical truth and duty are quite old-fashioned things: many pulpits are not so much as chaste: one's ears are so dinned with 'reason,' 'the great law of reason,' and the 'eternal law of reason,' that it is enough to put one out of conceit with the chief excellency of our nature, because it is idolized, and even deified. How prone are men to extremes! What a pity it is, that when people emerge out of an ancient mistake they seldom know when to stop! O! for the purity of our fountains, the wisdom and diligence of our tutors, the humility, piety, and teachableness of our youth," &c. &c. In another letter the same writer adds, "the defection of our younger ministers I greatly lament, and if the people departed from the doctrines of the reformation, as much as the ministers, I should begin to think whether ours were an interest worth serving."†

It is not asserted that the character of the entire body of Churchmen and Dissenters at the period referred to, was such as is represented in the preceding extracts. There were undoubtedly many honourable exceptions: there were not a few, who, like the exemplary prelates, Leighton and Burnet, or like Watts and Doddridge, wept in secret places over the desolations of the church of God, and laboured in season and out of season, to repair its ruins. But it is abundantly evident, that such was the predominant character of the age,—such the moral aspect of the times.

It is always desirable to trace effects to their causes, though the investigation, in moral as in physical science, is frequently attended with great difficulty. The causes are sometimes latent, so as scarcely to be discernible even to the most penetrating observer; sometimes so gradual and silent in their operation, that the effect is produced unexpectedly; sometimes so various, that we feel ourselves at a loss to determine which have produced the phenomenon in question; and sometimes so apparently inadequate, that it is scarcely possible to believe that such effects should result from such causes. These remarks will apply to the present subject. A most remarkable and rapid transition seems to have taken place, from a high tone of piety, to its lowest perceptible degree, from the prevalence, to the almost universal abandonment, of evangelical truth, from a flourishing and vigorous state of the church, to general sterility and decay. How happened this? To what cause, or rather, to what combination of causes, are these lamentable effects to be attributed? This is not merely a curious speculation, but an inquiry of great practical importance, since from the operation of the same causes, should

* Rev. J. Barker. "Life Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge," edited by Rev. Thomas Stedman, 1790, p. 96.
† Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge, p. 84.

they ever be permitted to exert their withering influence, the same melancholy catastrophe may be anticipated.

This defection from the doctrine and practice of genuine Christianity, may be traced to the combined influence of *external* and *internal* causes. The political events of that age were most remarkable. A bloodless revolution had recently taken place, the consequences of which were such as could not fail to attract and almost absorb public attention. One dynasty of British princes had forfeited the crown, by arbitrary usurpations, and the most determined efforts to subvert the Protestant faith. Another had succeeded, under whose auspices civil and religious liberty had revived, the breaches which had been made in the constitution by the House of Stuart were repaired, and the political rights of the community secured by new legislative enactments. But so great political changes could not be effected without much internal agitation. Two great parties were formed, one of which adhered to the old regime, and espoused the cause of the exiled family; the other was zealously attached to the new order of things, and the House of Orange. These party feelings and principles proved injurious to the interests of religion. The children and descendants of those who had suffered persecution for conscience' sake, now began to pant after worldly honours and distinctions, they became secularized in their views and habits, till, amidst the strife of ambition, their religious principles were gradually undermined, and at length destroyed. There is assuredly no reason why the patriot should be merged in the Christian, nor is an intense solicitude for the welfare of our country incompatible with a high tone of fervent piety: but experience and observation abundantly prove, that in proportion as Christians degenerate into violent political partisans, they become cold and negligent in their religious profession, if it be not finally abandoned. The result will be precisely that which Burnet so pathetically lamented in his day. "Politics and party," says he, "eat out among us not only study and learning, but that which is the only thing that is more valuable, a true sense of religion; with a sincere zeal for advancing that for which the Son of God both lived and died, and to which those who are received into holy orders, have vowed to dedicate their lives and labours." Still more pernicious was the influence of the *literature* of that age, if the term may be so desecrated, as to apply it to the infamous productions which then disgraced the public press. It is unnecessary to advert particularly to the profligate character and licentious writings of many of the celebrated wits and men of letters, who flourished towards the close of the seventeenth century; suffice it to say, that while they may be admitted to have improved our language, and are monuments of the genius and talents of their authors, they sapped the foundation of morals, and spread around them a deadly contagion, the effects of which are felt to the present day. In proportion as these works acquired a standard reputation, were extensively circulated and generally admired, they exerted a most malignant influence on the entire mass of society, but especially on the younger and more educated classes. To these may be added, a third and no less pestilential agency, — the infidel writings of that day, some of which were decorated with all the graces of eloquence; others were rendered fascinating by the wit and ridicule with which they assailed the Christian revelation, and others imposed on the ignorant and unwary, by the show of learning and critical erudition, with which they were invested. Not a few were induced by the perusal of those insidious writings, if not openly to embrace the cause of infidelity, yet to rest satisfied with a cold, speculative, semi-deistical form of Christianity.

But there were other and perhaps still more pernicious agencies at work within the bosom of the Christian church. While persecution raged, the company of the faithful were comparatively united, that they might combat more successfully the common foe. Agreeing, for the most part, in the vital and essential truths of their holy religion, they consented to merge

their lesser differences, and exercise charity towards each other. But when freed from the galling yoke of the oppressor, they began to strive about terms of human invention, modes of worship, and forms of church discipline, and on these grounds alone, formed themselves into numerous sects and parties, which could hold no fellowship with each other. These unhappy divisions generated a controversial spirit, characterized by rancorous asperity, in proportion as the grounds of separation were trifling and unimportant. To "hold fast the form of sound words which we have received" by inspiration from God, is unquestionably a Christian duty; and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But unless religious controversies be carried on, whether from the pulpit or the press, in the spirit of meekness and love, under the hallowed influence of a truly Christian temper, it will be found that their effects are most injurious to the interests of vital and practical piety. The true Christian is uninstructed and unedified, the impenitent and ungodly remain still obdurate and hardened; and error, instead of being checked or eradicated, makes rapid progress, by obtaining more numerous converts. Such was manifestly the result of those unhappy divisions, and theological controversies, which disgraced the period to which the present Essay refers.

In connexion with the controversial spirit of the age, may be noticed, as an additional cause of religious declension, the withdrawment of the attention of the ablest and most learned Christian divines from the essentials of the gospel, to an elaborate vindication of its evidences, in their controversy then carried on with deists and infidels. Grateful as is the recollection, that the same age and country which produced a Shaftesbury and a Bolingbroke, two of the subtlest and most formidable opponents of Christianity, produced also a Butler and a Clarke, two of its mightiest and most successful advocates; yet an attentive review of the treatises written by these champions of the Christian revelation, and still more of the numerous treatises produced by minds of an inferior grade, will sufficiently show the injurious influence of the deistical controversy, even on the most learned and pious of that day. Exclusively occupied with a refutation of the cavils and objections of infidels, they lost sight of those great fundamental truths which constitute the glory of the Christian system, and substituted a speculative form of Christianity, little removed from infidelity itself, for the Scriptural faith of their forefathers, or rather of the apostles and primitive believers; whilst laboriously and zealously defending the outworks, the citadel was almost lost.

But the most fruitful source of the various evils which have been alluded to, was the degenerate character of the Christian ministry. Genuine piety, Scriptural knowledge, ardent zeal, were no longer deemed essential to the sacred office, and were ridiculed as puritanical and degrading. Multitudes pressed into the Christian ministry, who were utterly destitute of all those qualities which can give efficiency and true dignity to that office. That such was the character of the great mass of those who assumed the clerical office within the pale of the national church, appears from the passage already cited from "Burnet's Pastoral Care," to which many other similar testimonies might be added. And that the same charge applies, though perhaps in a less degree, to the Dissenting ministry of that day, is no less evident from the treatises enumerated above, in most, if not all, of which, the lamented decay of religion is attributed to the want of piety and zeal, in those who sustained the pastoral office. "The inquiry," says Neal, in his Free and Serious Remonstrance to Protestant Dissenting Ministers, "the inquiry I humbly beg leave to make is, whether the zeal and assiduity of ministers in general, in qualifying themselves for, and in administering, the ordinances of divine worship, are not considerably abated, as well as the people's piety and regularity in attending them? Whether there is not a lukewarmness, a careless or negligent, a light or worldly, spirit visible amongst those who should cherish the sacred fire of pure and heavenly devotion in the hearts of Christians? Whether the vigilance and circumspection, the concern and ardour, of minis-

ters have arisen in proportion to the danger there confessedly is, that the cause of their great and worthy Master, which they have solemnly undertaken to serve and support, at any temporal pains and hazard, should decline and perish in their hands." (P. 7—9.) When the reciprocal influence of pastors and their people is duly considered, it will excite no surprise, that such lamentable consequences should have followed so degenerate a state of the Christian ministry.

The preceding sketch of ecclesiastical history has been introduced chiefly for the sake of elucidating the various works which compose the present volume. A knowledge of the facts which have been cursorily noticed, is necessary to a just estimate of the character and writings of Doddridge; who entered upon his public career, just when these evils were at their height, and the one great object of whose valuable life and labours appears to have been to counteract their baneful influence. In early youth, indeed, he had not wholly escaped the moral contagion of the times. It is evident, from some of his familiar letters, written, in all the confidence of private friendship, to those who shared his warmest affections, that at that period, while undergoing the process of preparatory education for the Christian ministry, his religious principles had not acquired that stability and decision which they subsequently attained; nor had that deep-toned and fervent piety taken full possession of his mind, which characterized his future life. From early associations, or educational prejudices, he had been led to identify orthodoxy of sentiment with an uncharitable and censorious spirit; and actuated by a just abhorrence of the latter, he stood aloof from the former, till convinced by observation and experience, that the alliance was rather accidental than necessary, arising out of human infirmity, and not originating in the system itself. By the vehemence and ardour of his social affections, too, he was betrayed into occasional habits of worldly conformity, which, though not uncommon in that degenerate age, are neither favourable to the growth of piety in the private Christian, nor consistent with the purity and dignity of the sacred office. But, happily, the friends of his youth, under whose patronage he was introduced into the Christian ministry, and whose counsels and example contributed in no ordinary degree to the formation of his character, were men of exemplary wisdom and piety; who, discerning in him indications of future eminence, watched over him with more than parental solicitude, affectionately warned him of the dangers into which he was likely, from the unguardedness of youth, or the peculiar susceptibility of his feelings, to be betrayed; and corrected the prejudices and errors into which he had fallen. Their efforts were amply rewarded, in perceiving the rapid progress of his religious character, to a maturity of growth, and luxuriance of fruitfulness, which far exceeded their most sanguine hopes. Ere he had proceeded far in his course as a Christian minister, his generous and susceptible mind was awakened to a full sense of the extent and magnitude of the evils which then afflicted and desolated the Christian church, and his determination fixed a resolution from which he never swerved, — to devote all the energies of his mind and body to persevering and unwearied efforts to produce a revival of true religion. This was henceforth the governing principle of his life, the supreme object of his heart's desire, to which all his labours, whether as a pastor, a tutor, or an author, were solemnly consecrated.

In pursuance of this truly philanthropic object, he began with himself, and his personal ministry. Anxious to produce in his own mind a more deep and abiding sense of the responsibilities of his office, he frequently drew up, and recorded in his diary, resolutions and covenant engagements, to which he solemnly subscribed his name, and by which he pledged himself to new and increased exertions. One series of these pastoral resolutions, evidently drawn up with more than ordinary attention, and intended to be a kind of sacred directory for his daily conduct, was transcribed by him in the first page of his interleaved Testament.

that he might be perpetually reminded thereby of his personal and social obligations. In accordance with these oft-repeated vows, he pursued his ministerial course with an ardour and earnestness, of which, in that day of religious apathy, there were but few examples. He adopted a style of preaching at once simple and energetic, impassioned but not declamatory, in which evangelical doctrine was happily blended with the practical enforcement of moral duties. The sermons preached on public occasions, and prepared by him for the press, are by no means to be regarded as the best specimens of his pastoral instructions. What they acquired in precision and accuracy by a careful revision, was lost in ease, and vigour, and genuine pathos. His ordinary sermons,* comparatively few of which have yet been published, furnish delightful specimens of genuine pulpit eloquence: they breathe the very soul of tenderness, and pastoral fidelity. In his selection of topics, he simply aimed at usefulness, and in discussing them, he invariably pursues an easy and natural method, remote from all affectation of singularity and artificial arrangement. There are no puerile attempts at display, no oratorical flourishes, no idle pomp of words, no laboured processes of reasoning, but they abound with earnest and pathetic appeals to the conscience, which the most ignorant might understand, and the most obdurate could scarcely resist. While he avoided the technicalities and tediousness of the puritan divines, it was evident that he drank deeply into their spirit, and most successfully imitated their earnestness and fidelity. Such being the character of his personal ministry, it is not surprising that his preaching should have been eminently successful. His own church and congregation flourished beneath his pastoral care. Wherever he preached, whether in the surrounding villages to the humble peasantry, or on public occasions to more intelligent assemblies, multitudes were attracted to hear, and numerous were the fruits of his ministry.†

These manifest tokens of the divine approbation served but to quicken his zeal, and prompted him to devise more liberal things. Aware that the solitary efforts of an individual can avail little towards effecting a general reformation, his next object was to stir up the members of his own church, and his brethren in the ministry, to increased fervour and activity. With this view, he drew up various plans of Christian benevolence, and engaged those who constituted his pastoral charge, to co-operate in the prosecution of those philanthropic projects; some of which related to the advancement of religion at home, and others to its propagation abroad. A document, illustrative of these remarks, still remains in MS., which is rendered extremely curious and interesting, by circumstances and events that have occurred in the present day.‡ In that paper, to which the name of Dr. Doddridge, and those of about 150 members of the congregation at Northampton, are appended, the parties subscribing pledge themselves to meet at stated periods to pray for the success of the gospel in heathen lands, and to contribute for the support of Christian missionaries; thus exhibiting a model of what was probably the first *congregational Missionary Association* in our own country, and the first *avowedly Missionary Prayer-meeting*. Could this great and good man have foreseen, that within fifty years from that time, almost every congregation in the British empire, the United States of America, and many other parts of the world, would be blest with similar associations, and that all denominations of Christians would be either unitedly or separately employed, in

* A small volume containing "The Leading Heads of Twenty-seven Sermons, preached at Northampton, by Dr. Doddridge, in the year 1749," was edited and published by the Rev. J. Hawkes, of Warley, near Halifax, Yorkshire, in 1818; and in 1826, were published four volumes more of brief heads transcribed from his MSS. in short hand, by Dr. Doddridge's direction, and left for publication after his decease. The copyright of these being as yet personal property, they cannot, of course, appear in the present edition of his works.

† An interesting statement as to Dr. Doddridge's manner in the Pulpit is contained in "Letters from the Rev. Mr. Job Orton, and the Rev. Sir James Stonehouse, Bart. M. D. to the Rev. Thomas Stedman, M. A. Vicar of St. Edward's, Shrewsbury," vol. iv. letter lx. p. 341.

‡ Vide infra, p. 498.

zealous efforts to propagate the gospel throughout the world, how would his enlarged soul have exulted in the delightful prospect, and he would have been ready to exclaim, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

From this limited sphere of usefulness, the expansive benevolence of Doddridge extended itself in every direction. Deeply lamenting the disorganized and divided state of the Christian denomination to which he belonged, he applied himself to the development of plans, by which their minor differences might be healed, and their affections cemented together in the bonds of Christian charity. This prompted the following earnest appeal to his brethren, so appropriate to the state of the times, and so calculated to arouse them to a sense of their duty: "Let us therefore, who, under different denominations, are honoured with the ministry of the everlasting gospel, agree for a while to suspend our debates upon less necessary subjects, that we may, with united efforts, concur in prosecuting that great design for which the gospel was revealed, the Spirit given, and our office instituted. And since it is so evident, that irreligion has grown upon us, while we have been attending to other, and, to be sure, smaller matters, let us by a plain, serious, and zealous way of preaching the most vital truths of Christianity, joined with a diligent inspection of the souls committed to our care, try what can be done, towards preventing the progress of this growing apostasy, and recovering the ground we have already lost." At his suggestion, associations of ministers and churches were formed, both in the metropolis, and various parts of the kingdom, not merely for purposes of Christian fellowship, but also for zealous co-operation in measures tending to the revival and advancement of true religion. The detail of these wise and holy projects, emanating from a heart burning with zeal for God, and melting with compassion to the souls of men, will be found in a subsequent part of this volume.* They are now distinctly noticed, as affording a delightful indication of the entire devotedness of spirit, with which this exemplary Christian entered upon and pursued his arduous course; and as exhibiting to future ages a pattern of active unwearied zeal, which cannot be too closely imitated. An impulse was given at this period, which continues to operate with increased force on the whole Christian world.

It has been stated, that the absence or low degree of piety, in those who assumed the character and office of Christian ministers, was a fruitful source of the evils which then desolated the church of God. No one was more fully convinced of the extent, nor more deeply lamented the prevalence, of this evil, than the excellent Doddridge; and it was this conviction, that induced him the more readily to acquiesce in the wishes, and yield to the entreaties, of his numerous friends, that he would undertake the work of tuition. He hoped thereby to be instrumental in purifying those fountains, which had sent forth so many turbid and pestilential streams. Whatever may have been the measure of his success, though painfully disappointed in many of his hopes and expectations, it is evident from his correspondence with those friends, to whom he was accustomed to lay open his inmost soul, that his principal motive in undertaking so arduous and responsible an office, was that he might effectuate a reformation in the character of the Christian ministry of that age. In attempting this, he had to contend with many prejudices, he laboured under difficulties which now are scarcely felt, and perhaps his own views and feelings, as to the best mode of accomplishing his object, were in some degree mistaken. It seemed then to be hardly a recognized principle, that decided piety is an indispensable prerequisite to the sacred office. It was deemed by many sufficient to warrant the introduction of a youth into that office, that his disposition should be amiable, his habits virtuous, and his character hopeful. Nor was it the least injurious of the practical errors of that day, in connexion with academical instruction, that young men who

* Vide infra, p. 194.

were not intended for the ministry, who made no pretensions to personal religion, and of whom no test of piety could be required, were blended and amalgamated, in the process of education, with those who were solemnly devoted to the ministerial office. The influence of this unhallowed association was but too manifest, in sapping the foundations of religious belief and virtuous conduct, in many who had once inspired the liveliest hopes. Yet notwithstanding these counteracting circumstances, the instructions, the prayers, the counsels, and above all, the holy example, of this devoted servant of Christ, proved eminently successful. Not a few of those, whom he introduced into the ministry, evinced in future life, that they had imbibed the spirit of their distinguished tutor; and followed up, with similar if not equal zeal, his various plans of Christian benevolence. Nor can we wonder that such happy effects should have resulted from the instructions of one, who, according to the testimony of a competent witness, "frequently inculcated on his students the necessity of preaching Christ, if they desired to save souls; of dwelling much on the peculiarities of the gospel scheme, and the doctrines of Christ and the Spirit; of considering their own concern in them, and endeavouring to feel their energy on their own spirits, that they might appear to their hearers, as giving vent to the feeling of their heart on its darling subject." *

It is not, however, with the personal or the official character of Doddridge, excellent as these may have been, and highly as they may deserve to be appreciated, we have so much to do at present, as with his various and valuable writings. Nor are these so much to be regarded as specimens of the genius, talents, and erudition of their author, as of his fervent and exalted piety. None who have read his earlier correspondence can doubt, that if he had chosen to direct the bent of his genius to works of imagination and taste, he could have rivalled some of the most sprightly wits of that polished age. Nor is it less evident, from his numerous MSS., that if he had preferred to employ the energies of his vigorous mind in philological and literary pursuits, he would have been no unworthy competitor of the Warburtons, the Lowths, and the Lardners, of that day. But his was a nobler aim. *Usefulness*, in the highest and most appropriate sense of the term; that usefulness which consists in promoting the spiritual and eternal welfare of mankind, was the chief, perhaps it is not too much to say, the exclusive, object of his ambition. For this he studied, and preached, and wrote, and was content, by exertions above measure, and far beyond his strength, to sacrifice his life. Though capable of enjoying, in a high degree, the productions of taste, or the developments of science, and though sincerely desirous of the advancement of literature in all its branches, he considered these but as secondary and subordinate objects; nor would he allow himself to pursue them further than might be rendered subservient to the great business of his life. Whether he published sermons, drew up biographical memoirs of departed friends, wrote academical lectures, practical treatises, or commentaries on the Scriptures, it was still apparent throughout, that not even for an instant could he lose sight of the object to which he had consecrated his existence, and which he was rendered eminently instrumental in promoting — the revival and increase of vital godliness.

The first acknowledged publication of Doddridge appeared in 1730; it was a tract entitled, "Free Thoughts on the most probable means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest," and was occasioned by a pamphlet of Strickland Gough, on the same subject, then recently published. That writer had attributed the decay of the Dissenting Interest to the defect of taste and learning, and mental cultivation, in its ministers; but our author maintains in his reply, that while these qualities are confessedly desirable and important, they would prove but ineffectual remedies to the existing evils, and contends that the preaching of evangelical doctrines, in a plain, Scriptural, and experimental manner, could alone preserve a congregation from religious

* Orton's Life of Doddridge.

decay, or revive it when languid and declining. Nothing could be more seasonable and appropriate to the state of the times, than this short but excellent publication. In 1732 he published a series of sermons, addressed to Christian parents, on "the Religious Education of their Children," and in 1735, a second series of "Sermons to Young Persons," in both of which, the tenderness and affection of the parent is happily blended with the fidelity and authority of the pastor. In 1736 his ten invaluable sermons were first published, on "the Power and Grace of Christ, and on the Evidences of his Glorious Gospel." In 1741 a series of "Practical Discourses on Regeneration" appeared, followed by two sermons on the "Scripture Doctrine of Salvation by Grace through Faith," besides several others, preached on special occasions. In 1742 he prefixed an interesting sketch of the "Life and Character of the Rev. Thomas Steffe," to a volume of posthumous discourses of his late excellent pupil; in which, while he yielded to the impulse of affection and friendship, he chiefly aimed at exhibiting a model of ministerial excellence to surviving pastors and students. It is scarcely possible to rise from the perusal of this brief but comprehensive memoir, without having the understanding enlightened, the judgment corrected, the affections quickened, and the heart improved.

Never, perhaps, was there an individual less fitted to act the part of a polemic than Doddridge. His natural disposition, and his mental habits, alike concurred to render him averse from religious controversy; and these impressions were strengthened by the mischievous effects which had resulted, in his day, from theological contentions. Yet, when duty called him into the field, he was not backward to enter the lists, as a champion of the Christian faith. In 1743, he appeared, for the first and only time of his life in which he assumed that character, as a controversialist. A disguised infidel had published, in the preceding year, a pamphlet entitled, "Christianity not Founded on Argument," in which the anonymous author, under pretence of great zeal for religion, had insidiously endeavoured to undermine all the rational and Scriptural evidences, adduced by the advocates of the Christian faith, and contended that nothing could warrant a belief in Christianity, short of an immediate personal inspiration. In this treatise, a species of wild enthusiasm, which was but assumed as a mask for the purpose of concealing his real design, was strangely blended with the latent poison of infidelity. Dr. Doddridge, in three letters, which followed each other in quick succession, effectually unmasked this wily adversary, exposed the folly and absurdity of his positions, and vindicated the fundamental doctrine of the influence and agency of the Holy Spirit, as taught in the Sacred Scriptures, from the charge of enthusiasm. These letters furnish an admirable specimen of the spirit in which all religious controversy should be carried on, and the style of composition best calculated to produce conviction in sceptical minds, as well as to silence gainsayers.

In 1745, the inestimable treatise on the "Rise and Progress of Religion," was first published; a work which, if he had written no other, would have been amply sufficient to embalm the memory of its pious author, and transmit his name with distinguished honour to far distant generations. It was undertaken most reluctantly, at the earnest and oft-repeated solicitations of his illustrious friend and contemporary Dr. Watts; who, justly conceiving that such a treatise was much needed at that period, and that no man then living was so well fitted as Dr. Doddridge to execute the task, pressed it upon him with such affectionate earnestness, that he could no longer resist; and happy is it, both for the church and the world, that those solicitations were ultimately successful. This work is too well known to need any description, and to eulogize it in the present day would be indeed a work of supererogation. Suffice it to say, that it is written with beautiful simplicity; that many passages are exquisitely tender and pathetic; and that the whole train of reasonings and illustrations, commend them-

selves alike to the most intelligent and the most unlettered mind, to readers of taste and refinement, as well as to the uncultivated and ignorant. Scarcely is it possible to conceive of a work more calculated to awaken religious impressions and emotions in the most thoughtless bosom, or to deepen and render permanent those impressions when excited. Its character of usefulness is sufficiently attested, by the wide and almost unlimited circulation it has obtained, the high reputation it has acquired and preserved amongst all denominations of Christians, and above all, by the numerous instances in which it is known to have been the instrument of conversion and salvation. The fervent supplications poured forth by its devout author, for the blessing of the Most High on this work of his hands, recorded at the conclusion of the introductory chapter, have indeed been most signally answered, though to what extent it were now vain to conjecture. That great day in which the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed, and all the purposes of divine mercy towards our apostate race developed; that day alone can declare, to how many, of almost every nation under heaven, this excellent work shall have been the means of spiritual instruction, improvement, consolation, and salvation.

Whilst these various publications were issuing from the press, their indefatigable author was employed, amidst an incredible multitude of other important avocations, in collecting materials for his principal work, "The Family Expositor;" the first volume of which was published in 1745, the second and third, at intervals of about two years, and the last three, subsequently to his death. From an early period of his life and ministry, he had contemplated this excellent commentary on the New Testament, and all his literary researches had been directed to the prosecution of this great design. This work is partly critical, partly interpretive, and partly devotional and practical. In the two former of these departments of sacred literature, it occupies no mean place, but in the latter it stands unrivalled. As a critical digest, it has long since been superseded by other more erudite and elaborate compositions; yet many of the verbal criticisms it contains, are well deserving the attention of biblical scholars. But it is to be remembered, that the life of Doddridge was too fully occupied with active official duties, to admit of that patient research, which is necessary to form the complete critic. Nor should it be forgotten, that the science of biblical criticism was then in its infancy. Little had then been done, compared with the results of more recent times, in the collation of ancient MSS. and versions, or in the investigation of various readings; the canons of sacred criticism were not as yet fixed; nor had the most valuable of those philological works then appeared, which have since acquired a standard reputation, and with which our libraries are now enriched. Besides which, it is to be borne in mind, that the design of the author, in his philological notes, was not so much to furnish the learned reader, or even the theological student, with a repository of critical science, as to illustrate and justify his own interpretations of Scripture.

The "Paraphrase" and "Harmony," as well as the "New Version" of the sacred text, which this work contains, were evidently the result of much labour and study. Whatever opinion may be formed of their utility, none can doubt that they are the production of an enlightened and well furnished mind; nor can we forbear to admire the fidelity and reverence for Scripture, which prompted him so carefully to detach the language of the sacred writers from his own commentaries. This part of his plan, the execution of which must have cost him no ordinary pains, originated (as he has modestly and piously expressed it in the preface to his first volume) in a desire, "that every one might immediately see, not only the particular clause to which any explication answers, but also what are the words of the sacred original, and what merely the sense of a fallible man, who is liable, though in the integrity of his heart, to mislead his readers, and dares not attribute to himself the singular glory of having put off every prejudice, even while he would deliberately and knowingly allow none."

But the principal charm of this valuable performance, consists in its truly devotional character. The "Improvements" appended to each section, are written with a chaste simplicity, and sometimes an elegance of style, which must render them grateful to the most refined and cultivated understanding, and at the same time with an evangelical unction, that cannot fail to endear them to the pious and devout. The excellent author has contrived with consummate skill, and yet in an easy and natural manner, to embody in his practical reflections, all the thoughts and much of the language of the inspired writers; and has shown, that even the minutest portion is "profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness." The writer of these introductory pages can testify from long experience, and the frequent perusal of these instructive paragraphs, that the more familiar the mind becomes with their contents, the more is it impressed with their exquisite beauty and intrinsic worth.

It was the intention of Dr. Doddridge, if his valuable life had been prolonged, to pursue the same plan with reference to some, if not all, the books of the Old-Testament Scriptures. Amongst his numerous MSS. is found, one which contains a "New Version of the Minor Prophets," in the margin of which are written a few critical notes on the Hebrew text. From the title-page of this MS.* it appears, that some portions of the prophetical writings were to have been paraphrased, and practical "improvements" annexed; but these, as well as many other projects, both literary and religious, devised by this Christian philanthropist, for the good of posterity, were abruptly terminated by his death. It is deeply to be regretted, that the devotions of Christian families are not aided by a similar commentary on the Old-Testament Scriptures, proceeding from the same enlightened mind, and breathing the same spirit of fervent piety, which pervades the "Family Expositor."

The only additional work of Doddridge, published during his life, (if we except some occasional sermons, and a tract of singular excellence and utility, on "the Importance of Family Religion,") was his "Memoirs of Colonel Gardiner," which first appeared in 1747. This biographical sketch glows throughout with all the fervour of Christian friendship, and was evidently intended by the writer, to afford practical evidence, that a high tone of piety and devotion may be preserved amidst pursuits and engagements most unfavourable to their exercise. His academical "Lectures," and "Hymns," were posthumous publications. The former take a wide range, embrace a great variety of topics, and sufficiently indicate the unwearied labour and research of their author. If they were to be regarded as, in themselves, a sufficient directory to theological students, or as containing a *complete system* of academical instruction, it must be acknowledged, that they are extremely defective and inadequate. But such was not the intention of their author, nor were they employed by him for this purpose. He considered them rather as an outline or syllabus to be filled up by the diligence of the students from other sources, to which he was continually referred. Objections have been made, and not without reason, to the scholastic and technical form in which the materials are arranged,—the blending together in one series of lectures, and a connected train of propositions, metaphysics, ethics, and divinity,—the disproportionate attention given to the evidences of natural and revealed religion, compared with the narrow space allotted to the statement and vindication of Christian doctrines,—and the employment, for the most part, of abstract general reasonings, instead of making a constant and final appeal to the authority of Scripture. Yet it can scarcely be doubted, that some of these defects were remedied in the lecture-room, by the vivâ voce instructions of the tutor; and others would probably have been diminished,

* The following memoranda inserted in the title-page of this MS. are somewhat curious, as indicating the plan of the author, the time occupied by each portion of this unfinished work, and the precise date of its performance. "A New Translation of the Minor Prophets, with a short Paraphrase on those passages which seemed most to require it, divided into proper sections, with a Practical Improvement of each, for the use of Families, and with large contents to each. Began Hosea Oct. 1, 1750. Joel, Oct. 29. Amos, Nov. 9. Obadiah, Dec. 3. Jonah, Dec. 7. Micah, Dec. 20. Nahum, Jan. 7. Habakkuk, Jan. 22. Zephaniah, March 8. Haggai, March 25. Zechariah, April 1. Malachi, May 14. The whole ended June 5, 1751."

if not removed, had the publication issued from the press while the author was yet living, and been subjected to his final revision.

The "Lectures on Preaching, and the several branches of the Ministerial Office," long remained in MS. though they are among the most valuable and useful of our author's compositions. They were left in an unfinished state, as is evident from the broken character of the sentences and paragraphs, and the abrupt transitions made from one subject to another; but they are full of practical wisdom, and, making due allowance for the altered condition of the Dissenting churches, the young pastor can scarcely follow a better guide in the discharge of his official duties. The didactic instructions contained in this short but comprehensive course, illustrated and exemplified as they are by the life and labours of their distinguished author, well deserve the frequent and serious perusal of all candidates for the sacred office.

Having thus cursorily noticed the principal works of this eminent divine, in their chronological order, it only remains in concluding these prefatory remarks, to glance for a moment at the happy change which has taken place in the religious condition of our country, since the date of their first publication; and to which they may unquestionably be considered as having in some degree contributed. It is not indeed asserted, nor is it the intention of the writer to intimate, that these are the only, or even the principal, cause of the happier state of things that now exists. Many circumstances have concurred to give an impulse to public opinion and feeling in modern times, which could scarcely have been anticipated, or hoped for, in the time of Watts and Doddridge, and still less in that of their illustrious predecessor. Yet the increased attention given in the present day to the theological and practical writings of the 17th century, and to those of a similar class and character of yet later date, may be enumerated among the favourable signs of the times, and affords a gratifying pledge that yet brighter and more prosperous days await the church of God. Instead of the general decay of vital religion, which awakened the sympathies and aroused the energies of Doddridge and his pious coadjutors, it is our happiness to have witnessed some symptoms of revival and increase, —symptoms which are not confined to one party or denomination of professing Christians alone, but which may be discerned, in a greater or less degree, in every section of the Christian church. Instead of the indifference to truth, or the widely-spread errors and heresies, which then depopulated and wasted the religious societies of our land, it is grateful now to observe the prevalence and almost universal triumph of evangelical truth. In place of the rancorous spirit of discord and division, that afflicted and grieved the susceptible mind of Doddridge, and others, who, like him, ardently prayed and longed for the peace and prosperity of Zion, it may be hoped, that now all sincere believers are approximating towards a state of catholic union, and breathing more of the spirit of peace and love, than at any former period since the apostolic age. And finally, instead of the isolated, the divided efforts to propagate the gospel, in Christian and heathen lands, to which Doddridge assiduously endeavoured to stimulate his brethren and fellow Christians, and which he deemed himself happy in being the instrument of accomplishing, though in a limited degree; it is our felicity to live in a period and country, in which efforts are making upon an enlarged scale, and with the combined energies of the whole Christian world, to communicate the volume of inspiration, and impart the blessings of the gospel, to the entire family of man. Other men have laboured, amidst a thousand discouragements and difficulties, of which we, who live in more favoured times, can scarcely form a conception, and it is ours to have entered into their labours. We are permitted to reap the fruits of the fervent and unceasing supplications of the pious and devout of former ages. May our zeal and diligence be proportionate to our increased obligations and privileges: so will the holy anticipations of this devoted servant of Christ be abundantly realized, and the joy of his beatified spirit increased by the developments of future years and ages.

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THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION IN THE SOUL;

ILLUSTRATED IN A COURSE OF

SERIOUS AND PRACTICAL ADDRESSES,

SUITED TO

PERSONS OF EVERY CHARACTER AND CIRCUMSTANCE:

WITH A

DEVOUT MEDITATION OR PRAYER ADDED TO EACH CHAPTER.

Qua feret hic gressum, fontem dabit arida vallis,
Inque cavas fossas depluet agmen aquæ;
Instaurabit vires et Numinis ora
Visurus Solymæ figet in æde pedem.

JOHNST. PSAL. lxxxiv. 7, 8.

Testifying—Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.—ACTS xx. 21.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.—COL. i. 28.

DEDICATION.

TO THE REVEREND DR. ISAAC WATTS.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

With the most affectionate gratitude and respect, I beg leave to present to you a book, which owes its existence to your request, its copiousness to your plan, and much of its perspicuity to your review, and to the use I made of your remarks on that part of it which your health and leisure would permit you to examine. I address it to you, not to beg your patronage to it, for of that I am already well assured; and much less from any ambition of attempting your character, for which, if I were more equal to the subject, I should think this a very improper place: but chiefly from a secret delight which I find in the thought of being known to those whom this may reach, as one whom you have honoured, not only with your friendship, but with so much of your esteem and approbation too, as must substantially appear in your committing a work to me, which you had yourself projected as one of the most considerable services of your life.

I have long thought the love of popular applause a meanness, which a philosophy far inferior to that of our divine Master might have taught us to conquer. But to be esteemed by eminently great and good men, to whom we are intimately known, appears to me not only one of the most solid attestations of some real worth, but, next to the approbation of God and our own consciences, one of its most valuable rewards. It will, I doubt not, be found so in that world, to which spirits like yours are tending, and for which, through divine grace, you have obtained so uncommon a degree of ripeness. And permit me, Sir, while I write this, to refresh myself with the hope that when that union of hearts, which has so long subsisted between us, shall arrive to its full maturity and endearment there, it will be matter of mutual delight to recollect, that you have assigned me, and that I have in some degree executed, a task, which may perhaps, under the blessing of God, awaken and improve religious sentiments in the minds of those whom we leave behind us, and of others who may arise after us in this vain, transitory, insnaring world.

Such is the improvement you have made of your capacities for service, that I am fully persuaded heaven has received very few, in these latter ages, who have done so much to serve its interests here below: few, who have laboured in this best of causes with equal assiduity, and equal success. And therefore I cannot but join with all who wish well to the Christian interest among us, in acknowledging the goodness of Providence to you and to the church of Christ, in prolonging a life at once so valuable and so tender, to such an advanced period. With them, Sir, I rejoice that God hath given you to possess in so extraordinary a degree, not only the consciousness of intending great benefit to the world, but the satisfaction of having effected it, and of seeing such a harvest already springing up, I hope as an earnest of a much more copious increase from thence. With multitudes more I bless God that you are not, in this evening of so afflicted and yet so laborious a day, rendered entirely incapable of serving the public from the press, and from the pulpit; and that amidst the pain which your active spirit feels, when these pleasing services suffer long interruptions from bodily weakness, it may be so singularly refreshed by reflecting on that sphere of extensive usefulness in which by your writings you continually move.

I congratulate you, dear Sir, that while you are, in a multitude of families and schools of the lower class, condescending to the humble, yet important, work of forming infant minds to the first rudiments of religious knowledge and devout impressions, by your various Catechisms and Divine Songs, you are also daily reading lectures on Logic, and other useful branches of philosophy, to studious youth. And this, not only in private academies, but in the most public and celebrated seats of learning, not merely

in Scotland, and in our American colonies, (where, from some peculiar considerations, it might most naturally be expected,) but, through the amiable candour of some excellent men and accomplished tutors, in our English universities too. I congratulate you, that you are teaching, no doubt, hundreds of ministers, and thousands of private Christians, by your sermons, and other theological writings, so happily calculated to diffuse through their minds that light of knowledge, and through their hearts that fervour of piety, which God has been pleased to enkindle in your own. But above all, I congratulate you, that by your sacred poetry, especially by your Psalms, and your Hymns, you are leading the worship, and I trust also animating the devotions of myriads, in our public assemblies, every sabbath, and in their families or closets every day. This, Sir, at least so far as it relates to the service of the sanctuary, is an unparalleled favour, by which God hath been pleased to distinguish you, I may boldly say it, beyond any of his servants now upon earth. Well may it be esteemed a glorious equivalent, and indeed much more than an equivalent, for all those views of ecclesiastical preferment, to which such talents, learning, virtues, and interest might have entitled you in an establishment; and I doubt not, but you joyfully accept it as such.

Nor is it easy to conceive in what circumstances you could, on any supposition, have been easier and happier, than in that pious and truly honourable family, in which, as I verily believe, in special indulgence both to you and to it, Providence has been pleased to appoint that you should spend so considerable a part of your life. It is my earnest prayer, that all the remainder of it may be serene, useful, and pleasant. And as, to my certain knowledge, your compositions have been the singular comfort of many excellent Christians (some of them numbered among my dearest friends) on their dying bed; for I have heard stanzas of them repeated from the lips of several, who were doubtless in a few hours to begin the Song of Moses and the Lamb: so I hope and trust, that when God shall call you to that salvation, for which your faith and patience have so long been waiting, he will shed around you the choicest beams of his favour, and gladden your heart with consolations, like those which you have been the happy instrument of administering to others.

In the mean time, Sir, be assured, that I am not a little animated in the various labours to which Providence has called me, by reflecting that I have such a contemporary, and especially such a friend, whose single presence would be to me as that of a cloud of witnesses here below, to awaken my alacrity in the race that is set before me. And I am persuaded, that while I say this, I speak the sentiment of many of my brethren, even of various denominations: a consideration, which I hope will do something towards reconciling a heart so generous as yours, to the delay of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory which is now so nearly approaching. Yes, my honoured friend, you will, I hope, cheerfully endure a little longer continuance in life amidst all its infirmities; from an assurance, that while God is pleased to maintain the exercise of your reason, it is hardly possible that you should live in vain to the world or yourself. Every day, and every trial, is brightening your crown, and rendering you still more meet for an inheritance among the saints in light. Every word that you drop from the pulpit has now surely its peculiar weight; the eyes of many are on their ascending prophet, eagerly intent that they may catch, if not his mantle, at least some divine sentence from his lips, which may long guide their ways and warm their hearts. This solicitude your friends bring into those happy moments, in which they are favoured with your converse in private, and when you are retired from them, your prayers, I doubt not, largely contribute towards guarding your country, watering the church, and blessing the world. Long may they continue to answer these great ends! and permit me, Sir, to conclude, with expressing my cheerful confidence, that in those best moments you are often particularly mindful of one, who so highly esteems, so greatly needs, and so warmly returns, that remembrance, as,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your most affectionate brother,

And obliged humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Dec. 13, 1744.

PREFACE.

The several hints given in the Dedication and the first chapter of this treatise, which contains a particular plan of the design, render it unnecessary to introduce it with a long preface. Some of my readers may perhaps remember that several years ago I promised this work to the public, in the preface to the second edition of my sermons on the power and grace of Christ, &c. My much honoured friend, Dr. Watts, had laid the scheme, especially of the former part. But as those indispositions with which (to the unspeakable grief of the churches) God has been pleased to exercise him, had forbid his hopes of being able to add this to his many labours of love to immortal souls, he was pleased in a very affectionate and importunate manner to urge me to undertake it. And I bless God with my whole heart, not only that he hath carried me through this delightful task, (for such indeed I have found it,) but also that he hath spared that worthy and amiable person to see it accomplished, and given him strength and spirit to review so considerable a part of it. His approbation expressed in stronger terms than modesty will permit me to repeat, encourages me to hope that it is executed in such a manner, as may, by the divine blessing, render it of some general service. And I the rather expect it will be so, as it now comes abroad into the world, not only with my own prayers, and his, but also with those of many other pious friends; which I have been particularly careful to engage for its success.

Into whatever hands this work may come, I must desire, that before any pass their judgment upon it, they would please to read it through; that they may discern the connexion between one part of it and another. Which I the rather request, because I have long observed, that Christians of different parties have been eagerly laying hold on particular parts of the system of divine truths, and have been contending about them as if each had been all; or as if the separation of the members from each other, and from the head, were the preservation of the body, instead of its destruction. They have been zealous to espouse the defence, and to maintain the honour and usefulness, of each apart; whereas their honour, as well as usefulness, seems to me to lie much in their connexion: and suspicions have often arisen betwixt the respective defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the preparations for securing one part of a ship in a storm were to be censured as a contrivance to sink the rest. I pray God to give to all his ministers and people more and more of the spirit of wisdom, and of love, and of a sound mind; and to remove far from us those mutual jealousies and animosities, which hinder our acting with that unanimity, which is necessary in order to the successful carrying on our common warfare against the enemies of Christianity. We may be sure, these enemies will never fail to make their own advantage of our multiplied divisions, and severe contests with each other; but they must necessarily lose both their ground and their influence, in proportion to the degree in which the energy of Christian principles is felt, to unite and transform the hearts of those by whom they are professed.

I take this opportunity of adding, that as this treatise may be looked upon as the sequel of my Sermons on Regeneration, though in something of a different method; a second edition of those Sermons is now published (in compliance with the request of my friends) in the same form and size with this book. I have been solicitous to make them both as cheap as possible, that I may fall in with the charitable designs of those who may purpose to give them away. There is however an edition of this treatise in octavo, for such as rather choose to have it in a larger character and fairer form.

I have studied the greatest plainness of speech, that the lowest of my readers may, if possible, be able to understand every word; and I hope persons of a more elegant taste and refined education, will pardon what appeared to me so necessary a piece of charity. Such a care in practical writings seems one important instance of that honouring all men, which our amiable and condescending religion teaches us: and I have been particularly obliged to my worthy patron for what he hath done to shorten some of the

sentences, and to put my meaning into plainer and more familiar words. Yet I dare say, the world will not suspect it of having contracted any impropriety or inelegance of language, by passing through the hands of Dr. Watts.

I must add one remark here, which I heartily wish I had not omitted in the first edition, viz. that though I do in this book consider my reader as successively in a great variety of supposed circumstances, beginning with those of a thoughtless sinner, and leading him through several stages of conviction, terror, &c. as what may be previous to his sincerely accepting the gospel, and devoting himself to the service of God; yet I would by no means be thought to insinuate, that every one who is brought to that happy resolution, arrives at it through those particular steps, or feels agitations of mind equal in degree to those I have described. Some sense of sin, and some serious and humbling apprehension of our danger and misery in consequence of it, must indeed be necessary, to dispose us to receive the grace of the gospel, and the Saviour who is there exhibited to our faith. But God is pleased sometimes to begin the work of his grace on the heart almost from the first dawning of reason, and to carry it on by such gentle and insensible degrees, that very excellent persons, who have made the most eminent attainments in the divine life, have been unable to recount any remarkable history of their conversion. And so far as I can learn, this is most frequently the case with those of them who have enjoyed the benefit of a pious education, when it has not been succeeded by a vicious and licentious youth. God forbid, therefore, that any such should be so insensible of their own happiness, as to fall into perplexity with relation to their spiritual state, for want of being able to trace such a rise of religion in their minds, as it was necessary on my plan for me to describe and exemplify here. I have spoken my sentiments on this head so fully in the eighth of my Sermons on Regeneration, that I think none who has read and remembers the general contents of it, can be in danger of mistaking my meaning here. But as it is very possible this book may fall into the hands of many who have not read the other, and have no opportunity of consulting it, I thought it proper to insert this caution in the preface to this, and I am much obliged to that worthy and excellent person, who kindly reminded me of the expediency of doing it.

I conclude with desiring my friends to forgive the necessary interruption which this work has given to the third volume of my Family Expositor, which I am now sending to the press as fast as I can, and hope to publish it in less than a year. To this volume I have referred several additional notes, and the indexes, which are necessary to render the former volumes complete; having determined to add nothing to the second edition which should depreciate the former. I do not think it necessary to trouble my friends with a new subscription; taking it for granted, that few who were pleased with the other part of the work, will fail of perfecting the set of the historical books of the New Testament.—When my exposition on the epistolary part may be completed, God only knows. I will proceed in it as fast as the other duties of my station will permit; and I earnestly beg, that if my readers find edification and advantage by any of my writings, they would in return offer a prayer for me, that God may carry me on, in that most important labour of my pen, under the remarkable tokens of his guidance and blessing.

THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION IN THE SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

The Introduction to the Work, with some general account of its design.

That true religion is very rare, appears from comparing the nature of it with the lives and characters of men around us, § 1, 2. The want of it, matter of just lamentation, § 3. To remedy this evil, is the design of the ensuing treatise, § 4. To which therefore the author earnestly bespeaks the attention of the reader, as his own heart is deeply interested in it, § 5, 6. A general plan of the work; of which the fifteen first chapters relate chiefly to the rise of religion, and the remaining chapters to its progress, § 7–12. The chapter concludes with a prayer for the success of the work.

§ 1. When we look round about us with an attentive eye, and consider the characters and pursuits of men, we plainly see, that though, in the original constitution of their natures, they only, of all the creatures that dwell on the face of the earth, be capable of religion, yet many of them shamefully neglect it. And whatever different notions people may entertain of what they call religion, all must agree in owning, that it is very far from being an universal thing.

§ 2. Religion, in its most general view, is such a sense of God on the soul, and such a conviction of our obligations to him, and our dependence upon him, as shall engage us to make it our great care to conduct ourselves in a manner which we have reason to believe will be pleasing to him. Now when we have given this plain account of *religion*, it is by no means necessary that we should search among the savages of the African or American nations, to find instances of those who are strangers to it. When we view the conduct of the generality of people at home, in a Christian and protestant nation, in a nation whose obligations to God have been singular, almost beyond those of any other people under heaven, will any one presume to say that religion has an universal reign among us? Will any one suppose that it prevails in every life? that it reigns in every heart? Alas, the avowed infidelity, the profanation of the name and day of God, the drunkenness, the lewdness, the injustice, the falsehood, the pride, the prodigality, the base selfishness, and stupid insensibility of the spiritual and eternal interests of themselves and others, which so generally appear among us, loudly proclaim the contrary. So that one would imagine upon this view, that thousands and ten thousands thought the neglect, and even the contempt, of religion were a glory, rather than a reproach. And where is the neighbourhood, where is the society, where is the happy family, (consisting of any considerable number,) in which, on a more exact examination, we find reason to say, "Religion fills even this little circle?" There is perhaps a freedom from any gross and scandalous immoralities, an external decency of behaviour, an attendance on the outward forms of worship in public, and (here and there) in the family; yet, amidst all this, there is nothing which looks like the genuine actions of the spiritual and divine life. There is no appearance of love to God, no reverence for his presence, no desire of his favours as the highest good: there is no cordial belief of the gospel of salvation; no eager solicitude to escape that condemnation which we have incurred by sin; no hearty concern to secure that eternal life, which Christ has purchased and secured for his people, and which he freely promises to all who will receive him. Alas! whatever the love of a friend, or even a parent, can do; whatever inclination there may be, to hope all things, and believe all things the most favourable; evidence to the contrary will force itself upon the mind, and extort the unwilling conclusion, that, whatever else may be amiable in this dear friend, in that favourite child, "Religion dwells not in its breast."

§ 3. To a heart that firmly believes the gospel, and views persons and things in the light of eternity, this is one of the most mournful considerations in the world. And indeed, to such a one, all

other calamities and evils of human nature appear trifles, when compared with this: the absence of real religion, and that contrariety to it which reigns in so many thousands of mankind. Let this be cured, and all the other evils will easily be borne; nay, good will be extracted out of them. But if this continue, it *bringeth forth fruit unto death*; and in consequence of it, multitudes, who share the entertainments of an indulgent providence with us, and are at least allied to us by the bond of the same common nature, must in a few years be swept away into utter destruction, and be plunged, beyond redemption, into everlasting burnings.

§ 4. I doubt not but there are many, under those various forms of religious profession which have so unhappily divided us in this nation, who are not only lamenting this in public, if their office in life calls them to an opportunity of doing it; but are likewise mourning before God in secret, under a sense of this sad state of things; and who can appeal to him that searches all hearts, as to the sincerity of their desires to revive the languishing cause of vital Christianity and substantial piety. And, among the rest, the author of this treatise may with confidence say, it is this which animates him to the present attempt, in the midst of so many other cares and labours. For this he is willing to lay aside many of those curious amusements in science which might suit his own private taste, and perhaps open a way for some reputation in the learned world. For this he is willing to save the laboured ornaments of speech, that he may, if possible, descend to the capacity of the lowest part of mankind. For this he would endeavour to convince the judgment, and to reach the heart, of every reader; and, in a word, for this, without any dread of the name of an enthusiast, whoever may at random throw it out upon the occasion, he would, as it were, enter with you into your closet, from day to day; and, with all plainness and freedom, as well as seriousness, would discourse to you of the great things which he has learnt from the Christian revelation, and on which he assuredly knows your everlasting happiness to depend: that if you hitherto have lived without religion, you may be now awakened to the consideration of it, and may be instructed in its nature and importance; or that if you are already, through divine grace, experimentally acquainted with it, you may be assisted to make a further progress.

§ 5. But he earnestly entreats this favour of you, that, as it is plainly a serious business we are entering upon, you would be pleased to give him a serious and an attentive hearing. He entreats that these addresses, and these meditations, may be perused at leisure, and be thought over in retirement; and that you would do him and yourself the justice to believe the representations which are here made, and the warnings which are here given, to proceed from sincerity and love; from a heart, which would not designedly give one moment's unnecessary pain to the meanest creature on the face of the earth, and much less to any human mind. If he be importunate, it is because he at least imagines that there is just reason for it: and fears, lest amidst the multitudes who are undone by the utter neglect of religion, and among those who are greatly damaged for want of a more resolute and constant attendance to it, this may be the case of some into whose hands this treatise may fall.

§ 6. He is a barbarian, and deserves not to be called a man, who can look upon the sorrows of his fellow-creatures without drawing out his soul unto them, and wishing, at least, that it were in the power of his hand to help them. Surely earth would be a heaven to that man, who could go about from place to place scattering happiness wherever he came, though it were only the body that he were capable of relieving, and though he could impart nothing better than the happiness of a mortal life. But the happiness rises in proportion to the nature and degree of the good which he imparts. Happy, are we ready to say, were those honoured servants of Christ, who, in the early days of his church, were the benevolent and sympathizing instruments of conveying miraculous healing to those whose cases seemed desperate; who poured in upon the blind and the deaf the pleasures of light and sound, and called up the dead to the powers of action and enjoyment. But this is an honour and happiness which it is not fit for God commonly to bestow on mortal men. Yet there have been in every age, and, blessed be his name, there still are those, whom he has condescended to make his instruments in conveying nobler and more lasting blessings than these to their fellow-creatures. Death hath long since veiled the eyes, and stopped the ears, of those who were the subjects of miraculous healing, and recovered its empire over those who were once recalled from the grave. But the souls who were prevailed upon to receive the gospel, live for ever. God has owned the labours of his faithful ministers in every age, to produce these blessed effects; and some of them being dead, yet speak with power and success in this important cause. Wonder not then if, living and dying, I be ambitious of this honour; and if my mouth be freely opened where I can truly say, my heart is enlarged.

§ 7. In forming my general plan I have been solicitous that this little treatise might, if possible, be useful to all its readers, and contain something suitable to each. I will therefore take the man and the Christian in a great variety of circumstances. I will first suppose myself addressing one of the vast number of thoughtless creatures, who have hitherto

been utterly unconcerned about religion; and will try what can be done, by all plainness and earnestness of address, to awaken him from this fatal lethargy, to a care, (Chap. 2.) an affectionate and an immediate care, about it. (Chap. 3.) I will labour to fix a deep and awful conviction of guilt upon his conscience, (Chap. 4.) and to strip him of his vain excuses and his flattering hopes. (Chap. 5.) I will read to him, Oh! that I could fix on his heart that sentence, that dreadful sentence, which a righteous and an almighty God hath denounced against him as a sinner, (Chap. 6.) and endeavour to show him in how helpless a state he lies under this condemnation, as to any capacity he has of delivering himself. (Chap. 7.) But I do not mean to leave any in so terrible a situation: I will joyfully proclaim the glad tidings of pardon and salvation by Christ Jesus our Lord, which is all the support and confidence of my own soul: (Chap. 8.) and then I will give some general view of the way by which this salvation is to be obtained; (Chap. 9.) urging the sinner to accept of it, as affectionately as I can; (Chap. 10.) though nothing can be sufficiently pathetic, where, as in this matter, the life of an immortal soul is in question.

§ 8. Too probable it is, that some will, after all this, remain insensible; and therefore, that their sad case may not encumber the following articles, I shall here take a solemn leave of them: (Chap. 11.) and then shall turn and address myself, as compassionately as I can, to a most contrary character; I mean, to a soul overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness of its sins, and trembling under the burthen, as if there were no more hope for him in God. (Chap. 12.) And that nothing may be omitted, which may give solid peace to the troubled spirit, I shall endeavour to guide its inquiries as to the evidences of sincere repentance and faith; (Chap. 13.) which will be further illustrated by a more particular view of the several branches of the Christian temper, such as may serve at once to assist the reader in judging what he is, and to show him what he should labour to be. (Chap. 14.) This will naturally lead to a view of the need we have of the influences of the blessed Spirit, to assist us in the important and difficult work of the true Christian; and of the encouragement we have to hope for his divine assistance. (Chap. 15.) In an humble dependence on which, I shall then enter on the consideration of several cases which often occur in the Christian life, in which particular addresses to the conscience may be requisite and useful.

§ 9. As some particular difficulties and discouragements attend the first entrance on a religious course, it will here be our first care to animate the young convert against them. (Chap. 16.) And that it may be done more effectually, I shall urge a solemn dedication of himself to God, (Chap. 17.) to be confirmed by entering into the full communion of the church by an approach to the sacred table. (Chap. 18.) That these engagements may be more happily fulfilled, we shall endeavour to draw a more particular plan of that devout, regular, and accurate course, which ought daily to be attended to: (Chap. 19.) and because the idea will probably rise so much higher than what is the general practice, even of good men, we shall endeavour to persuade the reader to make the attempt, hard as it may seem; (Chap. 20.) and shall caution him against various temptations, which might otherwise draw him aside to negligence and sin. (Chap. 21.)

§ 10. Happy will it be for the reader, if these exhortations and cautions be attended to with becoming regard; but as it is, alas, too probable that, notwithstanding all, the infirmities of nature will sometimes prevail, we shall consider the case of deadness and languor in religion, which often steals upon us by insensible degrees. (Chap. 22.) from whence there is too easy a passage to that terrible one of a return into known and deliberate sin. (Chap. 23.) And as the one or the other of these tends, in a proportionable degree, to provoke the blessed God to hide his face, and his injured Spirit to withdraw, that melancholy condition will be taken into a particular survey. (Chap. 24.) I shall then take notice also of the case of great and heavy afflictions in life; (Chap. 25.) a discipline which the best of men have reason to expect, especially when they backslide from God, and yield to their spiritual enemies.

§ 11. Instances of this kind will, I fear, be too frequent; yet, I trust, there will be many others, whose path, like the dawning light, will shine more and more until the perfect day. And therefore we shall endeavour, in the best manner we can, to assist the Christian in passing a true judgment on the growth of grace in his heart; (Chap. 26.) as we had done before in judging of its sincerity. And as nothing conduces more to the advance of grace, than the lively exercise of love to God, and a holy joy in him, we shall here remind the real Christian of those mercies, which tend to excite that love and joy; (Chap. 27.) and, in the views of them, to animate him to those vigorous efforts of usefulness in life, which so well become his character, and will have so happy an efficacy in brightening his crown. (Chap. 28.) Supposing him to act accordingly, we shall then labour to illustrate and assist the delight with which he may look forward to the awful solemnities of death and judgment; (Chap. 29.) and shall close the scene by accompanying him, as it were, to the nearest confines of that dark valley, through which he is to pass to glory, giving him such directions, as may seem most subservient to his honouring God, and adorning religion, by his dying behaviour. (Chap. 30.) Nor can I without a pleasing hope, that, through the divine blessing, and

grace, I may be in some instances so successful as to leave those triumphing in the views of judgment and eternity, and glorifying God by a truly Christian life and death, whom I found trembling in the apprehensions of future misery; or perhaps in a much more dangerous and miserable circumstance than that: I mean, entirely forgetting the prospect, and sunk into the most stupid insensibility, of those things, for an attendance to which the human mind was formed, and in comparison of which, all the pursuits of this transitory life are emptier than wind, and lighter than a feather.

§ 12. Such a variety of heads must, to be sure, be handled but briefly, as we intend to bring them within the bulk of a moderate volume. I shall not, therefore, discuss them as a preacher might properly do in sermons, in which the truths of religion are professedly to be explained and taught, defended and improved, in a wide variety and long detail of propositions, arguments, objections, replies, and inferences, marshalled and numbered under their distinct generals. I shall here speak in a looser and freer manner, as a friend to a friend; just as I would do, if I were to be in person admitted to a private audience, by one whom I tenderly loved, and whose circumstances and character I knew to be like that which the title of one chapter or another of this treatise describes. And when I have discoursed with him a little while, which will seldom be so long as half an hour, I shall, as it were, step aside, and leave him to meditate on what he has heard, or endeavour to assist him in such fervent addresses to God, as it may be proper to mingle with those meditations. In the mean time, I will here take the liberty to pray over my reader and my work; and to commend it solemnly to the divine blessing, in token of my deep conviction of an entire dependence upon it. And I am well persuaded, that sentiments like these are common, in the general, to every faithful minister, to every real Christian.

A Prayer for the success of this work, in promoting the rise and progress of religion.

"O thou great eternal Original and Author of all created being and happiness! I adore thee who hast made man a creature capable of religion, and hast bestowed this dignity and felicity upon our nature, that it may be taught to say, Where is God our Maker? I lament that degeneracy spread over the whole human race, which has turned our glory into shame, and has rendered the forgetfulness of God (unnatural as it is) so common and so universal a disease. Holy Father, we know that it is thy presence and thy teaching alone, that can reclaim thy wandering children; can impress a sense of divine things on the heart, and render that sense lasting and effectual. From thee proceed all good purposes and desires; and this desire above all, of diffusing wisdom, piety, and happiness, in this world, which (though sunk in such deep apostasy) thine infinite mercy has not utterly forsaken.

"Thou knowest, O Lord, the hearts of the children of men; and an upright soul in the midst of all the censures and suspicions it may meet with, rejoices in thine intimate knowledge of its most secret recesses and principles of action. Thou knowest the sincerity and fervency with which thine unworthy servant desires to spread the knowledge of thy name, and the savour of thy gospel, among all to whom this work may reach. Thou knowest, that hadst thou given him an abundance of this world, it would have been in his esteem the noblest pleasure that abundance could have afforded, to have been thine almoner, in distributing thy bounties to the indigent and necessitous, and so causing the sorrowful heart to rejoice in thy goodness, dispensed through his hands. Thou knowest, that hadst thou given him, either by ordinary or extraordinary methods, the gifts of healing, it would have been his daily delight to relieve the pains, the maladies, and the infirmities of men's bodies; to have seen the languishing countenance brightened by returning health and cheerfulness; and much more, to have beheld the roving distracted mind reduced to calmness and serenity, in the exercise of its rational faculties. Yet happier, far happier, will he think himself, in those humble circumstances, in which thy providence hath placed him, if thou vouchsafe to honour these his feeble endeavours, as the means of relieving and enriching men's minds; of recovering them from the madness of a sinful state, and bringing back thy reasonable creatures to the knowledge, the service, and the enjoyment of their God; or of improving those who are already reclaimed.

"O may it have that blessed influence on the person, whosoever he be, that is now reading these lines, and on all who may read or hear them! Let not my Lord be angry, if I presume to ask, that however weak and contemptible this work may seem in the eyes of the children of this world, and however imperfect it really be, as well as the author of it unworthy, it may nevertheless live before thee, and through a divine power be mighty to produce the rise and progress of religion in the minds of multitudes, in distant places, and in generations yet to come! Impute it not, O God, as a culpable ambition, if I desire, that whatever becomes of my name, about which I would not lose one thought before thee, this work, to which I am now applying myself in thy strength, may be completed and propagated far abroad; that it may reach to those that are yet unborn, and teach them thy name and thy praise, when the author has long dwelt in the dust: that so, when he shall appear before thee in the great day of final account, his joy may be increased, and

his crown brightened, by numbers before unknown to each other and to him! But if this petition be too great to be granted to one who pretends no claim, but thy sovereign grace, to hope for being favoured with the least, give him to be in thine Almighty hand the blessed instrument of converting and saving one soul: and if it be but one, and that the weakest and meanest of those who are capable of receiving this address, it shall be most thankfully accepted as a rich recompence for all the thought and labour it may cost; and though it should be amidst a thousand disappointments with respect to others, yet it shall be the subject of immortal songs of praise to thee, O blessed God, for and by every soul whom, through the blood of Jesus and the grace of thy Spirit, thou hast saved; and everlasting honours shall be ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to thy Holy Spirit, by the innumerable company of angels, and by the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven. Amen."

CHAP. II.

The careless sinner awakened.

It is too supposable a case, that this treatise may come into such hands. § 1, 2. Since many, not grossly vicious, fall under that character. § 3, 4. A more particular illustration of this case, with an appeal to the reader, whether it be not his own. § 5, 6. Expostulation with such. § 7–11. More particularly. § 7. From acknowledged principles, relating to the nature of God, his universal presence, purity, and perfections. § 10–12. § 8. From a view of personal obligations to him. § 13, 14. § 9. From the danger of this neglect, when considered in the aspect of a future state. § 14. An appeal to the conscience, practically convinced. § 15. Transition to the subject of the next chapter. § 16. The meditation of a sinner, who, having been long thoughtless, begins to be awakened.

§ 1. Shamefully and fatally as religion is neglected in the world, yet, blessed be God, it has some sincere disciples; children of wisdom, by whom, even in this foolish and degenerate age, it is justified; who, having by divine grace been brought to the knowledge of God in Christ, have faithfully devoted their hearts to him, and by a natural consequence, are devoting their lives to his service. Could I be sure this treatise would fall into no hands but theirs, my work would be shorter, easier, and pleasanter.

§ 2. But among the thousands that neglect religion, it is more than possible that some of my readers may be included; and I am so deeply affected with their unhappy case, that the temper of my heart, as well as the proper method of my subject, leads me in the first place to address myself to such; to apply to every one of them; and therefore to you, O reader, whoever you are, who may come under the denomination of a careless sinner.

§ 3. Be not, I beseech you, angry at the name. The physicians of souls must speak plainly, or they may murder those whom they should cure. I would make no harsh and unreasonable supposition, I would charge you with nothing more than is absolutely necessary to convince you that you are the person to whom I speak. I will not, therefore, imagine you to be a profane and abandoned profligate. I will not suppose that you allow yourself to blaspheme God, to dishonour his name by customary swearing, or grossly to violate his sabbath, or commonly to neglect the solemnities of his public worship; I will not imagine that you have injured your neighbours, in their lives, their chastity, or their possessions, either by violence or by fraud; or that you have scandalously debased the rational nature of man by that vile intemperance, which transforms us into the worst kind of brutes, or something beneath them.

§ 4. In opposition to all this, I will suppose that you believe the existence and providence of God, and the truth of Christianity, as a revelation from him; of which if you have any doubt, I must desire that you would immediately seek your satisfaction elsewhere. I say, immediately: because not to believe it, is in effect to disbelieve it; and will make your ruin equally certain, though perhaps it may leave it less aggravated, than if contempt and opposition had been added to suspicion and neglect. But supposing you to be a nominal Christian, and not a deist or a sceptic, I will also suppose your conduct among men to be not only blameless, but amiable; and that they who know you most intimately must acknowledge, that you are just and sober, humane and courteous, compassionate and liberal; yet with all this, you may lack that one thing on which your eternal happiness depends.

§ 5. I beseech you, reader, whoever you are, that you would now look seriously into your own heart, and ask it this one plain question, Am I truly religious? Is the love of God the governing principle of my life? Do I walk under the sense of his presence? Do I converse with him from day to day, in the exercise of prayer and praise? And am I, on the whole, making his service my business and my delight, regarding him as my Master and my Father?

§ 6. It is my present business only to address myself to the person whose conscience answers in the negative. And I would address with equal plainness, and equal freedom, to high and low, to rich and poor: to you, who (as the Scripture with a dreadful propriety expresses it) live without God in the world; and while in words and forms you own God, deny him in your actions, and behave yourselves in the main, (a few external ceremonies only excepted,) just as you would do, if you believed, and were sure, there was no God. Unhappy creature, whoever you are! your own heart condemns you immediately; and how much more that God, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things. He is in secret, as well as in public; and words cannot express the delight with which his children converse with him alone: but in secret

you acknowledge him not; you neither pray to him nor praise him in your retirements. Accounts, correspondences, studies may often bring you into your closet, but if nothing but devotion were to be transacted there, it would be to you quite an unfrequented place. And thus you go on from day to day, in a continual forgetfulness of God, and are as thoughtless about religion, as if you had long since demonstrated it to yourself that it was a mere dream. It, indeed, you are sick, you will perhaps cry to God for health; in any extreme danger, you will lift up your eyes and voice for deliverance: but as for the pardon of sin, and the other blessings of the gospel, you are not at all inwardly solicitous about them; though you profess to believe that the gospel is divine, and the blessings of it eternal. All your thoughts, and all your hours, are divided between the business and the amusements of life; and if now and then an awful providence, or a serious sermon or book, awakens you, it is but a few days, or it may be a few hours, and you are the same careless creature you ever were before. On the whole, you act as if you were resolved to put it to the venture, and at your own expense to make the experiment, whether the consequences of neglecting religion be indeed as terrible as its ministers and friends have represented. Their remonstrances do indeed sometimes force themselves upon you, as (considering the age and country in which you live) it is hardly possible entirely to avoid them; but you have, it may be, found out the art of Isaiah's people, hearing to hear, and not to understand; and seeing to see, and not to perceive: your heart is waxed gross, your eyes are closed, and your ears heavy. Under the very ordinances of worship, your thoughts are at the ends of the earth. Every amusement of the imagination is welcome, if it may but lead away your mind from so insipid and so disagreeable a subject as religion. And probably the very last time you were in a worshipping assembly, you managed just as you would have done if you had thought God knew nothing of your behaviour; or as if you did not think it worth one single care, whether he were pleased or displeased with it.

§ 7. Alas! is it then come to this, with all your belief of God, and providence, and Scripture, that religion is not worth a thought! That it is not worth one hour's serious consideration and reflection, "what God and Christ are; and what you yourselves are, and what you must hereafter be?" Where then are all your rational faculties? how are they employed, or rather, how are they stupified and benumbed?

§ 8. The certainty and importance of the things of which I speak are so evident, from the principles which you yourselves grant, that one might almost set a child or an idiot to reason upon them. And yet they are neglected by those who are grown up to understanding, and perhaps some of them to such refinement of understanding, that they would think themselves greatly injured, if they were not to be reckoned among the politer, and the more learned, part of mankind.

§ 9. But it is not your neglect, sirs, that can destroy the being or importance of such things as these. It may indeed destroy you, but it cannot in the least affect them. Permit me, therefore, having been myself awakened, to come to each of you, and say, as the mariners did to Jonah, while asleep in the midst of a much less dangerous storm, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, and call upon thy God. Do you doubt as to the reasonableness or necessity of doing it? I will demand, and answer me: answer me to your own conscience, as one that must, ere long, render another kind of account.

§ 10. You own that there is a God, and well you may; for you cannot open your eyes, but you must see the evident proofs of his being, his presence, and his agency. You behold him around you in every object. You feel him within you, if I may so speak, in every vein, and in every nerve. You see, and you feel, not only that he hath formed you with an exquisite wisdom, which no mortal man could ever fully explain or comprehend, but that he is continually near you, wherever you are, and however you are employed, by day, or by night; in him you live, and move, and have your being. Common sense will tell you, that it is not your own wisdom, and power, and attention, that causes your heart to beat, and your blood to circulate; that draws in, and sends out, that breath of life, that precarious breath of a most uncertain life, that is in your nostrils. These things are done when you sleep, as well as in those waking moments, when you think not of the circulation of the blood, or of the necessity of breathing, nor so much as to recollect that you have a heart and lungs. Now what is this, but the hand of God, perpetually supporting and actuating those curious machines that he has made?

§ 11. Nor is this his care limited to you; but if you look all around you, far as your view can reach, you see it extending itself on every side: and oh how much further than you can trace it! Reflect on the light and heat, which the sun every where dispenses; on the air, which surrounds all our globe, on the right temperature of which the life of the whole human race depends, and that of all the inferior creatures which dwell on the earth. Think of the suitable and plentiful provision made for man and beast: the grass, the grain, the variety of fruits, and herbs, and flowers, every thing that nourishes us, every thing that delights us; and say, whether it do not speak plainly and loudly, that our Almighty Maker is near, and that he is careful of us, and kind to us. And while all these things proclaim his goodness, do they not also proclaim his power?

For what power is any thing comparable to that, which furnishes out those gifts of royal bounty; and which, unwearied and unchanged, produces continually, from day to day, and from age to age, such astonishing and magnificent effects over the face of the whole earth, and through all the regions of heaven?

§ 12. It is then evident, that God is present, present with you at this moment; even God your creator and preserver, God the creator and preserver of the whole visible and invisible world. And is he not present as a most observant and attentive being? He that formed the eye, shall not he see? He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that teaches man knowledge, that gives him his rational faculties, and pours in upon his opening mind all the light it receives by them, shall not he know? He who sees all the necessities of his creatures so seasonably to provide for them, shall he not see their actions too? and seeing, shall he not judge them? Has he given us a sense and discernment of what is good and evil, of what is true and false, of what is fair and deformed, in temper and conduct? and has he himself no discernment of these things? Trifle not with your conscience, which tells you at once, that he judges of it, and approves or condemns, as it is decent or indecent, reasonable or unreasonable; and that the judgment which he passes is of infinite importance to all his creatures.

§ 13. And now, to apply all this to your own case, let me seriously ask you, Is it a decent and reasonable thing, that this great and glorious Benefactor should be neglected by his rational creatures? by those, that are capable of attaining to some knowledge of him, and presenting to him some homage? Is it decent and reasonable, that he should be forgotten and neglected by you? Are you alone, of all the works of his hands, forgotten or neglected by him? Oh sinner, thoughtless as you are, you cannot dare to say that, or even to think it. You need not go back to the helpless days of your infancy and childhood, to convince you of the contrary. You need not, in order to this, recollect the remarkable deliverances, which, perhaps, were wrought out for you many years ago. The repose of the last night, the refreshment and comfort you have received this day; yea, the mercies you are receiving this very moment, bear witness to him; and yet you regard him not. Ungrateful creature that you are! Could you have treated any human benefactor thus? Could you have borne to neglect a kind parent, or any generous friend, that had but a few months acted the part of a parent to you? to have taken no notice of him, while in his presence; to have returned him no thanks; to have had no contrivances to make some little acknowledgment for all his goodness? Human nature, bad as it is, is not fallen so low. Nay, the brutal nature is not so low as this. Surely every domestic animal round you must shame such ingratitude. If you do but for a few days take a little kind notice of a dog, and feed him with the refuse of your table, he will wait upon you, and love to be near you; he will be eager to follow you from place to place, or when, after a little absence, you return home, will try by a thousand fond transported motions, to tell you how much he rejoices to see you again. Nay, brutes far less sagacious and apprehensive, have some sense of our kindness, and express it after their way: as the blessed God condescends to observe, in this very view in which I mention it, The dull ox knows its owner, and the stupid ass his master's crib: what lamentable degeneracy therefore is it, that you do not know, that you, who have been numbered among God's professing people, do not, and will not, consider your numberless obligations to him?

§ 14. Surely, if you have any ingenuity of temper, you must be ashamed and grieved in the review: but if you have not, give me leave further to expostulate with you on this head, by setting it in something of a different light. Can you think yourselves safe, while you are acting a part like this? Do you not in your conscience believe, there will be a future judgment? Do you not believe there is an invisible and eternal world? As professed Christians, we all believe it; for it is no controverted point, but displayed in Scripture with so clear an evidence, that, subtle and ingenious as men are in error, they have not yet found out a way to evade it. And believing this, do you not see, that while you are thus wandering from God, destruction and misery are in your ways? Will this indolence and negligence of temper be any security to you? Will it guard you from death? Will it excuse you from judgment? You might much more reasonably expect, that shutting your eyes would be a defence against the rage of a devouring lion; or that looking another way should secure your body from being pierced by a bullet or a sword. When God speaks of the extravagant folly of some thoughtless creatures, who would hearken to no admonition, now he adds, in a very awful manner: In the latter day they shall consider it perfectly. And is not this applicable to you? Must you not, sooner or later, be brought to think of these things, whether you will or not? And, in the mean time, do you not certainly know, that timely and serious reflection upon them is, through divine grace, the only way to prevent your ruin?

§ 15. Yes, sinner, I need not multiply words on a subject like this. Your conscience is already inwardly convinced, though your pride may be unwilling to own it. And, to prove it, let me ask you one question more: Would you, upon any terms and considerations whatever, come to a resolution ab-

solutely to dismiss all further thought of religion, and all care about it, from this day and hour, and to abide by the consequences of that neglect? I believe hardly any man living would be bold enough to determine upon this. I believe most of my readers would be ready to tremble at the thought of it.

§ 16. But if it be necessary to take these things into consideration at all, it is necessary to do it quickly; for life itself is not so very long, nor so certain, that a wise man should risk much upon its continuance. And I hope to convince you, when I have another hearing, that it is necessary to do it immediately; and that, next to the madness of resolving, you will not think of religion at all, is that of saying, you will think of it hereafter. In the mean time, pause on the hints which have been already given, and they will prepare you to receive what is to be added on that head.

The Meditation of a sinner who was once thoughtless, but begins to be awakened.

"AWAKE, oh my forgetful soul, awake from these wandering dreams. Turn thee from this chace of vanity, and for a little while be persuaded by all these considerations, to look forward, and to look upward, at least for a few moments. Sufficient are the hours and days given to the labours and amusements of life. Grudge not a short allotment of minutes, to view thyself, and thine own more immediate concerns; to reflect who and what thou art; how it comes to pass that thou art here, and what thou must quickly be!

"It is indeed, as thou hast seen it now represented, oh my soul! Thou art the creature of God; formed and furnished by him, and lodged in a body which he provided, and which he supports; a body, in which he intended thee only a transitory abode. Oh, think how soon this tabernacle must be dissolved, and thou must return to God! And shall he, the one infinite, eternal, ever-blessed, and ever-glorious Being, shall he be least of all regarded by thee? Wilt thou live and die with this character, saying by every action of every day unto God, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways? The morning, the day, the evening, the night, every period of time, has its excuses for this neglect. But, oh my soul, what will these excuses appear, when examined by his penetrating eye? They may delude me; but they cannot impose upon him!

"Oh thou injured, neglected, provoked Benefactor! When I think, but for a moment or two, of all thy greatness, and of all thy goodness, I am astonished at this insensibility, which hath prevailed in mine heart, and even still prevails. I blush and am confounded to lift up my face before thee. On the most transient review, I see that I have played the fool, that I have erred exceedingly. And yet this stupid heart of mine would make its having neglected thee so long a reason for going on to neglect thee. I own it might justly be expected, that, with regard to thee, every one of thy rational creatures should be all duty and love; that each heart should be full of a sense of thy presence; and that a care to please thee should swallow up every other care. Yet thou hast not been in all my thoughts; and religion, the end and glory of my nature, has been so strangely overlooked, that I have hardly ever seriously asked my own heart, what it is. I know, if matters rest here, I perish, and yet I feel, in my perverse nature, a secret indisposition to pursue these thoughts: a proneness, if not entirely to dismiss them, yet to lay them aside for the present. My mind is perplexed and divided: but I am sure thou, who madest me, knowest what is best for me. I therefore beseech thee, that thou wilt, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me. Let me not delay till it is for ever too late. Pluck me as a brand out of the burning. Oh, break this fatal enchantment that holds down my affection to objects, which my judgment comparatively despises! And let me, at length, come into so happy a state of mind, that I may not be afraid to think of thee, and of myself; and may not be tempted to wish that thou hadst not made me, or that thou couldst for ever forget me; that it may not be my best hope, to perish like the brutes.

"If what I shall further read here, be agreeable to truth and reason; if it be calculated to promote my happiness, and is to be regarded as an intimation of thy will and pleasure to me: O God, let me hear and obey! Let the words of thy servant, when pleading thy cause, be like goads to pierce into my mind! and let me rather feel, and smart, than die! Let them be as nails fastened in a sure place: that whatever mysteries are as yet unknown, or whatever difficulties there be in religion, if it be necessary, I may not finally neglect it; and that if it be expedient to attend immediately to it, I may no longer delay that attendance! And oh let thy grace teach me the lesson I am so slow to learn, and conquer that strong opposition, which I feel in my heart, against the very thought of it! Hear these broken cries, for the sake of thy Son, who has taught and saved many a creature as untractable as I, and can out of stones raise up children to Abraham!" Amen.

CHAP. III.

The awakened sinner urged to immediate consideration, and cautioned against delay.

Sinners when awaked [illegible] to serious meditation on the present, [illegible] An immediate regard to serious religion [illegible] How the

excellency and pleasure of the thing itself. § 1. 2. From the uncertainty of that future time on which sinners presume, compared with the sad consequences of being cut off in sin. § 3. 3. From the unmeetableness of God's present demands. § 5. 4. From the hardness, which delay has, to make a compliance with those demands more difficult than it is at present. § 6. 5. From the danger of God's withdrawing his Spirit, compared with the dreadful case of a sinner given up by it. § 7. Which probably is often the case with many. § 8. Some therefore on the verge, whatever the event be deemed, may prove matter of lamentation. § 9. the chapter concludes with an exhortation against yielding to them. § 10. and a prayer against temptations of that kind.

§ 1. I HOPE my last address so far awakened the convictions of my reader, as to bring him to this purpose, "That some time or other he would attend to religious considerations." But give me leave to ask earnestly and punctually, "When that shall be?" "Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will send for thee," was the language, and the ruin, of unhappy Felix, when he trembled under the reasonings and expostulations of the apostle. The tempter presumed not to urge that he should give up all thoughts of repentance and reformation; but only that, considering the present hurry of his affairs, (as no doubt they were many,) he should defer it to a longer day. The artifice succeeded, and Felix was undone.

§ 2. Will you, reader, dismiss me thus? For your own sake, and out of tender compassion to your perishing immortal soul, I would not willingly take up with such a dismission and excuse. No, not though you shall fix a time; though you shall determine on the next year, or month, or week, or day. I would turn upon you with all the eagerness and tenderness of friendly importunity, and entreat you to bring the matter to an issue even now. For if you say, "I will think on these things to-morrow," I shall have but little hope; and shall conclude, that all that I have hitherto urged, and all that you have read, have been offered and viewed in vain.

§ 3. When I invited you to the care and practice of religion, it may seem strange that it should be necessary for me affectionately to plead the case with you, in order to your immediate regard and compliance. What I am inviting you to, is so noble and excellent in itself, so well worthy the dignity of our rational nature, so suitable to it, so manly, and so wise, that one would imagine you should take fire, as it were, at the first hearing of it; yea, that so delightful a view should presently possess your whole soul with a kind of indignation against yourself that you pursued it no sooner. "May I lift up my eyes and my soul to God? May I devote myself to him? May I even now commence a friendship with him; a friendship which shall last for ever, the security, the delight, the glory of this immortal nature of mine?" And shall I draw back and say, "Nevertheless let me not commence this friendship too soon? let me live at least a few weeks, or a few days, longer without God in the world?" Surely it would be much more reasonable to return inward, and say, "Oh my soul, on what vile husks hast thou been feeding, while thy heavenly Father has been forsaken, and injured! Shall I desire to multiply the days of my poverty, my scandal, and my misery?" On this principle, surely, an immediate return to God should in all reason be chosen, rather than to play the fool any longer, and to go on a little more to displease God, and thereby to starve and to wound your own soul; even though your continuance in life were ever so certain, and your capacity to return to God and your duty ever so entirely in your own power now, and in every future moment, through scores of years yet to come.

§ 4. But who or what are you, that you should lay your account for years or for months to come? What is your life? Is it not even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away? And what is your security, or what is your peculiar warrant, that you should thus depend upon the certainty of its continuance? and that so absolutely, as to venture, as it were, to pawn your soul upon it? Why, you will perhaps say, "I am young, and in all my bloom and vigour, I see hundreds about me, who are more than double my age, and not a few of them, who seem to think it too soon to attend to religion yet."—You view the living, and you talk thus. But, I beseech you, think of the dead. Return in your thoughts to those graves in which you have left some of your young companions and your friends. You saw them awhile ago gay and active, warm with life, and hopes, and schemes. And some of them would have thought a friend strangely importunate, that should have interrupted them in their business and their pleasures, with a solemn lecture on death and eternity. Yet they were then on the very borders of both. You have since seen their corpses, or at least their coffins; and probably carried about with you the badges of mourning which you received at their funerals. Those once vigorous, and perhaps beautiful, bodies of theirs, now lie mouldering in the dust, as senseless and helpless as the most decrepid pieces of human nature, which fourscore years ever brought down to it. And what is infinitely more to be regarded, their souls, whether prepared for this great change, or thoughtless of it, have made their appearance before God, and are at this moment fixed either in heaven or in hell. Now let me seriously ask you, Would it be miraculous, or would it be strange, if such an event should befall you? How are you sure that some fatal disease should not this day begin to work in your veins? How are you sure that you shall ever be capable of reading or thinking any more, if you do not attend to what you now read, and pursue the thought which is now offering itself to your mind? This sudden alteration may at least possibly happen; and if it does, it will be to you a terrible one indeed. To be thus surprised into the presence of a

forgotten God, to be torn away, at once, from a world, to which your whole heart and soul has been rivetted, a world which has engrossed all your thoughts and cares, all your desires and pursuits, and be fixed in a state, which you never could be so far persuaded to think of, as to spend so much as one hour in serious preparation for it. How must you even shudder at the apprehension of it, and with what horror must it fill you! It seems matter of wonder, that, in such circumstances, you are not almost distracted with the thoughts of the uncertainty of life, and are not even ready to die for fear of death. To trifle with God any longer, after so solemn an admonition as this, would be a circumstance of additional provocation, which, after all the rest, might be fatal. Nor is there any thing you can expect in such a case, but that he should cut you off immediately, and teach other thoughtless creatures, by your ruin, what a hazardous experiment they make, when they act as you are acting.

§ 5. And will you, after all, run this desperate risk? For what imaginable purpose can you do it? Do you think the business of religion will become less necessary, or more easy, by your delay? You know that it will not. You know, that whatever the blessed God demands now, he will also demand twenty or thirty years hence, if you should live to see the time. God hath fixed this method, in which he will pardon and accept sinners in his gospel. And will he ever alter that method? Or if he will not, can men alter it? You like not to think of repenting, and humbling yourself before God, to receive righteousness and life from his free grace in Christ; and you above all dislike the thought of returning to God in the ways of holy obedience. But will he ever dispense with any of these, and publish a new gospel, with promises of life and salvation to impenitent, unbelieving sinners, if they will but call themselves Christians, and submit to a few external rites? How long do you think you might wait for such a change in the constitution of things? You know death will come upon you; and you cannot but know, in your own conscience, that a general dissolution will come upon the world, long before God can thus deny himself, and contradict all his perfections, and all his declarations.

§ 6. Or if his demands continue the same, as they assuredly will, do you think any thing which is now disagreeable to you in them, will be less disagreeable hereafter than it is at present? Shall you love to sin less, when it is become more habitual to you, and when conscience is yet more enfeebled and debauched? If you are running with the footmen and fainting, shall you be able to contend with the horsemen? Surely you cannot imagine it. You would not say, in any distemper which threatened your life, "I will stay till I grow a little worse, and then I will apply to a physician: I will let my disease get a little more footing in my vitals, and then I will try what can be done to remove it." No, it is only where the life of the soul is concerned that men think thus wildly; the life and health of the body appear too precious to be thus trifled away.

§ 7. If after such desperate experiments you are ever recovered, it must be by an operation of divine grace on your soul, yet more powerful and more wonderful, in proportion to the increasing inveteracy of your spiritual maladies. And can you expect that the Holy Spirit should be more ready to assist you, in consequence of your having so shamefully trifled with him and affronted him? He is now, in some measure, moving on your heart; if you feel any secret relentings in it upon what you read, it is a sign you are not yet utterly forsaken, but who can tell whether these are not the last touches he will ever give to a heart so long hardened against him? Who can tell but God may this day swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest? I have been telling you that you may immediately die. You own it is possible you may. And can you think of any thing more terrible? Yes, sinner, I will tell you of one thing more dreadful than immediate death and immediate damnation. The blessed God may say, "As for that wretched creature who has so long trifled with me, and provoked me, let him still live. Let him live in the midst of prosperity and plenty. Let him live under the purest and most powerful ordinances of the gospel too; that he may abuse them to aggravate his condemnation, and die under seven-fold guilt, and a seven-fold curse. I will not give him the grace to think of his ways for one serious moment more; but he shall go on from bad to worse, filling up the measure of his iniquities, till death and destruction seize him in an unexpected hour, and wrath come upon him to the uttermost."

§ 8. You think this an uncommon case; but I fear it is much otherwise. I fear there are few congregations where the word of God has been faithfully preached, and where it has been long despised, especially by those whom it had once awakened, in which the eye of God does not see a number of such wretched souls; though it is impossible for us to pronounce upon the case who they are.

§ 9. I pretend not to say how he will deal with you, oh reader! whether he will immediately cut you off, or seal you up under final hardness and impenitency of heart; or whether his grace may at length awaken you to consider your ways, and return to him, even when your heart is grown yet more obdurate than it is at present. For to his almighty grace nothing is hard, not even to transform a rock of marble into a man and a saint. But this I will confidently say, that if you delay any longer, the time will come when you will bitterly repent of that delay, and either lament it before God in the anguish

of your heart here, or curse your own folly and madness in hell; yea, when you will wish, that, dreadful as hell is, you had rather fallen into it sooner, than have lived in the midst of so many abused mercies, to render the degree of your punishment more insupportable, and your sense of it more exquisitely tormenting.

§ 10. I do therefore earnestly exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the worth, and, if I may so speak, by the blood, of your immortal and perishing soul, that you delay not a day or an hour longer. Far from giving sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids, in the continued neglect of this important concern, take with you even now words, and turn unto the Lord; and before you quit the place where you now are, fall upon your knees in his sacred presence, and pour out your heart in such language, or at least to such purpose, as this.

A Prayer for one who is tempted to delay applying to religion, though under some conviction of its importance.

"Oh thou righteous and holy Sovereign of heaven and earth! Thou God, in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways! I confess I have been far from glorifying thee, or conducting myself according to the intimations or the declarations of thy will. I have, therefore, reason to adore thy forbearance and goodness, that thou hast not long since stopped my breath, and cut me off from the land of the living. I adore thy patience, that I have not months and years ago been an inhabitant of hell; where ten thousand delaying sinners are now lamenting their folly, and will be lamenting it for ever. But, O God, how possible is it that this trifling heart of mine may at length betray me into the same ruin! And then, alas, into a ruin aggravated by all this patience and forbearance of thine! I am convinced that, sooner or later, religion must be my serious care, or I am undone. And yet my foolish heart draws back from the yoke. Yet I stretch myself upon the bed of sloth, and cry out for a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep. Thus does my corrupt heart plead for its own indulgence, against the conviction of my better judgment. What shall I say? O Lord, save me from myself! Save me from the artifices and deceitfulness of sin! Save me from the treachery of this perverse and degenerate nature of mine, and fix upon my mind what I have now been reading!

"O Lord, I am not now instructed in truths which were before quite unknown. Often have I been warned of the uncertainty of life, and of the greater uncertainty of the day of salvation; and I have formed some light purposes, and have begun to take a few irresolute steps in my way towards a return to thee. But, alas! I have been only, as it were, fluttering about religion, and have never fixed upon it. All my resolutions have been scattered like smoke, or dispersed like a cloudy vapour before the wind. O that thou wouldst now bring these things home to my heart, with a more powerful conviction than it hath ever yet felt! O that thou wouldst pursue me with them, even when I flee from them, if I should ever grow mad enough to endeavour to escape them any more! May thy Spirit address me in the language of effectual terror, and add all the most powerful methods which thou knowest to be necessary, to awaken me from this lethargy, which must otherwise be mortal! May the sound of these things be in mine ears, when I go out, and when I come in, when I lie down, and when I rise up! And if the repose of the night, and the business of the day, be for a while interrupted by the impression, be it so, O God! if I may but thereby carry on my business with thee to better purpose, and at length secure a repose in thee, instead of all that terror which I now find, when I think upon God, and am troubled.

"O Lord, my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments; I am afraid, lest even now that I have begun to think of religion, thou shouldst cut me off in this critical and important moment, before my thoughts grow to any ripeness, and blast in eternal death the first buddings and openings of it in my mind. But O spare me, I earnestly entreat thee; for thy mercy's sake, spare me a little longer! It may be, through thy grace, I shall return. It may be, if thou continuest thy patience towards me a while longer, there may be some better fruit produced by this cumberer of the ground. And may the remembrance of that long forbearance which thou hast already exercised towards me, prevent my continuing to trifle with thee and with my own soul! From this day, O Lord, from this hour, from this moment, may I be able to date more lasting impressions of religion, than have ever yet been made upon my heart, by all that I have ever read, or all that I have heard! Amen."

CHAP. IV.

The sinner arraigned and convicted.

Conviction urged. § 1. Various pretences for delay considered. § 2. Whether [illegible] Christ. § 3. Whether [illegible] Gospel. § 4. [illegible] § 5. An appeal to the reader's [illegible] § 6. Objection answered. § 7. That to have [illegible] § 8. [illegible] § 9. [illegible] by a mere profession. § 10. [illegible] guilt, [illegible] § 11. [illegible] § 12. [illegible] [illegible] § 13. [illegible] § 14. [illegible] § 15. [illegible] § 16. [illegible] § 17. [illegible] § 18. [illegible] § 19. [illegible] § 20. [illegible] § 21. [illegible] § 22. [illegible] § 23. [illegible] § 24. [illegible] § 25. [illegible] § 26. [illegible] § 27. [illegible] § 28. [illegible] § 29. [illegible] § 30. [illegible] § 31. [illegible] § 32. [illegible] § 33. [illegible] § 34. [illegible] § 35. [illegible] § 36. [illegible] § 37. [illegible] § 38. [illegible] § 39. [illegible] § 40. [illegible] § 41. [illegible] § 42. [illegible] § 43. [illegible] § 44. [illegible] § 45. [illegible] § 46. 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§ 1. As I am attempting to lead you to true religion, and not merely to some superficial form of it

I am sensible I can do it no otherwise than in the way of deep humiliation. And therefore supposing you are persuaded through the divine blessing on what you have before read, to take it into consideration, I would now endeavour, in the first place, with all the seriousness I can, to make you heartily sensible of your guilt before God. For I well know, that unless you are convinced of this, and affected with the conviction, all the promissions of gospel grace will be slighted, and your soul infallibly destroyed in the midst of the noblest means appointed for its recovery. I am fully persuaded that thousands live and die in a course of sin without feeling upon their hearts any real fear that they are sinners; though they cannot for shame but own it in words. And therefore let me deal faithfully with you, though I may seem to deal roughly; for complaisance is not to give law to sobriety in which the life of your soul is concerned.

§ 2. Permit me therefore, O sinner, to consider myself at this time as an advocate of God's, as one employed in his name, to plead against thee, and to charge thee with nothing less than being a rebel and a traitor against the sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth. However thou mayst be ennobled or distinguished among men; if the noblest blood run in thy veins; if thy seat were among princes, and thy arm were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living; it would be necessary thou shouldst be told, and told plainly, thou hast broken the laws of the King of kings, and by the breach of it art become obnoxious to his righteous condemnation.

§ 3. Your conscience tells you, that you were born the natural subject of God; born under the indispensable obligations of his law. For it is most apparent, that the constitution of your rational nature, which makes you capable of receiving law from God, binds you to obey it. And it is equally evident and certain that you have not exactly obeyed this law; nay, that you have violated it in many aggravated instances.

§ 4. Will you dare to deny this? Will you dare to assert your innocence? Remember it must be complete innocence: yes, and a perfect righteousness too; or it can stand you in no stead, further than to prove, that though a condemned sinner, you are not quite so criminal as some others, and will not have quite so hot a place in hell as they. And when this is considered, will you plead Not guilty to the charge? Search the records of your own conscience; for God searcheth them; ask it seriously, "Have you never in your life sinned against God?" Solomon declared that in his days There was not a just man upon earth, who did good, and sinned not; and the apostle Paul, That all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God; that both Jews and Gentiles (which you know comprehended the whole human race) were all under sin. And can you pretend any imaginable reason to believe the world is grown so much better since their days that any should now plead their own case as an exception? Or will you, however, presume to arise in the face of the omniscient Majesty of heaven, and say, I am the man?

§ 5. Supposing, as before, you have been free from those gross acts of immorality which are so pernicious to society, that they have generally been punishable by human laws, can you pretend that you have not, in smaller instances, violated the rules of piety, of temperance, and of charity? Is there any one person who has intimately known you, that would not be able to testify you had said or done something amiss? Or if others could not convict you, would not your own heart do it? Does it not prove you guilty of pride, of passion, of sensuality; of an excessive fondness for the world and its enjoyments; of murmuring, or at least of secretly repining, against God, under the strokes of his afflicting providence; of mispending a great deal of your time; of abusing the gifts of God's bounty, to vain, if not (in some instances) to pernicious, purposes; of mocking him when you have pretended to engage in his worship, drawing near to him with your mouth and your lips, while your heart has been far from him? Does not conscience condemn you of some one breach of the law, at least? And by one breach of it you are in a sense, a scriptural sense, become guilty of all; and are as incapable of being justified before God by any obedience of your own, as if you had committed ten thousand offences. But, in reality, there are ten thousand and more chargeable to your account. When you come to reflect on all your sins of negligence, as well as on those of commission; on all the instances in which you have failed to do good when it was in the power of your hand to do it; on all the instances in which acts of devotion have been omitted, especially in secret; and on all those cases in which you have shown a stupid disregard to the honour of God, and to the temporal and eternal happiness of your fellow-creatures; when all these, I say, are reviewed, the number will swell beyond all possibility of account, and force you to cry out, Mine iniquities are more than the hairs of my head. They will appear in such a light before you, that your own heart will charge you with countless multitudes; and how much more then that God, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things.

§ 6. And say, sinner, is it a little thing that you have presumed to set light by the authority of the God of heaven, and to violate his law, if it had been by mere carelessness and inattention? How much more heinous, therefore, is the guilt, when in so many instances you have done it knowingly and

wilfully! Give me leave seriously to ask you, and let me entreat you to ask your own soul, against whom hast thou magnified thyself? Against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, or lifted up thy rebellious hand? On whose law, O sinner, hast thou presumed to trample? And whose friendship, and whose enmity, hast thou thereby dared to affront? Is it a man like thyself that thou hast insulted? Is it only a temporal monarch? Only one who can kill thy body, and then hath no more than he can do? Nay, sinner, thou wouldst not have dared to treat a temporal prince as thou hast treated the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. No price could have hired thee to deal by the majesty of an earthly sovereign, as thou hast dealt by that God before whom the cherubim and seraphim are continually bowing. Not one opposing or complaining, disputing or murmuring, word is heard among all the celestial legions, when the intimations of his will are published to them. And who art thou, O wretched man, who art thou, that thou shouldst oppose him? That thou shouldst oppose and provoke a God of infinite power and terror, who needs but exert one single act of his sovereign will, and thou art in a moment stripped of every possession; cut off from every hope; destroyed and rooted up from existence, if that were his pleasure; or, what is inconceivably worse, consigned over to the severest and most lasting agonies? Yet, this is the God whom thou hast offended; whom thou hast affronted to his face, presuming to violate his express laws in his very presence. This is the God before whom thou standest as a convicted criminal; convicted not of one or two particular offences, but of thousands and ten thousands; of a course and series of rebellions and provocations, in which thou hast persisted, more or less, ever since thou wast born; and the particulars of which have been attended with almost every conceivable circumstance of aggravation. Reflect on particulars, and deny the charge if you can.

§ 7. If knowledge be an aggravation of guilt, thy guilt, O sinner, is greatly aggravated! For thou wast born in Emanuel's land, and God hath written to thee the great things of his law, yet thou hast accounted them as a strange thing. Thou hast known to do good, and hast not done it: and therefore to thee the omission of it has been sin indeed. Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? Wast thou not early taught the will of God, in thine infant years? Hast thou not since received repeated lessons, by which it has been inculcated again and again, in public and in private, by preaching and reading the word of God? Nay, hath not thy duty been in some instances so plain, that even without any instruction at all, thy own reason might easily have inferred it? And hast thou not also been warned of the consequences of disobedience? Hast thou not known the righteous judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death? Yet thou hast, perhaps, not only done the same, but hast taken pleasure in those that do them; hast chosen them for thy most intimate friends and companions; so as thereby to strengthen, by the force of example and converse, the hands of each other in your iniquities.

§ 8. Nay more, if divine love and grace [illegible] aggravation of the sins committed against it, thy crimes, O sinner, are heinously aggravated. Must thou not acknowledge it, O foolish creature, and unwise? Hast thou not been nourished and brought up by him as his child, and yet hast rebelled against him? Did not God take you out of the womb? Did he not watch over you in your infant days, and guard you from a multitude of dangers, which the most careful parent or nurse could not have observed or warded off? Has he not given you your rational powers? and is it not by him you have been favoured with every opportunity of improving them? Has he not every day supplied your wants with an unwearied liberality; and added, with respect to many who will read this, the delicacies of life to its necessary supports? Has he not heard your cry, when trouble came upon you, and frequently appeared for your deliverance, when in the distress [illegible] you have called upon him for help? Has he not rescued you from ruin, when it seemed just ready to swallow you up; and healed your diseases, when it seemed to all about you, that the residue of your days was cut off in the midst? Or if it had not been so, is not this long continued and uninterrupted health, which you have enjoyed for so many years, to be acknowledged as an equivalent obligation? Look round upon all your possessions, and say what one thing have you in the world, which his goodness did not give you, and which it hath not thus far preserved to you? Add to all this, the kind notices of his will, which he hath sent you; the tender expostulations which he hath used with you, to bring you to a wiser and better temper, and the discoveries and gracious invitations of his gospel, which you have heard, and which you have despised; and then say, whether your rebellion has not been aggravated by the vilest ingratitude, and whether that aggravation can be accounted small!

§ 9. Again, if it be any aggravation of sin to be committed against conscience, thy crimes, O sinner, have been so aggravated. Consult the records of it; and then dispute the fact, if you can. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding; and that understanding will act, and a secret conviction of being accountable to its Maker and Preserver is inseparable from the workings of it. It is easy to [illegible] remonstrances, and to give things false colourings before men; but the heart [illegible]

longing excuses. Have you not often found it so? Has not conscience remonstrated against your past conduct, and have not those remonstrances been very painful to you? I have been assured by a gentleman of undoubted credit, that when he was in the prime of all the gayest accomplishments of life, and was reckoned one of the happiest of mankind to his sense, he once came into the room where he was among his merry companions, and has grieved inwardly, and said, 'Oh that I had been that dog!' And did thou, sinner, felt nothing like this? Has thy conscience been so disquieted, so seared with a hot iron, that it has never cried out of any of the wickedness which have been done it? Has it never warned thee of the fatal consequences of what thou hast done in opposition to it? These warnings are, in effect, the voice of God, they are the admonitions which he gave thee by his vicegerent in thy breast. And when his sentence for thy evil works is executed upon thee in everlasting death, thou shalt hear that voice speaking to thee again, in a louder tone, and a severer accent, than before: and then shalt be tormented with its upbraidings through eternity, because thou wouldst not, in time, hearken to its admonitions.

§ 10. Let me add further, if it be any aggravation that sin has been committed after God has been moving by his Spirit on the mind, surely your sin has been attended with that aggravation too. Under the Mosaic dispensation, dark and imperfect as it was, the Spirit strove with the Jews else Stephen could not have charged it upon them, that through all their generations they had always resisted him. Now surely we may much more reasonably apprehend, that he strives with sinners under the gospel. And have you never experienced any thing of this kind, even when there has been no external circumstance to awaken you, nor any pious teacher near you? Have you never perceived some secret impulse upon your mind, leading you to think of religion, urging you to an immediate consideration of it, sweetly inviting you to make trial of it, and warning you that you would lament this stupid neglect? O sinner, why were not these happy motions attended to? Why did you not, as it were, spread out all the sails of your soul, to catch that heavenly, that favourable breeze? But you have carelessly neglected it, you have even borne them kind reproaches, how reasonably, how might the sentence have gone forth in righteous displeasure, My Spirit shall no more strive! And indeed who can say that it is not already gone forth? If you feel no secret agitations of mind, no remorse, no awakening, while you read such a remonstrance as this, there will be room great room, to suspect it.

§ 11. There is indeed one aggravation more, which may not attend your guilt. I mean that of having committed against solemn covenant engagements. A circumstance which has lain heavy on the consciences of many who perhaps in the main series of their lives have served God with great integrity. But let me call you to think, to what is this owing? Is it not that you have never personally made any solemn profession of devoting yourself to God at all? have never done any thing, which has appeared to your own apprehension an action by which you made a covenant with him; though you have heard so much of his covenant, though you have been so solemnly and so tenderly invited into it! And in this view how monstrous must the circumstance appear, which at first was mentioned as some alleviation of guilt! Yet I must add, that you are not perhaps altogether so free from guilt on this head as you may at first imagine. I will not insist on the covenant which your parents made in your name, when they devoted you to God in baptism; though it is really a weighty matter, and by calling yourself a Christian you have professed to own and avow what they then did. But I would remind you of what may have been more personal and express. Has your heart been, even from your youth, hardened to so uncommon a degree, that you have never cried to God in any season of danger and distress? And did you never mingle vows with those cries? Did you never promise, that if God would hear and help you in that hour of extremity, you would forsake your sins, and serve him as long as you lived? He heard and helped you, or you had not been reading these lines; and by such deliverance did, as it were, bind down your vows upon you; and therefore your guilt, in the violation of them, remains before him, though you are stupid enough to forget them. Nothing is forgotten, nothing is overlooked, by him; and the day will come when the record shall be laid before you too.

§ 12. And now, O sinner, think seriously with thyself, what defence thou wilt make to all this! Prepare thine apology; call thy witnesses; make thy appeal, from him whom thou hast thus offended, to some superior judge, if such there be. Alas, those apologies are so weak and vain, that one of thy fellow-worms may easily detect and confound them, as I will endeavour presently to show thee. But thy foreboding conscience already knows the issue. Thou art convicted; convicted of the most aggravated offences. Thou hast not humbled thy heart, but lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and thy sentence shall come forth from his presence. Thou hast violated his known law. Thou hast despised and abused his unbidden kindness; thou hast affronted conscience, his vicegerent in thy soul; thou hast resisted and grieved his Spirit. Thou hast trifled with him in all thy pretended solemnities; and in one word, and that his own, thou hast done evil things as thou couldst. Thou canst

are, no doubt, already in hell, whose guilt never equalled thine; and it is astonishing that God has spared thee to read this representation of thy case, or to make any pause upon it. O waste not so precious a moment, but enter, as attentively and humbly as thou canst, into those reflections, which suit a case so lamentable and so terrible as thine!

The Confession of a sinner concerned in general of his guilt.

"O God! thou injured Sovereign, thou all penetrating and Almighty Judge! What shall I say to this charge? Shall I pretend I am wronged by it, and stand on the defence in thy presence? I dare not do it; for thou knowest my foolishness, and none of my sins are hid from thee. My conscience tells me, that a denial of my crimes would only increase them, and add new fuel to the fire of thy deserved wrath. If I justify myself, mine own mouth will condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it will also prove me perverse. For innumerable evils have compassed me about. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. They are, as I have been told in thy name, more than the hairs of my head, and therefore my heart faileth me. I am more guilty than is possible for another to declare or represent. My heart speaks more than any other accuser. And thou, O Lord, art much greater than my heart, and knowest all things.

"What has my life been, but a course of rebellion against thee? It is not this or that particular action alone I have to lament. Nothing has been right in its principles, views, and ends. My whole soul has been disordered. All my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pursuits, have been wretchedly alienated from thee. I have acted as if I had hated thee, who art infinitely the loveliest of all beings; as if I had been contriving how I might tempt thee to the uttermost, and wear out thy patience, marvellous as it is. My actions have been evil; my words yet more evil than they; and, O blessed God, my heart, how much more corrupt than either! What an inexhausted fountain of sin has there been in it! A fountain of original corruption, which mingled its bitter streams with the days of early childhood; and which, alas, flows on even to this very day, beyond what actions or words could express. I see this to have been the case, with regard to what I can particularly survey. But oh, how many months and years have I forgotten! concerning which I only know this, in the general, that they are much like those I can remember; except it be, that I have been growing worse and worse, and provoking thy patience more and more, though every new exercise of it was more and more wonderful.

"And how am I astonished, that thy forbearance is still continued! It is because thou art God, and not man. Had I, a sinful worm, been thus injured, I could not have endured it. Had I been a prince, I had long since done justice on any rebel, whose crimes had borne but a distant resemblance to mine. Had I been a parent, I had long since cast off the ungrateful child who had made me such a return, as I have all my life long been making to thee, O thou Father of my spirit! The flame of natural affection would have been extinguished, and the sight and his very name, would have become hateful to me. Why then, O Lord, am I not cast out from thy presence? Why am I not sealed up under the irreversible sentence of destruction? That I live, I owe to thine indulgence. But oh, if there be yet any way of deliverance, if there be yet any hope for so guilty a creature, may it be opened upon me by thy gospel and thy grace! And if any further alarm, humiliation, and terror, be necessary to my security and salvation, may I meet them, and bear them all! Wound mine heart, O Lord, so that thou wilt but afterwards heal it; and break it in pieces, if thou wilt but at length condescend to bind up!"

CHAP. V.

The [illegible]

§ 1. My last discourse left the sinner in a very alarming and a very pitiable circumstance, a criminal convicted at the bar of God, disarmed of all pretences to perfect innocence and sinless obedience, and consequently obnoxious to the sentence of a holy law, which can make no allowance for any transgression, no, not for the least; but pronounces death, and a curse, against every act of disobedience: how much more, then, against those [illegible] O sinner, thy [illegible] thee before God! I would hope some of my readers will ingenuously fall under the conviction, and not think of making any apology: for sure I am, that [illegible] decent, and, all things considered, the most prudent, thing that can be done in such an unhappy circumstance. Yet I know the [illegible] of a sinful and corrupted heart: I know what excuses it makes, and [illegible] refuge, it flies to another, to fortify itself against con-

vation, and to persuade, not merely another, but itself, "That it has been in some instances to blame, it is not to be crimined as was represented. That there are, at least, considerations that plead in its favour, which, if they cannot justify, will in some degree excuse." A secret reserve of this kind, sometimes perhaps scarce formed into a distinct reflection, hinders the force of conviction, and often prevents that deep humiliation before God, which is the happiest token of approaching deliverance. I will, therefore, examine into some of these particulars, and for that purpose would seriously ask thee, O sinner, What thou hast to offer in arrest of judgment? What plea thou canst urge for thyself, why the sentence of God should not go forth against thee, and why thou shouldst not fall into the hands of his justice?

§ 2. But this I premise, that the question is not, how thou wouldst answer to me, a weak sinful worm like thyself, who am shortly to stand with thee at the same bar, (the Lord grant that I may find mercy of the Lord in that day!) but what will thou reply to thy judge? What couldst thou plead if thou wast now actually before his tribunal? where, to multiply vain words, and to frame idle apologies, would be but to increase thy guilt and provocation? Surely the very thoughts of his presence, must supersede a thousand of those trifling excuses, which now sometimes impose on a generation that are pure in their own eyes, though they are not washed from their filthiness; or while they are conscious of their own impurities, trust in words that cannot profit, and lean upon broken reeds.

§ 3. You will not, to be sure, in such a circumstance, plead, "that you are descended from pious parents." That was indeed your privilege, and woe be to you that you have abused it, and forsaken the God of your fathers. Ishmael was immediately descended from Abraham, the friend of God; and Esau was the son of Isaac, who was born according to the promise. Yet, you know, they were both cut off from the blessing, to which they apprehended they had a kind of hereditary claim. You may remember, that our Lord does not only speak of one who could call Abraham father, who was circumcised in flames, but expressly declares that many of the children of the kingdom shall be shut out of it; and when others come from the most distant parts to sit down in it, shall be distinguished from their companions in misery only by louder accents of lamentation, and more furious gnashing of teeth.

§ 4. Nor will you then presume to plead, "that you had exercised your thoughts about the speculative part of religion." For to what end can this serve, but to increase your condemnation? Since you have broken God's law, since you have contradicted the most obvious and apparent obligations of religion, to have inquired into it, and argued upon it, is a circumstance that passes your guilt more heinous. What! did you think religion was merely an exercise of men's wit, and the amusement of their curiosity? If you argued about it, on the principles of common sense, you must have judged and proved it to be a practical thing: and if it was so, why did you not practise accordingly? You knew the particular branches of it, and why then did you not attend to every one of them? To have pleaded an unavoidable ignorance, would have been the happiest plea that could have remained for you; nay, an actual, though faulty, ignorance, would have been some little allay of your guilt. But if, by your own confession, you have known your Master's will, and have not done it, you bear witness against yourself, that you deserve to be beaten with many stripes.

§ 5. Nor yet again will it suffice to say, "that you have had right notions, both of the doctrines and the precepts of religion." Your advantage for practising it was therefore the greater; but understanding, and acting, might can never go for the same thing, in the judgment of God or of man. In believing there is one God, you have done well; but the devils also believe and tremble. In acknowledging Christ to be the Son of God, and the Holy One, you have done well too; but you know the unclean spirits made this very orthodox confession, and yet they are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. And will you place any secret confidence in that, which might be pleaded by the infernal spirits, as well as by you?

§ 6. But perhaps you may think of pleading "that you have actually done something in religion." Having judged what faith was the soundest, and what worship the purest, "you entered yourself into those societies, where such articles of faith were professed, and such forms of worship were practised; and among those you have signalized yourself, by the exactness of your attendance, by the zeal with which you have espoused their cause, and by the earnestness with which you have contended for such principles and practices." O sinner, I much fear that this zeal of thine, about the circumstantials of religion, will swell thy account, rather than be allowed in abatement of it. He that searches thy heart, knows from whence it arose, and how far it extended. Perhaps he sees that it was all hypocrisy; an artful veil, under which thou wast carrying on thy mean designs for this world, while the sacred names of God and religion were profaned and prostituted in the basest manner: and if so, thou art cursed with a distinguished curse, for so clearing an insult on the divine omniscience, as well as justice. Or perhaps, the earnestness with which you have been contending for the faith

and worship, which was once delivered to the saints, or which it is possible you may have rashly concluded to be that, might be mere pride and bitterness of spirit: and all the zeal you have expressed might possibly arise from a confidence of your own judgment, from an impatience of contradiction, or some secret malignity of spirit, which delighted itself in condemning, and even in worrying, others: yea, which (if I may be allowed the expression) fiercely preyed upon religion, as the tiger upon the lamb, to turn it into a nature most contrary to its own. And shall this screen you before the great tribunal? Shall it not rather awaken the displeasure it is pleaded to avert?

§ 7. But say, that this zeal for notions and forms has been ever so well intended, and so far as it has gone, ever so well conducted too; what will that avail towards vindicating thee in so many instances of negligence and disobedience, as are recorded against thee in the book of God's remembrance? Were the revealed doctrines of the gospel to be earnestly maintained, (as indeed they ought,) and was the great practical purpose for which they were revealed to be forgot? was the very mint, and anise, and cummin to be tithed, and were the weightier matters of the law to be omitted; even that love to God, which is its first and great command? Oh, how will thou be able to vindicate even the justest sentence thou hast passed on others, for their infidelity, or for their disobedience, without being condemned out of thy own mouth?

§ 8. Will you then plead "your fair moral character, your works of righteousness and of mercy?" Had your obedience to the law of God been complete, the plea might be allowed as important and valid. But I have supposed and proved above, that conscience testifies to the contrary, and you will not now dare to contradict it. I add further, had these works of yours, which you now urge, proceeded from a sincere love to God, and a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you would not have thought of pleading them, any otherwise than as an evidence of your interest in the gospel covenant, and in the blessings of it, procured by the righteousness and blood of the Redeemer. And that faith, had it been sincere, would have been attended with such deep humility, and with such solemn apprehensions of the divine holiness and glory, that instead of pleading any works of your own before God, you would rather have implored his pardon for the mixture of sinful imperfection attending the very best of them. Now, as you are a stranger to this humbling and sanctifying principle, (which here, in this address, I suppose my reader to be,) it is absolutely necessary you should be plainly and faithfully told, that neither sobriety, nor honesty, nor humanity, will justify you before the tribunal of God, when he lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and examines all your actions and all your thoughts with the strictest severity. You have not been a drunkard, an adulterer, or a robber. So far it is well. You stand before a righteous God, who will do you ample justice, and therefore will not condemn you for drunkenness, adultery, or robbery. But you have forgotten him, your Parent and your Benefactor; you have cast off fear, and restrained prayer before him; you have despised the blood of his Son, and all the immortal blessings that he purchased with it. For this, therefore, you are judged and condemned. And as for any thing that has looked like virtue and humanity in your temper and conduct, the exercise of it has in a great measure been its own reward, if there were any thing more than form and artifice in it; and the various bounties of Divine Providence to you amidst all the numberless provocations, have been a thousand times more than an equivalent for such defective and imperfect virtues as these. You remain, therefore, chargeable with the guilt of a thousand offences, for which you have no excuse; though there are some other instances in which you did not grossly offend. And those good works in which you have been so ready to trust, will no more vindicate you in his awful presence, than a man's kindness to his poor neighbours would be allowed as a plea in arrest of judgment, when he stood convicted of high treason against his prince.

§ 9. But you will perhaps be ready to say, "You did not expect all this; you did not think the consequences of neglecting religion would have been so fatal." And why did you not think it? Why did you not examine more attentively, and more impartially? Why did you suffer the pride and folly of your vain heart to take up with such superficial appearances, and trust the light suggestions of your own prejudiced mind against the express declaration of the word of God? Had you reflected on his character as the Supreme Governor of the world, you would have seen the necessity of such a day of retribution as we are now referring to. Had you regarded the Scripture, the divine authority of which you professed to believe, every page might have taught you to expect it. "You did not think of religion:" and of what were you thinking when you forgot or neglected it? Had you too much employment of another kind? Of what kind, I beseech you? What end could you propose by any thing else of equal moment? Nay, with all your engagements, conscience will tell you, that there have been seasons, when for want of thought, time and life have been a burthen to you: yet you guarded against thought as an enemy, and cast up (as it were) an intrenchment of inconsideration around you on every side, as if it had been to defend you from the most dangerous invasion. God knew you were thoughtless, and therefore he sent you line upon line, and precept upon

precept, in such plain language that it needed no genius or study to understand it. He tried you with afflictions, as well as with mercies, to awaken you out of your fatal lethargy; and yet, once awakened, you would be down again upon the bed of sloth. And now, pleasing as your dreams might be, you must be down in earnest. Repentance has at last overtaken you, and must be heard as a tormentor, since it might not be heard as a friend.

§ 10. But some may perhaps suppose that an important apology is yet unheard, and that there may be room to say "you were, by the necessity of your nature, impelled to those things, which are now charged upon you as crimes; whereas it was not in your power to have avoided them, in the circumstances in which you are placed." If this will do any thing, it indeed promises to do much; so much that it will amount to nothing. If I were disposed to answer you upon the folly and madness of your own principles, I might say, that the same consideration, which proves it was necessary for you to offend, proves also that it is necessary for God to punish you; and that indeed he cannot but do it: and I might further say, with an excellent writer of our own age, "that the same principles which destroy the injustice of sins, destroy the injustice of punishment too." But if you cannot admit this, if you should still reply, in spite of principle, that it must be unjust to punish you for an action utterly and absolutely unavoidable, I really think you would answer right. But in that answer you would contradict your own scheme, (as I observed above,) and I leave your own conscience to judge, what sort of a scheme that must be, which would make all kind of punishment unjust: for the argument will on the whole be the same, whether with regard to human punishment or divine. It is a scheme full of confusion and horror. You would not, I am sure, take it from a servant who had robbed you, and then fired your house: you would never inwardly believe, that he could not have helped it; or think, that he had fairly excused himself by such a plea. And I am persuaded, you would be so far from presuming to offer it to God at the great day, that you would not venture to turn it into a prayer even now. Imagine that you saw a malefactor dying with such words as these in his mouth: "O God, it is true, I did indeed rob and murder my fellow-creatures: but thou knowest, that, as my circumstances were ordered, I could not do otherwise; my will was irresistibly determined by the motives which thou didst set before me; and I could as well have shaken the foundations of the earth, or darkened the sun in the firmament, as have resisted the impulse which bore me on." I put it to your conscience, whether you would not look on such a speech as this with detestation, as one enormity added to another. Yet if the excuse would have any weight in your mouth, it would have equal weight in his; or would be equally applicable to any the most shocking occasion. But indeed it is so contrary to the plainest principles of common reason, that I can hardly persuade myself any one could seriously and thoroughly believe it; and should misspend my time very ill employed here, if I were to set myself to combat those pretences to argument, by which the sentiousness of human wit has attempted to varnish it over.

§ 11. You see then, on the whole, the vanity of all your pleas, and how easily the most plausible of them might be silenced, by a mortal man like yourself! How much more then by him, who searches all hearts, and can, in a moment, flash in upon the conscience a most powerful and irresistible conviction! What then can you do, while you stand convicted in the presence of God! What should you do, but hold your peace under an inward sense of your inexcusable guilt, and prepare yourself to hear the sentence, which his law pronounces against you? You must feel the execution of it, if the gospel does not at length deliver you, and you must feel something of the terror of it, before you can be excited to seek to that gospel for deliverance.

The Meditation of a convicted sinner, giving up his own pleas before God

"DEPLORABLE condition, to which I am indeed reduced! I have sinned; and what shall I say unto thee, O thou Preserver of men! What shall I dare to say! Fond that I was, to entertain myself with such trifling excuses as these, and to imagine they could have any weight in thy tremendous presence; or that I should be able so much as to mention them there! I cannot presume to do it. I am silent and confounded. My hopes, alas, are slain, and my soul itself is ready to die too, so far as an immortal soul can die; and I am almost ready to say, O that it could die entirely! I am indeed a criminal in the hand of justice, quite disarmed, and stripped of the weapons in which I trusted. Dissimulation can only add provocation to provocation; I will therefore plainly and freely own it. I have acted as if I thought God was altogether such a one as myself. But he hath said, I will reprove thee; I will set thy sins in order before thine eyes, will marshal them in battle array. And oh, what a terrible kind of host do they appear! and how do they surround me beyond all possibility of an escape! O my soul, they have, as it were, taken thee prisoner; and they are bearing thee away to the divine tribunal!

"Thou must appear before it. Thou must see the awful eternal Judge, who tries the very reins; and who needs no other evidence, for he has himself been witness to all thy rebellion. Thou must see

him, O my soul, sitting in judgment upon thee! And when he is strict to mark iniquity, how wilt thou answer him for one of a thousand? And if thou canst not answer him, in what language will he speak to thee? Lord, as things at present stand, I can expect no other language than that of condemnation. And what a condemnation it is! Let me reflect upon it. Let me read my sentence before I hear it finally and irreversibly passed. I know he has recorded it in his word; and I know, in the general, that the representation of it is made with a gracious design. I know that he would have us alarmed, that we may not be destroyed. Speak to me, therefore, O God, while thou speakest not for the last time, and in circumstances when thou wilt hear me no more. Speak in the language of effectual terror, so that it be not to speak me into final despair. And let thy word, however painful in its operations, be quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Let me not vainly flatter myself: let me not be left a wretched prey to those who would prophesy smooth things to me, till I am sealed up under wrath, and feel thy justice piercing my soul, and the poison of thine arrows drinking up all my spirits.

"Before I enter upon the particular view, I know, in the general, that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. O thou living God, in one sense I am already fallen into thine hands. I am become obnoxious to thy displeasure, justly obnoxious to it; and whatever thy sentence may be, when it comes forth from thy presence, I must condemn myself, and justify thee. Thou canst not treat me with more severity than mine iniquities have deserved. And how bitter soever that cup of trembling may be, which thou shalt appoint for me, I give judgment against myself, that I deserve to wring out the very dregs of it."

CHAP. VI.

The sinner sentenced.

The Sinner called upon to hear his sentence. § 1–2. God's law does now in general pronounce a curse. § 3. It pronounces death. § 4. And hence eternal misery. § 5. The final sentence shall confirm. § 6. The solemnity of that grand transaction. § 7. Its awful representations of it. § 7, 8. Why a particular consideration of the sentence. Depart, accursed. &c. § 9. The punishment of sense, and immediately follows. § 10. The sinner, second to pronounce it, endeavoring it. § 11. The reflection of a condemned with the hearing of this sentence.

§ 1. HEAR, O sinner, and I will speak yet once more, as in the name of God, of God thine Almighty Judge; who if thou dost not attend to his servants, will ere long speak unto thee in a more immediate manner, with an energy and terror which thou shalt not be able to resist.

§ 2. Thou hast been convicted, as in his presence. Thy pleas have been overruled; or rather, they have been silenced. It appears before God, it appears to thine own conscience, that thou hast nothing more to offer in arrest of judgment; therefore hear thy sentence, and summon up, if thou canst, all the powers of thy soul to bear the execution of it. It is indeed a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment; but he that now judgeth thee is the Lord. Hear therefore, and tremble, while I tell thee how he will speak to thee; or rather, while I show thee, from express Scripture, how he doth even now speak, and what is the authentic and recorded sentence of his word; even of his word, who hath said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one tittle of my word shall ever pass away.

§ 3. The law of God speaks, not to thee alone, O sinner, not to thee by any particular address; but in a most universal language, it speaks to all transgressors, and levels its terrors against all offences, great or small, without any exception. And this is its language: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. This is its voice to the whole world; and this it speaks to thee. Its awful contents are thy personal concern, O reader; and thy conscience knows it. Far from continuing in all things that are written therein to do them, thou canst not but be sensible that innumerable evils have encompassed thee about. It is then manifest, thou art the man whom it condemns. Thou art even now cursed with a curse, as God emphatically speaks, with the curse of the most high God. Yea, all the curses which are written in the book of the law are pointed against thee. God may righteously execute any of them upon thee in a moment: and though thou at present feelest none of them, yet, if infinite mercy doth not prevent, it is but a little while, and they will come into thy bowels like water, till thou art burst asunder with them, and shall penetrate like oil into thy bones.

§ 4. Thus saith the Lord, the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But thou hast sinned, and therefore thou art under a sentence of death. And, O unhappy creature, of what a death! What will the end of these things be! That the agonies of dissolving nature shall seize thee; that thy soul shall be torn away from thy languishing body, and thou return to the dust from whence thou wast taken. This is indeed one awful effect of sin. In these affecting characters has God, through all nations and all ages of men, written the awful register and memorial of his holy abhorrence of it, and righteous displeasure against it. But alas, all this solemn pomp and horror of dying is but the opening of the dreadful scene. It is but a rough kind of stroke, by which the fetters are knocked off, when the criminal is led out to torture and execution.

§ 5. Thus saith the Lord, the wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God. Though there be whole nations of them, their

multitudes and their power shall be no defence to them. They shall be driven into hell together into that flaming prison, which divine vengeance hath prepared, into Tophet, which is ordained of old, even for royal sinners as well as for others, as little can any human distinction protect! He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it; and the flaming torrent shall flow in upon it so fast, that it shall be turned into a sea of liquid fire; or, as the Scripture also expresses it, a lake burning with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. This is the second death; and the death to which thou, O sinner, by the word of God art doomed.

§ 6. And shall this sentence stand upon record in vain? Shall the law speak it, and the gospel speak it, and shall it never be pronounced more audibly? And will God never require and execute the punishment? He will, O sinner, require it, and he will execute it, though he may seem for a while to delay. For well dost thou know, that he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the whole world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given us assurance in having raised him from the dead. And when God judgeth the world, O reader, whoever thou art, he will judge thee. And while I remind thee of it, I would also remember that he will judge me. And knowing the terror of the Lord, that I may deliver my own soul, I would with all plainness and sincerity labour to deliver thine.

§ 7. I therefore repeat the solemn warning: Thou, O sinner, shalt stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Thou shalt see that pompous appearance, the description of which is grown so familiar to thee, that the repetition of it makes no impression on thy mind. But surely, stupid as thou now art, the shrill trumpet of the archangel shall shake thy very soul; and if nothing else can awaken and alarm thee, the convulsions and flames of a dissolving world shall do it.

§ 8. Dost thou really think that the intent of Christ's final appearance is only to recover his people from the grave, and to raise them to glory and happiness? Whatever assurance thou hast that there shall be a resurrection of the just, thou hast the same that there shall also be a resurrection of the unjust; that he shall separate the rising dead one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, with equal certainty, and with infinitely greater ease. Or can you imagine that he will only make an example of some flagrant and notorious sinners, when it is said, that all the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God; and that he who knew not his Master's will, and consequently seems of all others to have had the fairest excuse for his omission to obey it, yet even he, for that very omission, shall be beaten, though with fewer stripes? Or can you think, that a sentence to be delivered with so much pomp and majesty, a sentence by which the righteous judgment of God is to be revealed, and to have its most conspicuous and final triumph, will be inconsiderable? or the punishment to which it shall consign the sinner be slight or tolerable? There would have been little reason to apprehend that, even if we had been left barely to our own conjectures what that sentence should be. But this is far from being the case. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his infinite condescension and compassion, has been pleased to give us a copy of the sentence, and no doubt a most exact copy; and the words which contain it are worthy of being inscribed on every heart. The King, amidst all the splendour and dignity in which he shall then appear, shall say unto those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And where the word of a king is, there is power indeed. And these words have a power which may justly animate the heart of the humble Christian, under the most overwhelming sorrow, and may fill him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. To be pronounced the blessed of the Lord! to be called to a kingdom! to the immediate, the everlasting inheritance of it! and of such a kingdom! so well prepared, so glorious, so complete, so exquisitely fitted for the delight and entertainment of such creatures so formed and so renewed, that it shall appear worthy the eternal counsels of God to have contrived it, worthy his eternal love to have prepared it, and to have delighted itself with the views of bestowing it upon his people. Behold a blessed hope indeed! a lively glorious hope, to which we are begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and formed by the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God upon our minds. But it is a hope from which thou, O sinner, art at present excluded; and, methinks, that might be grievous; to reflect, "These gracious words shall Christ speak to some, to multitudes, but not to me; on me there is no blessedness pronounced; for me there is no kingdom prepared." But is that all? Alas, sinner, our Lord hath given thee a dreadful counterpart to this. He has told us what he will say to thee if thou continuest what thou art; to thee, and all the nations of the impenitent and unbelieving world, be they ever so numerous, be the rank of particular criminals ever so great. He shall say to the kings of the earth, who have been rebels against him, to the great and rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, as well as to every bond man, and every free man of inferior rank, Depart from me, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. O pause upon these weighty words, that thou mayst enter into something of the importance of them!

§ 9. He will say, Depart! You shall be driven from his presence with disgrace and infamy; from him, the source of life and blessedness, in a nearness to whom all the inhabitants of heaven continually rejoice. You shall depart accursed. You have broken God's law, and its curse falls upon you; and you are, and shall be, under that curse, that abiding curse: from that day forward you shall be regarded by God, and all his creatures, as an accursed and abominable thing, as the most detestable and most miserable part of the creation. You shall go into fire; and O consider into what fire! Is it merely into one fierce blaze, which shall consume you in a moment, though with exquisite pain? That were terrible. But O, such terrors are not to be named with these! Thine, sinner, is everlasting fire: it is that which our Lord hath in such awful terms described as prevailing there, Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and then says it a second time, Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and again, in wonderful compassion, a third time, Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Nor was it originally prepared, or principally intended, for you: it was prepared for the devil and his angels; for those first grand rebels, who were immediately upon their fall doomed to it: and since you have taken part with them in their apostasy, you must sink with them into that flaming ruin; and sink so much the deeper, as you have despised a Saviour who was never offered to them. These must be your companions and your tormentors, with whom you must dwell for ever. And is it I that say this? or say not the law and the gospel the same? Does not the Lord Jesus Christ expressly say it, who is the faithful and true witness, even he who himself is to pronounce the sentence?

§ 10. And when it is thus pronounced, and pronounced by him, shall it not also be executed! Who could imagine the contrary? Who could imagine there should be all this pompous declaration, to fill the mind only with vain terror; and that this sentence should vanish into smoke? You may easily apprehend that this would be a greater reproach to the divine administration, than if sentence were never to be passed. And therefore we might easily have inferred the execution of it from the process of the preceding judgment. But lest the treacherous heart of the sinner should deceive him with so vain a hope, the assurance of that execution is immediately added, in very memorable terms. It shall be done; it shall immediately be done. Then, on that very day, while the sound of it is yet in their ears, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; and thou, O reader, whoever thou art, being found in their number, shalt go away with them; shalt be driven on among all these wretched multitudes, and plunged with them into eternal ruin. The wide gates of hell shall be open to receive thee; they shall be shut upon thee for ever to enclose thee; and be fast barred by the almighty hand of divine justice, to prevent all hope, all possibility, of escape for ever.

§ 11. And now, prepare thyself to meet the Lord thy God; summon up all the resolution of thy mind, to endure such a sentence, such an execution, as this: for he will not meet thee as a man; whose heart may sometimes fail him, when about to exert a needful act of severity, so that compassion may prevail against reason and justice. No, he will meet thee as a God, whose schemes and purposes are all immovable as his throne. I therefore testify to thee in his name this day, that if God be true, he will thus speak; and that if he be able, he will thus act. And on supposition of thy continuance in thy impenitence and unbelief, thou art brought into this miserable case; that if God be not either false or weak, thou art undone, thou art eternally undone.

The Reflection of a sinner struck with the terror of this sentence.

"Wretch that I am! What shall I do! or whither shall I flee? I am weighed in the balance, and am found wanting. This is indeed my doom; the doom I am to expect from the mouth of Christ himself; from the mouth of him that died for the redemption and salvation of men. Dreadful sentence! and so much the more dreadful when considered in that view! To what shall I look to save me from it! To whom shall I call? Shall I say to the rocks, Fall upon me, and to the hills, Cover me? What shall I gain by that? Were I indeed overwhelmed with rocks and mountains, they could not conceal me from the notice of his eye; and his hand could reach me with as much ease there as any where else.

"Wretch indeed that I am! Oh that I had never been born! That I had never known the dignity and prerogative of the rational nature! Fatal prerogative indeed, that renders me obnoxious to condemnation and wrath! Oh that I had never been instructed in the will of God at all, rather than that, being thus instructed, I should have disregarded and transgressed it! Would to God I had been allied to the meanest of the human race, to them that come nearest to the state of the brutes, rather than that I should have had my lot in cultivated life, amidst so many of the improvements of reason, and (dreadful reflection!) amidst so many of the advantages of religion too! and thus to have perverted all to my own destruction! Oh that God would take away this rational soul! But this it will live for ever; will live to feel the agonies of eternal death. Why have I seen the beauties and glories of a world like this, to exchange it for that

flaming prison! Why have I tasted so many of my Creator's bounties to wring out at last the cup of his wrath! Why have I known the delights of social life and friendly converse, to exchange them for the horrid company of devils and damned spirits in Tophet! Oh, who can dwell with them in everlasting flames! Who can lie down with them in everlasting, everlasting, everlasting burnings!

"But whom have I to blame in all this, but myself? What have I to accuse, but my own stupid incorrigible folly? On what is all this terrible ruin to be charged, but on this one fatal cursed cause, that having broken God's law, I rejected his gospel too!

"Yet stay, O my soul, in the midst of all these doleful foreboding complaints. Can I say that I have finally rejected the gospel? Am I not to this day under the sound of it? The sentence is not yet gone forth against me in so determinate a manner as to be utterly irreversible. Through all this gloomy prospect one ray of hope breaks in, and it is possible I may be delivered.

"Reviving thought! Rejoice in it, O my soul, though it be with trembling; and turn immediately to that God, who, though provoked by ten thousand offences, has not yet sworn in his wrath, that thou shalt never be permitted to hold further intercourse with him, or to enter into his rest.

"I do then, O blessed Lord, prostrate myself in the dust before thee. I own I am a condemned and miserable creature; but my language is that of the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner! Some general and confused apprehensions I have of a way by which I may possibly escape. O God, whatever that way is, show it me, I beseech thee! Point it out so plainly, that I may not be able to mistake it! And oh, reconcile my heart to it, be it ever so humbling, be it ever so painful!

"Surely, Lord, I have much to learn; but be thou my teacher! Stay for a little thine uplifted hand; and, in thine infinite compassion, delay the stroke, till I inquire a little further how I may finally avoid it!"

CHAP. VII.

The helpless state of the sinner under condemnation.

§ 1. SINNER, thou hast heard the sentence of God, as it stands upon record in his sacred and immutable word. And wilt thou lie down under it in everlasting despair? Wilt thou make no attempt to be delivered from it, when it speaks nothing less than eternal death to thy soul? If a criminal, condemned by human laws, has but the least shadow of hope that he may possibly escape, he is all attention to it. If there be a friend who he thinks can help him with what a strong importunity does he entreat the interposition of that friend! And even when he is before the judge, how difficult is it often to force him away from the bar, while the cry of Mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy, may be heard, though it be never so unreasonable! A mere possibility that it may make some impression, makes him eager in it, and unwilling to be silenced and removed.

§ 2. Will thou not then, O sinner, use yet execution is done, that execution which may perhaps be done this very day, will thou not cast about in thy thoughts what measures may be taken for deliverance? Yet what measures can be taken! Consider attentively, for it is an affair of moment. Thy wisdom, thy power, thy eloquence, or thine interest, can never be exerted on a greater occasion. If thou canst help thyself, do. If thou hast any secret source of relief, go not out of thyself for other assistance. If thou hast any sacrifice to offer, if thou hast any strength to exert; yea, if thou hast any allies on earth, or in the invisible world, who can defend and deliver thee; take thy own way, so that thou mayst but be delivered at all, that we may not see thy ruin. But say, oh sinner, in the presence of God, what sacrifice thou wilt present, what strength thou wilt exert, what allies thou wilt have recourse to, on so urgent, so hopeless an occasion; for hopeless I must indeed pronounce it, if such methods are taken.

§ 3. The justice of God is injured: hast thou any atonement to make to it? If thou wast brought to an inquiry and proposal, like that of an awakened sinner, wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Alas, wert thou as great a prince as Solomon himself, and couldst thou indeed purchase such sacrifices as these, there would be no room to mention them; Lebanon would not be sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof for a burnt-offering. Even under that dispensation, which admitted and required sacrifices in some cases, the blood of bulls and of goats, though it exempted the offender from further temporal punishment, could not take away sin, nor prevail by any means to purge the conscience in the sight of God. And that soul that had done ought presumptuously was not allowed to bring any sin-offering or trespass-offering at all, but was condemned to die without mercy. Now God and thy own conscience know, that thy offences have not

been merely the errors of ignorance and inadvertency, but that thou hast sinned with an high hand in repeated aggravated circumstances, as thou hast acknowledged already. Shouldst thou add, with the wretched sinner described above, shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? what could the blood of a beloved child do in such a case, but dye thy crimes so much the deeper, and add a yet unknown horror to them? Thou hast offended a being of infinite majesty; and if that offence is to be expiated by blood, it must be by another kind of blood than that which flows in the veins of thy children, or in thy own.

§ 4. Wilt thou then suffer thyself, till thou hast made full satisfaction? But where shall that satisfaction be made? shall it be by any calamities to be endured in this mortal momentary life? Is the justice of God then esteemed so little a thing, that the sorrows of a few days should suffice to answer its demands? Or dost thou think of future sufferings in the invisible world? If thou dost, that is not deliverance; and with regard to that I may venture to say, when thou hast made full satisfaction thou wilt be released; when thou hast paid the utmost farthing of that debt thy prison doors shall be opened. In the mean time thou must make thy bed in hell, and, O unhappy man, wilt thou lie down there, with a secret hope that the moment will come, when the rigour of divine justice will not be able to inflict any thing more than thou hast endured, and when thou mayst claim thy discharge as a matter of right? It would indeed be well for thee if thou couldst carry down with thee such a hope, false and flattering as it is; but alas, thou wilt see things in so just a light, that to have no comfort but this, will be eternal despair. That one word of thy sentence, Everlasting fire; that one declaration, The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; will be sufficient to strike such a thought into black confusion, and to overwhelm thee with hopeless agony and horror.

§ 5. Or do you think that your future reformation, and diligence in duty for the time to come, will procure your discharge from this sentence? Take heed, sinner, what kind of obedience thou thinkest of offering to a holy God. That must be spotless and complete which his infinite sanctity can approve and accept, if he consider thee in thyself alone: there must be no inconstancy, no forgetfulness, no mixture of sin, attending it. And wilt thou, enfeebled as thou art, by so much original corruption, and so many sinful habits contracted by innumerable actual transgressions, undertake to render such an obedience, and that for all the remainder of thy life? In vain wouldst thou attempt it, even for one day. New guilt would immediately plunge thee into new ruin. But if it did not: if from this moment to the very end of thy life all were as complete obedience as the law of God required from Adam in paradise, would that be sufficient to cancel past guilt? Would it discharge an old debt, that thou hadst not contracted a new one? Offer this to thy neighbour, and see if he will accept it for payment; and if he will not, wilt thou presume to offer it to thy God?

§ 6. But I will not multiply words on so plain a subject. While I speak thus, time is passing away, death presses on, and judgment is approaching. And what can save thee from these awful scenes, or what can protect thee in them? Can the world save thee from that vain delusive idol of thy wishes and pursuits, to which thou art sacrificing thy eternal hopes? Well dost thou know that it will utterly forsake thee when thou needest it most; and that not one of its enjoyments can be carried along with thee into the invisible state; no, not so much as a trifle to remember it by, if thou couldst desire to remember so inconstant and so treacherous a friend as the world has been.

§ 7. And when you are dead, or when you are dying, can your sinful companions save you? Is there any one of them, if he were ever so desirous of doing it, that can give unto God a ransom for you, to deliver you from going down to the grave, or from going down to hell? Alas, you will probably be so sensible of this, that when you lie on the border of the grave, you will be unwilling to see or to converse with those that were once your favourite companions. They will afflict you rather than relieve you, even then; how much less can they relieve you before the bar of God, when they are overwhelmed with their own condemnation!

§ 8. As for the powers of darkness, you are sure they will be far from any ability or inclination to help you. Satan has been watching and labouring for your destruction, and he will triumph in it. But if there could be any thing of an amicable confederacy between you, what would that be but an association in ruin? For the day of judgment for ungodly men will also be the judgment of these rebellious spirits; and the fire into which thou, O sinner, must depart, is that which was prepared for the devil and his angels.

§ 9. Will the celestial spirits then save thee? will they interpose their power, or their prayers, in thy favour? An interposition of power, when sentence is gone forth against thee, were an act of rebellion against heaven, which these holy and excellent creatures would abhor. And when the final pleasure of the Judge is known, instead of interceding in vain for the wretched criminal, they would rather, with adoring zeal for the glory of their Lord, and cordial acquiescence in the determination of his wisdom and justice, prepare to execute it. Yea, difficult as it may at present be to conceive it,

it is a certain truth, that the servants of Christ who now most tenderly love you, and most affectionately seek your salvation, and excepting those who are allied to you in the nearest bonds of patience of friendship, even they shall put their hands to it. Now indeed their bowels yearn over you, and their eyes pour out tears on your account: now they expostulate with you, and plead with God for you, if by any means, while there is hope, you may be plucked as a firebrand out of the burning. But alas, their remonstrances you will not regard; and as for their prayers, what should they ask for you? What but this, that you may see yourselves to be undone? and that, utterly despairing of any help from yourselves, or from any created power, you may lie before God in humility and brokenness of heart: that submitting yourselves to his righteous judgment, and in an utter denunciation of all self-dependence, and of all creature dependence, you may lift up an humble look towards him, as almost from the depths of hell, if peradventure he may have compassion upon you, and may himself direct you to that only method of rescue, which, while things continue as in present circumstances they are, neither earth, nor hell, nor heaven can afford you.

The Lamentation of a sinner in this miserable condition.

"Oh doleful, uncomfortable, helpless state! Oh wretch that I am, to have reduced myself to it! Poor, empty, miserable, abandoned creature! Where is my pride, and the haughtiness of my heart! Where are my idol deities whom I have loved, and served, after whom I have walked, and whom I have sought, whilst I have been multiplying my transgressions against the Majesty of heaven! Is there no hand to save me! Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me, hath seized me! I feel it pressing me hard; and what shall I do? Perhaps they have pity upon me: but, alas, how feeble a compassion! Only, if there be any where in the whole compass of nature any help, tell me where it may be found! O point it out, direct me towards it, or rather, confounded and astonished as my mind is, take me by the hand, and lead me to it.

"O ye ministers of the Lord, whose office it is to guide and comfort distressed souls, take pity upon me! I fear I am a pattern of many other helpless creatures, who have the like need of your assistance. Lay aside your other cares, to care for my soul; to care for this precious soul of mine, which lies as it were bleeding to death, (if that expression may be used,) while you perhaps hardly afford me a look; or, glancing an eye upon me, pass over to the other side. Yet, alas, in a case like mine, what can your intercession avail, if it be alone? if the Lord do not help me, how can you help me?

"O God of the spirits of all flesh, I lift up mine eyes unto thee, and cry unto thee, according to the bells of my [illegible]. I cry unto thee, as it were, from the borders of it. Yet while I lie before thee in this miserable distress, I know that there is a [illegible] goodness and love, and that not a way for my recovery.

"Thou art he whom I have most of all injured and offended: and yet from thee alone must I now seek redress. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight: so that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest, though thou shouldst this moment adjudge me to eternal misery. And yet I find something that secretly draws me to thee, as if I might find rescue there, where I have found the most aggravated destruction. Blessed God, I have destroyed myself: but in thee is my help, if there can be help at all.

"I know, in general, that thy ways are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as our thoughts: but as the heavens are high above the earth, so are thy ways above our ways, and thy thoughts above our thoughts. Have mercy therefore upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies! Oh point out the path to the city of refuge! Oh lead me thyself in the way everlasting! I know, in general, that thy gospel is the only remedy; O teach thy servants to administer it! Oh prepare mine heart to receive it! and suffer not sin to make [illegible] that noble medicine, which has spread itself through all my nature, to turn that noble medicine into poison!"

CHAP. VIII

News of salvation by Christ brought to the convicted and condemned sinner.

[illegible]

§ 1. My dear reader, it is the great design of the gospel, and, wherever it is cordially received, it is the glorious effects of it, to fill the heart with sentiments of love, to teach us to abhor all unnecessary rigour and severity, and to delight, not in the grief, but in the happiness of our fellow-creatures. I can heartily apprehend how he can be a Christian, who takes pleasure in the distress which appears even in a brute, much less in that of a human mind; and especially in such distress as the thoughts I have been proposing must give, if there be any due attes-

tion to their weight and energy. I have often felt a tender regret, while I have been representing these things; and I could have wished from my heart that it had not been necessary to have placed them in so severe and so painful a light. But now I am addressing myself to a part of my work, which I undertake with unutterable pleasure; and to that which indeed I had in view, in all these awful things which I have already been laying before you. I have been showing you, that if you hitherto have lived in a state of impenitence and sin, you are condemned by God's righteous judgment, and have in yourself no spring of hope, and no possibility of deliverance. But I mean not to leave you under this sad apprehension, to lie down and die in despair, complaining of that cruel zeal, which has tormented you before your time.

§ 2. Arise, O thou dejected soul, that art prostrate in the dust before God, and trembling under the terror of his righteous sentence: for I am commissioned to tell thee, that though thou hast destroyed thyself, in God is thy help. I bring thee good tidings of great joy, which delight my own heart, while I proclaim them, and will, I hope, reach and revive thine; even the tidings of salvation, by the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer. And I give it thee for thy greater security, in the words of a gracious and forgiving God, that "he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing to them their trespasses."

§ 3. This is the best news that ever was heard, the most important message which God ever sent to his creatures: and though I doubt not at all but, living as you have done, in a Christian country, you have heard it often, perhaps a thousand and a thousand times, I will, with all simplicity and plainness, repeat it to you again, and repeat it as if you had never heard it before. If thou, O sinner, shouldst now for the first time feel it, then will it be as a new gospel unto thee, though so familiar to thy ear; nor shall it be grievous for me to speak what is so common, since to you it is safe and necessary. They who are most deeply and intimately acquainted with it, instead of being cloyed and satiated, will hear it with distinguished pleasure; and as for those who have hitherto slighted it, I am sure they had need to hear it again. Nor is it absolutely impossible, that some one soul at least may read these lines, who hath never been clearly and fully instructed in this important doctrine, though his everlasting all depends on knowing and receiving it. I will therefore take care that such a one shall not have it to plead at the bar of God, that though he lived in a Christian country, he was never plainly and faithfully taught the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, by whom alone we come unto the Father.

§ 4. I do therefore testify unto you this day, that the holy and gracious Majesty of heaven and earth, foreseeing the fatal apostasy into which the whole human race would fall, did not determine to deal in a way of strict and rigorous severity with us, so as to consign us over to universal ruin and inevitable damnation: but on the contrary, he determined to enter into a treaty of peace and reconciliation, and to publish to all, whom the gospel should reach, the express offers of life and glory, in a certain method, which his infinite wisdom judged suitable to the purity of his nature, and the honour of his government. This method was indeed a most astonishing one, which, familiar as it is to our thoughts and our tongues, I cannot recollect and mention without great amazement. He determined to send his own Son into the world, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, partaker of his own divine perfections and honours, to be not merely a teacher of righteousness and a messenger of grace, but also a sacrifice for the sins of men; and would consent to his saving them, on no other condition but this, that he should not only labour but die in the cause.

§ 5. Accordingly, at such a period of time as Infinite Wisdom saw most convenient, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in human flesh: and after he had gone through incessant and long-continued fatigues, and borne all the preceding injuries, which the ingratitude and malice of men could inflict, he voluntarily submitted himself to death, even the death of the cross; and having been delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification. After his resurrection, he continued long enough on earth to give his followers most convincing evidences of it, and then ascended into heaven in their sight; and sent down his Spirit from thence upon his apostles, to enable them, in the most persuasive and authoritative manner, to preach the gospel: and he has given it in charge to them, and to those who in every age succeed them in this part of their office, that it should be published to every creature; that all who believe in it may be saved, by virtue of its abiding energy, and the immutable power and grace of its divine Author, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

§ 6. This gospel do I therefore now preach and proclaim unto thee, O reader, with the sincerest desire, that, through divine grace, it may this very day be salvation to thy soul. Know therefore, and consider it, whosoever thou art, that as surely as these words are now before thy eyes, so surely it is that the incarnate Son of God was made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men; his back torn with scourges, his head with thorns, his limbs stretched out as on a rack, and nailed to the accursed tree; and in this miserable condition he was hung by his hands and his feet, as an object of public

infamy and contempt. Thus did he die, in the midst of all the insults and insults of his cruel enemies, who thirsted for his blood; and, which was the saddest circumstance of all in the relish of those agonies with which he closed the most innocent, perfect, and useful life that ever was spent upon earth, he had not those supports of the divine presence, which sinful men have often experienced, when they have been suffering for the testimony of their conscience. They have often burst out into transports of joy, and songs of praise, while their executioners have been glutting their hellish malice, and more than savage barbarity, by making their torments artificially grievous; but the crucified Jesus cried out, in the distress of his spotless and holy soul, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

§ 7. Look upon our dear Redeemer; look up to this mournful, dreadful, yet, in one view, delightful, spectacle; and then ask thy own heart, Do I believe that Jesus suffered and died thus? And why did he suffer and die? Let me answer in God's own words. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin; for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. So that I may address you in the words of the apostle, Be it known unto you therefore, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; as it was his command, just after he rose from the dead, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: the very place where his blood had so lately been shed in such a cruel manner. I do therefore testify to you, in the words of another inspired writer, that Christ was made sin, that is, a sin-offering, for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that is, that through the righteousness he has fulfilled, and the atonement he has made, we might be accepted by God as righteous, and be not only pardoned, but received into his favour. To you is the word of this salvation sent; and to you, O reader, are the blessings of it even now offered by God, sincerely offered; so that, after all that I have said under the former heads, it is not your having broken the law of God, that shall prove your ruin, if you do not also reject his gospel. It is not all those legions of sins which rise up in battle array against you that shall be able to destroy you, if unbelief do not lead them on, and final impenitency do not bring up the rear. I know that guilt is a tremendous thing; I will therefore speak in the words of God himself, nor can any be more comfortable. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he shall never come into condemnation: there is therefore now no condemnation to him or degree of it to any one of them, who are in Jesus Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. You have indeed been a very great sinner, and your offences have truly been attended with most heinous aggravations; nevertheless, you may rejoice in the assurance, that where sin hath abounded, there shall grace much more abound; that where sin hath reigned unto death, where it has had its most undisputed sway, and most unresisted triumph, there shall righteousness reign to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. That righteousness, to which on believing on him thou wilt be entitled, shall not only break those chains, by which sin is (as it were) dragging thee at its chariot wheels with a furious pace to eternal ruin; but it shall clothe thee with the robes of salvation, shall fix thee on a throne of glory, where thou shalt live and reign for ever among the princes of heaven, shall set thee in immortal beauty and joy; without one remaining scar of divine displeasure upon thee; without one single mark by which it could be known, that thou hadst ever been obnoxious to wrath and a curse; except it be an anthem of praise to the Lamb that was slain, and has washed thee from thy sins in his own blood.

† 8. Nor is it necessary, in order to thy being released from guilt, and entitled to this high and complete felicity, that thou shouldst, before thou wilt venture to apply to Jesus, bring any good works of thy own to recommend thee to his acceptance. It is indeed true, that if thy faith be sincere, it will certainly produce them, but I have the authority of the word of God to tell thee, that if thou this day sincerely believest in the name of the Son of God, thou shalt this day be taken under his care, and be numbered among those of his sheep to whom he hath graciously declared, that he will give eternal life, and that they shall never perish. Thou hast no need therefore to say, Who shall go up into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep for me? So the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. With this joyful message I leave thee; with this faithful saying, indeed worthy of all acceptation; with this gospel, O sinner, which is my life, and which, if thou dost not reject it, will be thine for

The author's Reflections on what is said above.

"Oh, my soul, how astonishing is the message which thou hast this day received! I have indeed often heard it before; and it is grown so common to me, that the surprise is not sensible. But reflect, O my soul, what is it thou hast heard! and say, whether the name of the Saviour, whose message it is, may not well be called Wonderful, Counsellor, when he displays before thee such wonders of love, and proposes to thee such counsels of peace!"

"Blessed Jesus, is it indeed thus? is it not the fiction of the human mind? Surely it is not! what human mind could have invented or conceived it? Is it a plain, a certain fact, that thou didst leave the magnificence and joy of the heavenly world, in compassion to such a wretch as I! O hadst thou, from that height of dignity, and felicity, only looked down upon me for a moment, and sent some gracious word to me for my direction and comfort, even by the least of thy servants, justly might I have prostrated myself in grateful admiration, and have kissed the very footsteps of him that published the salvation. But didst thou condescend to be thyself the messenger? what grace had that been though thou hadst but once in person made the declaration, and immediately returned back to the throne, from whence divine compassion brought thee down! But this is not all the triumph of thine illustrious grace. It not only brought thee down to earth, but kept thee here, in a frail and wretched tabernacle, for long successive years; and at length it cost thee thy life, and stretched thee out as a malefactor upon the cross, after thou hadst borne insults and cruelty, which it may justly wound my heart so much as to think of. And thus thou hast atoned injured justice, and redeemed me to God with thine own blood.

"What shall I say? Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! It seems to put faith to the stretch, to admit, what it indeed exceeds the utmost stretch of imagination to conceive. Blessed, for ever blessed, be thy name, O thou Father of mercies, that thou hast contrived the way! Eternal thanks to the Lamb that was slain, and to that kind providence that sent the word of this salvation to me! Oh let me not, for ten thousand worlds, receive the grace of God in vain! Oh impress this gospel upon my soul, till its saving virtue be diffused over every faculty! Let it not only be heard, and acknowledged, and professed, but felt! Make it thy power to my eternal salvation, and raise me to that humble tender gratitude, to that active unwearied zeal in thy service, which becomes one to whom so much is forgiven, and forgiven upon such terms as these!

"I feel a sudden glow in my heart, while these tidings are sounding in mine ears: but oh, let it not be a slight superficial transport! Oh let not this, which I would fain call my Christian joy, be as that foolish laughter, with which I have been so madly enchanted, like the crackling blaze of thorns under a pot! Oh teach me to secure this mighty blessing, this glorious hope, in the method which thou hast appointed! and preserve me from mistaking the joy of nature, while it catches a glimpse of its rescue from destruction, for that consent of grace, which embraces and insures the deliverance!"

CHAP. IX.

A more particular account of the way by which this salvation is to be obtained.

[illegible]

§ 1. I now consider you, my dear reader, as coming to me with the inquiry which the Jews once addressed to our Lord, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? "What method shall I take to secure that redemption and salvation which I am told Christ has procured for his people?" I would answer it as seriously and carefully as possible; as one that knows of what importance it is to you to be rightly informed, and that knows also how strictly he is to answer to God, for the sincerity and care with which the reply is made. May I be enabled to speak as his oracle, that is, in such a manner as faithfully to echo back what the sacred oracles teach!

§ 2. And here, that I may be sure to follow the safest guides and the fairest examples, I must preach salvation to you in the way of repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That good old doctrine which the apostles preached, and which no man can pretend to change, but at the peril of his own soul, and of theirs who attend to him.

§ 3. I suppose that you are by this time convinced of your guilt and condemnation, and of your own inability to recover yourself. Let me nevertheless urge you to feel that conviction yet more deeply, and to impress it with yet greater weight upon your soul; that you have undone yourself, and that in yourself is not your help found. Be persuaded, therefore, expressly, and solemnly, and sincerely, to give up all self-dependence; which, if you do not guard against, will be ready to return secretly, before it is observed, and will lead you to attempt building up what you have just been destroying.

§ 4. Be assured, that if ever you are saved, you must ascribe that salvation entirely to the free grace of God. If, guilty and miserable as you are, you are not only accepted, but crowned, you must lay down your crown with all humble acknowledgment before the throne. No fresh moral glow in the pure sense, but he that glorieth must glory in the Lord: for of him are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And you must be sensible you are in such a state, as having none of these in yourself, to need them in another. You

must therefore be sensible that you are in a miserable and guilty, polluted and enslaved state, or, to use Scripture phrases, with regard to some who are under a Christian profession, that you are sinners, poor and wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

§ 5. If these views be deeply impressed upon your mind, you will be prepared to receive what I am now to say. Hear therefore, in a few words your duty, your remedy, and your safety. Which consists in this: "That you must apply to Christ with a deep abhorrence of your former sins, and a firm resolution of forsaking them, leaning that conviction on the strength of his grace, and fixing your dependence on him for your acceptance with God, even while you are purposing to do your very best, and when you have actually done the best you ever will do in consequence of that purpose."

§ 6. The first and most important advice that I can give you in your present circumstances, is, that you look to Christ, and apply yourself to him. And here my text in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring him down to me? or, Who shall raise me up thither, to present me before him? The blessed Jesus, by whom all things consist, by whom the whole system of them is supported, "forgotten as he is by most that bear his name," is not far from any of us: nor could he have promised to have been wherever two or three are met together in his name, but in consequence of those truly divine perfections by which he is every where present. Would you therefore, O sinner, desire to be saved? go to the Saviour. Would you desire to be delivered? look to that great Deliverer: and though you should be so overwhelmed with guilt, and shame, and fear, and horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless confusion at his feet; and behold him as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

§ 7. Behold him therefore with an attentive eye, and say, whether the sight does not touch, and even melt, thy very heart? Dost thou not feel what a foolish and what a wretched creature thou hast been; that for the sake of such low and sordid gratifications and interests as those which thou hast been pursuing, thou shouldst thus kill the Prince of life? Behold the deep wounds which he bore for thee. Look on him whom thou hast pierced, and surely thou must mourn; unless thy heart be hardened into stone. Which of thy past sins canst thou reflect upon, and say, "But that it was worth my while thus to have incurred my Saviour's, and to have exposed the Son of God to such sufferings!" And what future temptations can arise, so considerable that thou shouldst say, "For the sake of this I will certainly my Lord again?" Sinner, thou must repent of every sin, and must forsake it; but if thou dost it to any purpose, I well know it must be at the foot of the cross. Thou must renounce every lust, even the dearest; though it should be like a right hand or a right eye; and therefore, that thou mayst, if possible, be animated to it, I have led thee to that altar on which Christ himself was sacrificed for thee, an offering of a sweet smelling savour. Thou must yield up thyself to God, as one alive from the dead, and therefore I have shewed thee at what a price he purchased thee: for thou wast not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, that Lamb without blemish and without spot. And now I would ask thee, as before the Lord, What does thy own heart say to it? Art thou grieved for thy former offences? Art thou willing to forsake thy sins? Art thou willing to become the cheerful, thankful servant of him who hath purchased thee with his own blood?

§ 8. I will suppose such a purpose as this arising in thy heart. How determinate it is, and how effectual it may be, I know not; what different views may rise hereafter, or how soon the present sense may wear off. But this I assuredly know, that thou wilt never see reason to change these views: for however thou mayst alter, the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And the reasons that now recommend repentance and faith as fit and necessary, will continue invariable, as long as the perfections of the blessed God are the same, and as long as his Son continues the same.

§ 9. But while you have these views and these purposes, I must remind you that this is not all which is necessary to your salvation. You must not only purpose, but, as God gives opportunity, you must act, as those who are convinced of the evil of sin, and of the necessity and excellence of holiness. And that you may be enabled to do so in other instances, you must, in the first place, and as the first great work of God, (as our Lord himself calls it,) believe in him whom God hath sent: you must confide in him. "I must commit your soul into the hands of Christ, to be saved by him in his own appointed method of salvation." This is the great act of saving faith: and I pray God that you may experimentally know what it means: so as to be able to say, with the apostle Paul, in the near views of death itself, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day; that great decisive day, which, if we are Christians, we have always in view. To this I would urge you; and O that I could be so happy as to engage you to it while I am illustrating it in this and the following addresses! Be assured you must not apply yourselves immediately to God as absolutely, or in himself considered, in the neglect of a mediator. It will neither be acceptable to him, nor safe for you, to rush into his presence without any regard to his own Son.

whom he hath appointed to introduce sinners to him. And if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a sinner. The very manner of presenting the address will be interpreted as a denial of that guilt with which he knows you are chargeable: and therefore he will not admit you, nor so much as look upon you. And accordingly, our Lord, knowing how much every man living was concerned in this, says in the most universal terms, No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

§ 10. Apply therefore to this glorious Redeemer, amiable (as he will appear to every believing eye,) in the blood which he shed upon the cross, and in the wounds which he received there. Go to him, O sinner, this day, this moment, with all thy sins about thee. Go just as thou art; for if thou wilt never apply to him till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all: nor canst be so on this supposition, unless there were some way of being so without him; and then there would be no occasion for applying to him for righteousness and holiness. It were indeed as if it should be said, that a sick man should defer his application to a physician, till his health is recovered. Let me therefore repeat it without offence, go to him just as thou art, and say, (O that thou mayst this moment be enabled to say it from thy very soul!) "Blessed Jesus, I am surely one of the most sinful, and one of the most miserable, creatures that ever fell prostrate before thee: nevertheless, I come, because I have heard that thou didst once say, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I come, because I have heard thou didst graciously say, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. O thou Prince of peace, O thou King of glory, I am a condemned miserable sinner. I have ruined my own soul, and am condemned for ever, if thou dost not help me, and save me. I have broken thy Father's law and thine, for thou art one with him. I have deserved condemnation and wrath; and I am even at this very moment under a sentence of everlasting destruction; a destruction which will be aggravated by all the contempt which I have cast upon thee, O thou bleeding Lamb of God, for I cannot, and will not, dissemble it before thee, that I have wronged thee, most basely and ungratefully wronged thee, under the character of a Saviour, as well as of a Lord. But now I am willing to submit to thee, and I have brought my poor trembling soul, to lodge it in thine hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it, and if thou dost not, it must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy feet; stretch out thy golden sceptre that I may live! Yea, if it please the King, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition." I have no treasure wherewith to purchase it; I have no equivalent to give thee for it; but if that compassionate heart of thine can find a pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayst here find. O Lord, I have foolishly attempted to be mine own saviour; but it will not do. I am sensible the attempt is vain; and therefore I give it over, and look unto thee. On thee, blessed Jesus, who art sure and stedfast, do I desire to fix my anchor. On thee, as the only sure foundation, would I build my eternal hopes. To thy teaching, O thou unerring Prophet of the Lord, would I submit: be thy doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that thou thyself hast said it. To thine atonement, obedience, and intercession, O thou holy and ever acceptable High Priest, would I trust. And to thy government, O thou exalted Sovereign, would I yield a willing delightful subjection: in token of reverence and love, I kiss the Son; I kiss the ground before his feet. I admit thee, O my Saviour, and welcome thee with unutterable joy to the throne in my heart. Ascend it, and reign there for ever! Subdue mine enemies, O Lord, for they are thine; and make me thy faithful and zealous servant; faithful to death, and zealous to eternity!"

§ 11. Such as this must be the language of your heart before the Lord. But then remember, that in consequence thereof, it must be the language of your life too. The unmeaning words of the lips would be a vain mockery. The most affectionate transport of the passions, should it be transient and ineffectual, would be but like a blaze of straw, presented instead of incense at his altar. With such humility, with such love, with such cordial self-dedication and submission of soul, must thou often prostrate thyself in the presence of Christ; and then thou must go away, and keep him in thy view; must go away, and live unto God through him, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and behaving thyself soberly, righteously, and godly in this vain insnaring world. You must make it your care to show your love by obedience; by pleasing him, as much as possible, according to the temper and manner of Jesus, in whom you believe. You must make it the great point of your ambition, (and a nobler view you cannot entertain,) to be a living image of Christ; that so far as circumstances will allow, even those who have heard and read but little of him, may, by observing you, in some measure see and know what kind of a life that of the blessed Jesus was. And this must be your constant care, your prevailing character, as long as you live. You must follow him, whithersoever he leads you; must follow with a cross on your shoulder, when he commands you to take it up; and so must be faithful even unto death, expecting the crown of life.

§ 12. Thus, so far as I have been able to learn from the word of God, is the way to safety and glory the surest, the only way you can take. It is the way which every faithful minister of Christ

her trod, and is treading; and the way to which, as he holds to the salvation of his own soul, he must direct others. We cannot see how it could not arise in the heart of every true and honest friend. It is the way in which alone, as far as we can judge, it has seen fit, blessed God! to save the apostate creatures. And therefore, reader, I beseech and entreat you seriously to consider it; and let your own conscience answer as in the presence of God, whether you are willing to acquiesce in it, or not. But know, that to reject it is DEATH eternal death. For as there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved but that of Jesus of Nazareth, so there is no other method but that, in which Jesus himself will save us.

The author deliberates on the expediency of following it with this method of salvation.

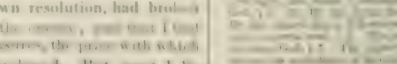
"CONSCIENCE. O my soul, what answer wilt thou return to such proposals as these? Surely, if I were to speak the first dictate of this corrupt and degenerate heart, it would be, This is a hard saying, and who can hear it? To be thus humbled thus mortified, thus subjected! To take such a yoke upon me, and to carry it as long as I live! To give up every darling lust, though dear to me as a right eye, and seemingly necessary as a right hand! To submit not only my life, but my heart, to the command and discipline of another! To have a master there, and such a master, as will control many of its favourite affections, and direct them quite into another channel; a master who himself opposes his commands, by taking up the cross and following him! To adhere to the strictest rules of godliness and sobriety, of righteousness and truth; not departing from them in any allowed instance, great or small, upon any temptation for any advantage, to escape any inconvenience and evil, no, not even for the preservation of life itself; but, upon a proper call of Providence, to act as if I hated even my own life! Lord, it is hard to flesh and blood; and yet I perceive and feel there is one demand yet harder than this.

"With all these precautions, with all these mortifications, the pride of my nature would find some inward resource of pleasure, might I but secretly think that I had been my own saviour; that my own wisdom, and my own resolution, had broken the bands and chains of the enemy, and that I had drawn out of my own treasuries, the price with which my redemption was purchased. But must I lie down before another as guilty and condemned, as weak and helpless" and must the obligation be undisputed, and must a mediator have the whole true! Must I go to thy cross for my salvation and seek my glory from the poverty of that! Must I be stripped of every pleasing pretence to righteousness and stand in this respect upon a level with the vilest of men! Stand at the last amongst the greatest criminals pleading guilty with them and seeking deliverance by that very act of grace whereby they have obtained it!

"I dare not deliberately say, this method is unreasonable. My conscience testifies, that I have sinned and cannot be justified before God, as an innocent and obedient creature. My conscience tells me, that all these humbling circumstances are fit, that it is fit a convicted criminal should be brought upon his knees; that a captive rebel should give up the weapons of his rebellion, and bow before his sovereign. If he expect his life. Yea my reason, as well as my conscience, tells me, that it is fit and necessary, that if I am saved at all, I should be saved from the power and love of sin, as well as from the condemnation of it: and that a contrary mercy gives up a soul for ever having deserved eternal death, it is most fit I should yield myself to God, as alive from the dead. But, oh wretched man that I am, I feel a law in my members that wars against the law of my mind, and captives me into subjection of my reason and conscience. Who shall deliver me from this bondage! Who shall make me willing to do that, which I know in my own soul to be most expedient! O Lord, sanctify my heart, and let it not be drawn so strongly one way, while the nobler powers of my mind would direct it another! Conquer every licentious principle within, that it may be my joy to be so wisely governed, and restrained! Especially, subdue my pride, that loudly corruption, which so ill suits an impoverished and a condemned creature; that thy way of salvation be made amiable to me, in proportion to the degree in which it is humbling! I feel a disposition to linger in Sodom, but oh be merciful to me, and pull me out of it, before the storm of thy flaming vengeance fall, and there be no more escaping!"

CHAP. X.

The author seriously argued and concluded to accept of salvation in this way.



"THUS far have I often known convictions and impressions to arise, for I might judge by the strongest appearances (which alas! all have more or less) Satan unhappy circumstances of external temptation, ever joined by the inward reluctance of an unconvinced heart to this lowly and humbling

scheme of redemption, has been the ruin of multitudes. And through the deceitfulness of sin they have been hardened, till they seem to have been utterly destroyed, and that without remedy. And therefore, O thou immortal creature, who art now reading these lines, I beseech thee, that while affairs are in this critical situation, while there are these balancings of mind between accepting and rejecting that glorious gospel, which, in the integrity of my heart, I have now been laying before you, you would once more give me an attentive audience, while I plead in God's behalf, (shall I say?) or rather in your own: while as an ambassador from Christ, and as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you in Christ's stead, that you would be reconciled to God; and would not, after these awakenings and these inquiries, by a madness which it will surely be the doleful business of a miserable eternity to lament, reject this compassionate counsel of God towards you.

§ 2. One would indeed imagine there should be no need of importunity here. One would conclude, that as soon as perishing sinners are told, that an offended God is ready to be reconciled; that he offers them a full pardon for all their aggravated sins; yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his family now, that he may at length admit them to his heavenly presence; all should with the utmost readiness and pleasure embrace so kind a message, and fall at his feet in speechless transports of astonishment, gratitude, and joy. But alas, we find it much otherwise. We see multitudes quite unmoved, and the impressions which are made on many more, are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O reader, let me urge the message with which I have the honour to be charged: let me entreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of pardon and salvation in the way in which it is so freely offered to you.

§ 3. I entreat you, "by the majesty of that God, in whose name I come;" whose voice fills all heaven with reverence and obedience. He speaks not in vain to legions of angels: but if there could be any contention among those blessed spirits, it would be, who should be first to execute his commands. O let him not speak in vain to a wretched mortal! I entreat you, "by the terrors of his wrath," who could speak to you in thunder; who could, by one single act of his will, cut off this precarious life of yours, and send you down to hell. I beseech you, "by his mercies, by his tender mercies;" by the bowels of his compassion, which still yearn over you, as those of a parent over a dear son, over a tender child, whom notwithstanding his former ungrateful rebellion, he earnestly remembers still. I beseech and entreat you, "by all this paternal goodness," that you do not (as it were) compel him to lose the character of the gentle parent in that of [illegible] regard to those whom he hath just called his sons and daughters) a [illegible] which shall burn unto the lowest hell.

§ 4. I beseech you, further, "by the name and love of our dying Saviour." I beseech you, by all the condescension of his incarnation; by that poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, that you might be enriched with eternal treasures; by all the gracious invitations which he gave, which still sound in his word, and still coming (as it were) warm from his heart, are sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. I beseech you, by all his glorious works of power and of wonder, which were also works of love. I beseech you, by the memory of the most benevolent person, and the most generous friend. I beseech you, by the memory of what he suffered, as well as of what he said and did; by the agony which he endured in the garden, when his body was covered with a dew of blood. I beseech you, by all that tender distress which he felt, when his dearest friends forsook him and fled, and his blood-thirsty enemies dragged him away like the meanest of slaves, and like the vilest of criminals. I beseech you, by the blows and bruises, by the stripes and lashes, which this injured Sovereign endured while in their rebellious hands; by the shame of spitting, from which he hid not that kind and venerable countenance. I beseech you, by the purple robe, the sceptre of reed, and the crown of thorns, which this King of glory wore, that he might set us among the princes of heaven. I beseech you, by the heavy burthen of the cross, under which he panted, and toiled, and fainted, in the painful way to Golgotha, that he might free us from the burthen of our sins. I beseech you, by the remembrance of those rude nails, that tore the veins and arteries, the nerves and tendons, of his sacred hands and feet; and by that invincible, that triumphant goodness, which while the iron pierced his flesh, engaged him to cry out, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. I beseech you, by that unutterable anguish which he bore, when lifted up upon the cross, and extended there as on a rack. By [illegible] painful hours, that you open your hearts to those attractive influences which have drawn to him thousands and ten thousands. I beseech you, by all that insult and derision, which the Lord of glory bore there; by that parching thirst, which could [illegible] the cruel [illegible] to [illegible] O cry, so astonishing in the mouth of the Only-begotten of the Father, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I beseech you, by that grace that subdued and pardoned a dying malefactor; by that compassion for sinners, by that compassion for you, which wrought in his heart, long as its vital motion continued, and which rushed out when he bowed his head, saying, It is finished, and gave up the

plead. I beseech you, by the triumphs of that resurrection by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness whereby he rose from the dead, by that gracious tenderness which accompanied all those triumphs, when he said to her out of whom he had cast seven devils, concerning his disciples, who had treated him so basely, Go, tell my brethren. I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God. I beseech you, by that condescension with which he said to Thomas, whose his unbelief had drawn such an unreasonable demand, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. I beseech you, by that generous and faithful care of his people, which he carried up with him to the regions of glory, and which engaged him to send down his Spirit in that rich profusion of miraculous gifts, to spread the progress of the saving word. I beseech you, by that vein of sympathy and power with which he said to Saul, Saul, why injuring his church, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? by that generous goodness, which spared that prostrate enemy, when he lay trembling at his feet, and raised him to so high a dignity, as to be not inferior to the very chief of apostles. I beseech you, by the memory of all that Christ hath already done, by the expectation of all he will further do, for his people. I beseech you, at once, by the sceptre of his grace, and by the sword of his justice, by which all his incorrigible enemies shall be slain before him, that you do not trifle away these precious moments, while his Spirit is thus breathing upon you; that you do not lose an opportunity which may never return, and on the improvement of which your eternity depends.

§ 5. I beseech you, "by all the bowels of compassion which you owe to the faithful ministers of Christ" who are studying and laboring, preaching and praying, wearing out their time, exhausting their strength, and very probably shortening their lives, for the salvation of your soul, and of souls like yours. I beseech you, by the affection with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, long to see you brought back to him. I beseech you, by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead; by the ruin of those who have trifled away their days, and are perished in their sins, and by the happiness of those who have embraced the gospel, and are saved by it. I beseech you, by the great expectation of that important day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, by the terrors of a dissolving world, by the sound of the archangel's trumpet, and of that infinitely more awful sentence, Come, ye blessed, and Depart, ye cursed, with which that awful solemnity shall close.

§ 6. I beseech you, [illegible] by your own precious and immortal soul, by the sure prospect of a dying hour, or of a solemn appearance before the awful tribunal, and as you would feel one spark of comfort in your departing spirit when your flesh and your heart are failing, I beseech you, by your own personal concern before the throne of Christ, for a personal appearance before it, that you would set on the throne of your heart, by all the transports of the Eternal, and by all the agonies of the damned, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion. I affectionately entreat and beseech you, as the servants of all those united considerations, as you will answer it to me, who may in that day be commanded to testify before your face what is the spiritually wise, as you will answer it to your own consciences, as you will answer it to the eternal Judge, that you dismiss not these thoughts, these meditations and these cares, till you have brought matters to a happy issue, till you have made a reasonable choice of Christ and his appointed way of salvation, and till you have solemnly devoted yourself to God, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant.

§ 7. And Oh! I leave the matter before you, and before the Lord. I have told you my errand, I have discharged my embassy. Stronger arguments I cannot use, more endearing and more useful ones I cannot suggest. Choose, therefore, whether you will go out (as it were) clothed in sackcloth, to cast yourself at the feet of him who now sends you these equitable and gracious terms of peace and pardon; or whether you will hold it out till he appears, sword in hand, to reckon with you for your treasons and your crimes, and for this neglected embassy among the rest of them. Fain would I hope the best: and can I believe that this labour of love shall be so entirely unsuccessful, that not one soul shall be brought to the foot of Christ in cordial submission and humble faith. Take with you, therefore, words, and turn unto the Lord: and all that those which follow mean, in effect at least, be the genuine language of every one that reads them.

The sinner praying to the Lord, and devoting himself to the covenant of salvation by Christ.

"Blessed Lord, it is enough! it is for much! Search these words out this variety of arguments, that acquiescence of persuasion to which we are to be happy, to reveal upon me the account of pardon, of life, of eternal glory. Compassionate Saviour, my soul is subdued, as thou knowest, to thy will; I trust the language of thy grace is become that of my petitions: and I may say, My heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.

"O gracious Redeemer! I have already negotiated this affair with thee. I have received thee, and have consented that afresh by my guilt and unprin-

tence, as if I had taken pleasure in putting thee to an open shame. But my heart now bows itself before thee, in humble unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these—that I may be entirely thine. I cheerfully present thee with a blank, entreating thee that thou wilt do me the honour to signify upon it what is thy pleasure. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me to do! For I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practise it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and to that strength I will serve thee. O receive a soul which thou hast made willing to be thine!

"No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to beseech and entreat me. Permit me rather to address myself to thee, with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that at length sees and knows there is salvation in no other! Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet, like a helpless outcast, that has no shelter but in thy generous compassion! like one pursued by the avenger of blood, and seeking earnestly an admittance into the city of refuge!

"I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in thy word do I hope that thou wilt receive me graciously. My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the patience which has borne with me so long, and the grace that now makes me heartily wishing to be thine, to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. Oh secure this treacherous heart to thyself! Oh unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of flesh and blood, none of the vanities of an insnaring world, none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee, and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! Be security, O Lord, for thy servant, for good; that I may still keep my hold on thee, and so on eternal life; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Saviour Jesus art! Amen."

CHAP. XI.

A Serious Address to those who will not be persuaded to fall in with the design of the gospel.

I would [illegible] I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

distinguish the one from the other, that you may know on what principles to build as certain in the examination of those concerning which you are yet in doubt. But whatever these doubts are, I would further ask you, "How long have they continued? and what method have you taken to get them resolved?" Do you imagine, that in matters of such moment it will be an allowable case for you to trifle on, neglecting to inquire into the evidence of these things, and then plead your not being satisfied in that evidence as an excuse for not acting according to them? Must not the principles of common sense assure you, that if these things be true, (as when you talk of doubting about them, you acknowledge it at least possible they may,) they are of infinitely greater importance than any of the affairs of life, whether of business or pleasure, for the sake of which you neglect them? Why then do you continue indolent and unconcerned, from week to week and from month to month, which probably conscience tells you is the case?

§ 3. Do you ask, "What method you should take to be resolved?" It is no hard question. Open your eyes. Set yourself to think; let conscience speak; and verily do I believe, that if it be not seared in an uncommon degree, you will find shrewd forebodings of the certainty, both of natural and revealed religion, and of the absolute necessity of repentance, faith, and holiness, to a life of future felicity. If you are a person of any learning, you cannot but know, by what writers, and in what treatises, these great truths are defended. And if you are not, you may find, in almost every town and neighbourhood, persons capable of informing you in the main evidences of Christianity, and of answering such scruples against it as unlearned minds may have met with. Set yourself then, in the name of God, immediately to consider the matter. If you study at all, bend your studies close this way; and trifle not with mathematics, or poetry, or history, or law, or physic, (which are all comparatively light as a feather,) while you neglect this. Study the argument, as for your life; for much more than life depends on it. See how far you are satisfied, and why that satisfaction reaches no further. Compare evidences on both sides. And above all, consider the design and tendency of the New Testament. See to what it will lead you, and all them that cordially obey it; and then say whether it be not good. And consider, how naturally its truths are connected with its goodness. Trace the character and sentiments of its authors, whose living image (if I may be allowed the expression) is still preserved in their writings. And then ask your own heart, Can you think this was a forgery? an impious cruel forgery? For such it must have been, if it were a forgery at all: a scheme to mock God, and to ruin men, even the best of men, such as reverenced conscience, and would abide all extremities for what they apprehended to be truth. Put the question to your own heart. Can I in my conscience believe it to be such an imposture? can I look up to an omniscient God, and say, "O Lord thou knowest, that it is in reverence to thee, and in love to truth and virtue, that I reject this book, and the method to happiness here laid down?"

§ 4. But there are difficulties in the way. And what then? Have those difficulties never been cleared. Go to the living advocates for Christianity, to those of whose abilities, candour, and piety you have the best opinion; if your prejudices will give you leave to have a good opinion of any such: tell them your difficulties; hear their solutions; weigh them seriously, as those who know they must answer it to God; and while doubts continue, follow the truth as far as it will lead you, and take heed that you do not imprison it in unrighteousness. Nothing appears more inconsistent and absurd, than for a man solemnly to pretend dissatisfaction in the evidences of the gospel, as a reason why he cannot in conscience be a thorough Christian; when yet, at the same time, he violates the most apparent dictates of reason and conscience, and lives in vices condemned even by the heathens. O sirs, Christ has judged concerning such, and judged most righteously and most wisely, They do evil, and therefore hate the light, neither come they to the light, lest their deeds should be made manifest, and be reproved. But there is a light, that will make manifest, and reprove their works, to which they shall be compelled to come, and the painful scrutiny of which they shall be forced to abide.

§ 5. In the mean time, if you are determined to inquire no further into the matter now, give me leave at least, from a sincere concern that you may not heap upon your head more aggravated ruin, to entreat you, that you would be cautious how you expose yourself to yet greater danger, by what you must yourself own to be unnecessary, I mean, attempts to prevent others from believing the truth of the gospel. Leave them, for God's sake, and for your own, in possession of those pleasures and those hopes, which nothing but Christ and his grace can give them: and let not, as it were, carelessness to add to the guilt of an infidel, the tenfold damnation, which they who have been the perverters and destroyers of the souls of others, must expect to meet, if that gospel which they have so adversariously opposed shall prove, as it certainly will, a serious, and to them a dreadful, truth.

§ 6. If I cannot prevail here, but the pride of displaying a superiority of understanding should bear on such a reader, even in opposition to his own favourite maxims of the innocence of error, and the equal merit of all religions consistent with moral virtue, to do his utmost to trample down the gospel with

contempt. I would however dismiss him with one proposal, which I think the importance of the affair may fully justify. If you have done with your examination into Christianity, and determine to live and conduct yourself as if it were assuredly false, sit down then, and make a memorandum of that determination. Write it down; "On such a day of such a year, I deliberately resolved, that I would live and die rejecting Christianity myself, and doing all I could to overthrow it. This day I determined, not only to renounce all subjection to, and expectation from, Jesus of Nazareth, but also to make it a serious part of the business of my life, to destroy, as far as I possibly can, all regard to him in the minds of others, and to exert my most vigorous efforts, in the way of reasoning or of ridicule, to sink the credit of his religion, and if it be possible, to root it out of the world: in calm, steady defiance of that day, when his followers say, he shall appear in so much majesty and terror, to execute the vengeance threatened to his enemies." Dare you write this, and sign it? I firmly believe, that many a man, who would be thought a deist, and endeavours to increase the number, would not. And if you in particular dare not to do it, whence does that small remainder of caution arise? The cause is plain. There is in your conscience some secret apprehension, that this rejected, this opposed, this derided gospel, may after all prove true. And if there be such an apprehension, then let conscience do its office, and convict you of the impious madness of acting as if it were most certainly and demonstrably false. Let it tell you at large, how possible it is, that haply you may be found fighting against God, that, bold as you are in defying the terrors of the Lord, you may possibly fall into his hands; may chance to hear that despised sentence, which when you hear it from the mouth of the eternal Judge, you will not be able to despise. I will repeat it again, in spite of all your scorn, you may hear the King say to you, Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And now, go and pervert and burlesque the Scripture, go and lampoon the character of its heroes, and ridicule the sublime discourses of its prophets and its apostles; as some have done, who have left little behind them, but the short-lived monuments of their ignorance, their profaneness, and their malice. Go and spread like them the banners of infidelity, and pride thyself in the number of credulous creatures listed under them. But take heed, lest the insulted Galilean direct a secret arrow to thy heart, and stop thy licentious breath, before it has finished the next sentence thou wouldst utter against him.

§ 7. I will turn myself from the deist or the sceptic, and direct my address to the nominal Christian, if he may upon any terms be called a Christian, who heeds not, after all I have pleaded, a Christ to subject himself to the government and the grace of that Saviour, whose name he bears. O sinner, thou art turning away from my Lord, in whose cause I speak, but let me earnestly entreat thee seriously to consider, why thou art turning away, and to whom thou wilt go from him, whom thou acknowledgest to have the words of eternal life. You call yourself a Christian, and yet will not by any means be persuaded to seek salvation in good earnest from and through Jesus Christ, whom you call your Master and Lord. How do you for a moment excuse this negligence to your own conscience? If I had urged you on any controverted point, it might have altered the case. If I had laboured hard to make you the disciple of any particular party of Christians, your delay might have been more reasonable; nay, perhaps, your refusing to acquiesce might have been an act of apprehended duty to our common Master. But is it matter of controversy amongst Christians, whether there be a great, holy, and righteous God; and whether such a being, whom we agree to own, should be reverenced and loved, or neglected and dishonoured? Is it matter of controversy, whether a sinner should deeply and seriously repent of his sins, or whether he should go on in them? Is it a disputed point amongst us, whether Jesus became incarnate, and died upon the cross, for the redemption of sinners, or no? And if it be not, can it be disputed by them who believe him to be the Son of God and the Saviour of men, whether a sinner should seek to him, or neglect him? or whether one who professes to be a Christian, should depart from iniquity, or give himself up to the practice of it? Are the precepts of our great Master written so obscurely in his word, that there should be room seriously to question, whether he require a devout, holy, humble, spiritual, watchful, self-denying life, or whether he allow the contrary? Has Christ, after all his pretensions of bringing life and immortality to light, left it more uncertain than he found it, whether there be any future state of happiness and misery, or for whom these states are respectively intended? Is it a matter of controversy, whether God will, or will not, bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil? or whether, at the conclusion of that judgment, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal? You will not, I am sure, for very shame pretend any doubt about these things, and yet call yourself a Christian. Why then will you not be persuaded to lay them to heart, and to act as duty and interest so evidently require? Oh sinner, the cause is too obvious: a cause indeed quite unworthy of being called a reason. It is because thou art blinded and besotted with thy vanities and thy lusts. It is because thou hast some darling trifle

which charms thy imagination and thy senses, so that it is dearer to thee than God and Christ, than thy own soul and its salvation. It is my word, because thou art still under the influence of that carnal mind, which, whatever pious forms it may sometimes assume and pretend to, remains against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. And therefore, thou art in the very case of those wretches, concerning whom our Lord said in the days of his flesh, Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life, and therefore ye shall die in your sins.

8. In this case, I see not what it can signify, to renew those expostulations and addresses which I have made in the former chapters. As our blessed Redeemer says of those who rejected his gospel, Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father; so may I truly say with regard to you, I have endeavoured to show you in the plainest and the clearest words, both Christ and the Father; I have urged the obligations you are under to both; I have laid before you your guilt, and your condemnation. I have pointed out the only remedy; I have pointed out the Rock, on which I have built my own eternal hopes, and the way in which alone I expect salvation. I have recommended those things to you, which, if God gives me an opportunity, I will with my dying breath earnestly and affectionately recommend to my own children, and to all the dearest friends that I have upon earth, who may then be near me; esteeming it the highest token of my friendship, the surest proof of my love to them. And if believing the gospel to be true, you resolve to reject it; I have nothing further to say, but that you must abide by the consequence. Yet as Moses, when he went out from the presence of Pharaoh for the last time, finding his heart yet more hardened by all the judgments and deliverances with which he had formerly been exercised, denounced upon him God's passing through the land in terror, to smite the first-born with death, and warned him of that great and lamentable cry which the sword of the destroying angel should raise throughout all his realms; so will I, sinner, now when I am quitting thee, speak to thee yet again, whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt forbear, and denounce that much more terrible judgment, which the sword of divine vengeance, already whetted and drawn and bathed as it were in heaven, is preparing against thee; which shall end in a much more dreadful cry, though thou wert greater and more obstinate than that haughty monarch. Yes, sinner, that I may, with the apostle Paul, when turning to others who are more like to hear me, shake my raiment, and say, I am pure from your blood; I will once more tell you what the end of these things will be. And oh, that I could speak to purpose! Oh that I could thunder in thy ear such a peal of terror as might awaken thee, and be too loud to be drowned by all the noise of carnal mirth, or to be deadened by those dangerous opiates with which thou art endeavouring to stupefy thy conscience!

10. Seek what amusements and entertainments thou wilt. O sinner, I tell thee, if thou wert equal in dignity, and power, and magnificence, to the great monarch of Babylon, thy pomp should be brought down to the grave, and all the sound of thy viols, the worm should be spread under thee, and the worm shall cover thee. Yes, sinner, the end of these things is death; death in its most terrible sense to thee, if this continue thy governing temper. Thou canst avoid it; and, if it be possible for any thing that I can say to prevent, thou shalt not forget it. Your stomach is not the strength of stones, nor is your flesh of brass. You are accessible to diseases as well as others; and if some sudden accident do not prevent it, we shall soon see how heroically you will behave yourself on a dying bed, and in the near views of eternity. You that now despise Christ, and trifle with his gospel, we shall see you droop and languish; shall see all your relish for your carnal recreations, and your vain companions, lost. And if, perhaps, one and another of them bolt in upon you, and is brutish and desperate enough to attempt to entertain a dying man with a gay story, or a profane jest, we shall see how you will relish it. We shall see what comfort you will have in reflecting on what is past, or what hope in looking forward to what is to come. Perhaps, trembling and astonished, you will then be inquiring in a wild kind of consternation, what you should do to be saved; calling for the ministers of Christ, whom you now despise for the earnestness with which they would labour to save your soul; and it may be, falling into a delirium, or dying convulsions, before they can come. Or perhaps we may see you hoodwink yourself through a long lingering illness, that you shall still recover, and putting off any serious reflection and conversation, for fear it should overset your spirits. And the cruel kindness of friends and physicians, as if they were in league with Satan to make the destruction of your soul as sure as possible, may perhaps abet this fatal deceit.

11. And if any of these probabilities happen, that is, in short, unless a miracle of grace snatch you as a brand out of the burning, when the flames have, as it were, already taken hold of you: all these gloomy circumstances, which pass in the chambers of illness and the beds of death, are but the forerunners of infinitely more dreadful things. Oh, who can describe them? who can imagine them? When surviving friends are tenderly mourning over the breathless corpse, and taking a final farewell of it before it is laid to consume away in the dark and silent grave; what words, O sin-

ner, will thy soul be fallen! What scenes will open upon thy separate spirit, even before thy deserted flesh be cold, or thy sightless eyes are closed, it shall then know what it is to return to God to be rejected by him, as having rejected his gospel and his Son, and despised the only treaty of reconciliation; and that such a one, so amazingly condescending and gracious. Thou shalt know what it is to be disowned by Christ, whom thou hast refused to entertain: and what it is, as the certain and immediate consequence of that, to be left in the hands of the malignant spirits of hell. There will be no more friendship then; none to comfort, none to alleviate thy agony and distress; but, on the contrary, all around thee labouring to aggravate and increase them. Thou shalt pass away the intermediate years of the separate state in dreadful expectation, and bitter outcries of horror and remorse. And then thou shalt hear the trumpet of the archangel, in whatever cavern of that gloomy world thou art lodged. Its sound shall penetrate thy prison, where, doleful and horrible as it is, thou shalt nevertheless wish, that thou mightest still be allowed to hide thy guilty head, rather than show it before the face of that awful Judge, before whom heaven and earth are fleeing away. But thou must come forth, and be reunited to a body, not formed for ever to endure agonies, which in this mortal state would have dissolved it in a moment. You would not be persuaded to come to Christ before; you would stupidly neglect him, in spite of reason, in spite of conscience, in spite of all the tenderest solicitations of the gospel, and the repeated admonitions of its most faithful ministers. But now, sinner, you shall have an interview with him; if that may be called an interview, in which you will not dare to lift up your head to view the face of your tremendous and inexorable Judge. There, at least, how distant soever the time of our life and the place of our abode may have been, there shall we see how courageously your heart will endure, and how strong your hands will be, when the Lord doth this. There shall I see thee, O reader, whoever thou art, that goest on in thy impenitency, among thousands and ten thousands of despairing wretches, trembling and confounded. There shall I hear thy cries among the rest, rending the very heavens in vain. The Judge will rise from his tribunal with majestic composure, and leave thee to be hurried down to those everlasting burnings, to which his righteous vengeance hath doomed thee, because thou wouldst not be saved from them. Hell shall shut its mouth upon thee for ever, and the sad echo of thy groans and outcries shall be lost amidst the Hallelujahs of heaven, to all that find mercy of the Lord in that day.

§ 11. This will most assuredly be the end of those things, and thou, as a Christian, professest to know and to believe it. It moves my heart, at least, if it moves not thine. I firmly believe that every one, who himself obtains salvation and glory, will have so much of his Saviour's image in wisdom and goodness, in zeal for God, and a steady regard to the happiness of the whole creation, that he will behold this sad scene with calm approbation, and without any painful commotion of mind. But as yet I am flesh and blood; and therefore my bowels are troubled, and my eyes often overflow with grief, to think that wretched sinners will have no more compassion upon their own souls; to think, that in spite of all admonition they will obstinately run upon final everlasting destruction. It would signify nothing here to add a prayer, or a meditation, for your use. Poor creature! you will not meditate! you will not pray! Yet, as I have often poured out my heart in prayer over a dying friend, when the force of his distemper has rendered him incapable of joining with me; so I will now apply myself to God for you, O unhappy creature! And if you disdain so much as to read what my compassion dictates; yet I hope, they who have felt the power of the gospel on their own souls, as they cannot but pity such as you, will join with me in such cordial though broken petitions as these.

A Prayer in behalf of an impenitent sinner, in the case mentioned above.

"ALMIGHTY GOD! with thee all things are possible: to thee therefore do I humbly apply myself in behalf of this dear immortal soul, which thou here seest perishing in its sins, and hardening itself against that everlasting gospel, which has been the power of God to the salvation of so many thousands and millions. Thou art witness, O blessed God, thou art witness to the plainness and seriousness with which the message has been delivered. It is in thy presence that these awful words have been written; and in thy presence have they been read. Be pleased therefore to record it in the book of thy remembrance, that so if this wicked man dieth in his iniquity, after the warning has been so plainly and solemnly given him, his blood may not be required at my hand, nor at the hand of that Christian friend, whoever he is, by whom this book has been put into his, with a sincere desire for the salvation of his soul. Be witness, O blessed Jesus, in the day in which thou shalt judge the secret of all hearts, that thy gospel hath been preached to this hardened wretch, and salvation by thy blood hath been offered him, though he continue to despise it. And may thy unworthy messengers be unto God a sweet savour in Christ, in this very soul, even though it should at last perish!

"But, oh that, after all this hardness and impenitence, thou wouldst still be pleased, in the sove-

reign power of thine efficacious grace, to awaken and convert him! Well do we know, O thou Lord of universal nature, that he who made the soul, can cause the sword of conviction to come near and enter into it. Oh that, in thine infinite wisdom and love, thou wouldst find out a way to interpose and save this sinner from death, from eternal death! Oh that, if it be thy blessed will, thou wouldst immediately do it! Thou knowest, oh God, he is a dying creature; thou knowest, that if any thing be done for him, it must be done quickly; thou seest, in the book of thy wise and gracious decrees, a moment marked which must seal him up in an unchangeable state: oh that thou wouldst lay hold on him, while he is yet joined with the living, and hath hope! Thy immutable laws in the dispensation of grace forbid that a soul should be converted and renewed after its entrance on the invisible world; oh let thy sacred Spirit work while he is yet, as it were, within the sphere of its operations! Work, O God, by whatever method thou pleasest; only have mercy upon him! O Lord, have mercy upon him, that he sink not into those depths of damnation and ruin, on the very brink of which he so evidently appears! Oh that thou wouldst bring him, if that be necessary, and seem to thee most expedient, into any depths of calamity and distress! Oh that, with Manasseh, he may be taken in the thorns, and laden with the fetters, of affliction, if that may but cause him to seek the God of his fathers!

"But I prescribe not to thine infinite wisdom. Thou hast displayed thy power in glorious and astonishing instances; which I thank thee that I have so circumstantially known, and by the knowledge of them have been fortified against the rash confidence of those who weakly and arrogantly pronounce that to be impossible which is actually done. Thou hast, I know, done that by a single thought in retirement, when the happy man reclaimed by it hath been far from means, and far from ordinances, which neither the most awful admonitions, nor the most tender entreaties, nor the most terrible afflictions, nor the most wonderful deliverances, had been able to effect.

"Glorify thy name, O Lord, and glorify thy grace, in the method which to thine infinite wisdom shall seem most expedient! Only grant, I beseech thee, with all humble submission to thy will, that this sinner may be saved! Or if not, that the labour of this part may not be altogether in vain; but that if some reject it to their aggravated ruin, others may hearken and live: that those thy servants, who have laboured for their deliverance and happiness, may view them in the regions of glory, as the spoils which thou hast honoured them as the instruments of recovering; and may join with them in the hallelujahs of heaven, to him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us of condemned rebels, and accursed polluted sinners, kings and priests unto God; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen."

CHAP. XII.

An Address to a soul so overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness of its sins, that it dares not apply itself to Christ with any hope of salvation.

[illegible]

§ 1. I HAVE now done with those unhappy creatures who despise the gospel, and with those who neglect it. With pleasure do I now turn myself to those who will hear me with more regard. Among the various cases which now present themselves to my thoughts, and demand my tender, affectionate, respectful care, there is none more worthy of compassion than that which I have mentioned in the title of this chapter; none which requires a more immediate attempt of relief.

§ 2. It is very possible some afflicted creature may be ready to cry out, "It is enough: aggravate my grief and my distress no more. The sentence you have been so awfully describing, as what shall be passed and executed on the impenitent and unbelieving, is my sentence; and the terrors of it are my terrors. For my iniquities are gone up unto the heavens, and my transgressions have reached unto the clouds. My case is quite singular. Surely there never was so great a sinner as I. I have received so many mercies, I have enjoyed so many advantages, I have heard so many invitations of gospel grace; and yet my heart has been so hard, and my nature so exceeding sinful, and the number and aggravating circumstances of my provocations have been such, that I dare not hope. It is enough that God hath supported me thus long. It is enough that, after so many years of wickedness, I am yet out of hell. Every day's reprieve is a mercy at which I am astonished. I lie down, and wonder that death and damnation have not seized me in my walks the day past. I arise, and wonder that my bed hath not been my grave; wonder that my soul is not separated from the flesh, and surrounded with devils and damned spirits.

§ 3. "I have indeed heard the message of salvation; but alas, it seems no message of salvation to me. There are happy souls that have hope; and their hope is indeed in Christ, and the grace of God manifested in him. But them they find in their hearts an encouragement to apply to him; whereas I dare not do it. Christ and grace are things in which I fear I have no part, and must expect none.

There are exceeding rich and precious promises in the word of God; but they are to me as a sealed book, and are hid from me as to any personal use. I know Christ is able to save. I know he is willing to save some. But that he should be willing to save me, such a polluted, such a provoking, creature, as God knows, and as conscience knows, I have been, and to this day am: this I know not how to believe; and the utmost that I can do towards believing it, is to acknowledge that it is not absolutely impossible, and that I do not yet lie down in complete despair; though, alas, I seem upon the very borders of it, and expect every day and hour to fall into it."

§ 4. I should not perhaps have entered so fully into this case, if I had not seen many in it; and I will add, reader, for your encouragement, if it be your case, several who are now in the number of the most established, cheerful, and useful Christians. And I hope divine grace will add you to the rest, if out of these depths you be enabled to cry unto God; and though, like Jonah, you may seem to be cast out from his presence, yet still, with Jonah, you look towards his holy temple.

§ 5. Let it not be imagined that it is in any neglect of that blessed Spirit, whose office it is to be the great Comforter, that I now attempt to reason you out of this disconsolate frame. For it is as the great source of reason, that he deals with rational creatures; and it is in the use of rational means and considerations, that he may most justly be expected to operate. Give me leave therefore to address myself calmly to you, and to ask you, what reason you have for all these passionate complaints and accusations against yourself? What reason have you to suggest that your case is singular, when so many have told you that they have felt the same? What reason have you to conclude so hardly against yourself, when the gospel speaks in such favourable terms? or what reason to imagine, that the gracious things it says are not intended for you? You know indeed more of the corruptions of your own heart, than you know of the hearts of others, and you make a thousand charitable excuses for their visible failings and infirmities, which you make not for your own. And it may be, some of those whom you admire as eminent saints when compared with you, are on their part humbling themselves in the dust, as unworthy to be numbered amongst the least of God's people, and wishing themselves like you, in whom they think they see much more good, and much less of evil, than in themselves.

§ 6. But to suppose the worst, what if you were really the vilest sinner that ever lived upon the face of the earth? What if your iniquities had gone up unto the heavens every day, and your transgressions had reached unto the clouds; reached thither with such horrid aggravations, that earth and heaven should have had reason to detest you as a monster of impiety? Admitting all this, is any thing too hard for the Lord? Are any sins of which a sinner can repent, of so deep a dye that the blood of Christ cannot wash them away? Nay, though it would be daring wickedness and monstrous folly for any to sin that grace may abound, yet had you indeed raised your account beyond all that divine grace has ever yet pardoned, who should limit the Holy One of Israel? Or who should pretend to say, that it was impossible that God might for your very wretchedness choose you out from others, to make you a monument of mercy, and a trophy of hitherto unparalleled grace? The apostle Paul strongly intimates this to have been the case with regard to himself. And why might not you likewise, if indeed the chief of sinners obtain mercy, that in you, as the chief, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who shall hereafter believe?

§ 7. Gloomy as your apprehensions are, I would ask you plainly, Do you in your conscience think, that Christ is not able to save you? What! is he not able to save even to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him? Yes, you will say, abundantly able to do it; but I dare not imagine that he will do it. And how do you know that he will not? He has helped the very greatest sinners of all that have yet applied themselves to him; and he has made the offers of grace and salvation in the most engaging and encouraging terms. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And once more, Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. True, you will say, none that are given him by the Father. Could I know I were of that number, I could then apply cheerfully to him. But, dear reader, let me entreat you to look into the text itself, and see whether that limitation be expressly added there. Do you there read, none of them whom the Father hath given me shall be cast out? The words are in a much more encouraging form. And why should you frustrate his wisdom and goodness, by such an addition of your own? Add not to his words, lest he reprove thee: take them as they stand, and drink in the consolation of them. Our Lord knew into what perplexity some serious minds might possibly be thrown by what he had before been saying, All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me: and therefore, as if it were on purpose to balance it, he adds those gracious words, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise, by no means, on no consideration whatsoever, cast out.

§ 8. If therefore you are already discouraged and terrified at the greatness of your sins do not add to their weight and number that one greatest and worse

than all the rest, a distrust of the faithfulness and grace of the blessed Redeemer. Do not, so far as in you lies, oppose all the purposes of his love to you. O distressed soul, whom dost thou dread? to whom dost thou tremble to approach? Is there any thing so terrible in a crucified Redeemer, in the Lamb that was slain? If thou canst thy soul almost sinking under the burthen of its guilt to lay down at his feet, what dost thou offer him, but the spoil which he bled and died to recover and possess? And did he purchase it so dearly that he might reject it with disdain? Go to him directly, and fall down in his presence, and plead that misery of thine, which thou hast now been pleading in a contrary view, as an encouragement to your own soul to make the application, and as an argument with the compassionate Saviour to receive you. Go, and be assured, that where sin hath abounded there grace shall much more abound. Be assured, that if one sinner can promise himself a more certain welcome than another, it is not he that is least guilty and miserable, but he that is most deeply humbled before God under a sense of that misery and guilt, and lies the lowest in the apprehension of it.

Reflections on these encouragements, ending in an humble and earnest application to Christ for mercy.

"O my soul, what sayest thou to these things? Is there not at least a possibility of help from Christ? and is there a possibility of help any other way? Is any other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved? I know there is none. I must then say, like the lepers of Israel, if I sit here I perish; and if I make my application in vain, I can but die. But, peradventure, he may save my soul alive. I will therefore arise, and go unto him; or rather, believing him here, by his spiritual presence, sinful and miserable as I am, I will this moment fall down on my face before him, and pour out my soul unto him.

"Blessed Jesus, I present myself unto thee, as a wretched creature; driven indeed by necessity to do it. For surely, were not that necessity urgent and absolute, I should not dare for very shame to appear in thy holy and majestic presence. I am fully convinced that my sins and my follies have been inexcusably great; more than I can express, more than I can conceive. I feel a source of sin in my corrupt and degenerate nature, which pours out iniquity, as a fountain sends out its water, and makes me a burthen and a terror to myself. Such aggravations have attended my transgressions, that it looks like presumption so much as to ask pardon for them. And yet, would it not be greater presumption to say, that they exceed thy mercy, and the efficacy of thy blood; to say, that thou hast power and grace enough to pardon and save only sinners of a lower order, while such as I lie out of thy reach? Preserve me from that blasphemous imagination! preserve me from that unreasonable suspicion! Lord, thou canst do all things, neither is there any thought of mine heart withholden from thee. Thou art indeed, as thy word declares, able to save unto the uttermost. And therefore, breaking through all the oppositions of shame and fear, that would keep me from thee, I come and lie down as in the dust before thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, all my sins, and all my follies. I cannot, and I hope I may say, I would not, disguise them before thee, or set myself to find out plausible excuses. Accuse me, Lord, as thou pleasest; and I will ingenuously plead guilty to all thine accusations, I will own myself as great a sinner as thou callest me; but I am still a sinner that comes unto thee for pardon. If I must die, it shall be submitting and owning the justice of the fatal stroke. If I perish, it shall be laying hold, as it were, on the horns of the altar: laying myself down at thy footstool, though I have been such a rebel against thy throne. Many have received a full pardon there; have met with favour even beyond their hopes. And are all thy compassions, O blessed Jesus, exhausted! And wilt thou now begin to reject a humble creature, who flies to thee for life, and pleads nothing but mercy and free grace? Have mercy upon me, O most gracious Redeemer, have mercy upon me, and let my life be precious in thy sight! O do not resolve to send me down to that state of final misery and despair, from which it was thy gracious purpose to deliver and save so many!

"Spurn me not away, O Lord, from thy presence, nor be offended when I presume to lay hold on thy royal robe, and say that I cannot and will not let thee go, till my suit is granted! O remember, that all my hopes of obtaining eternal happiness, and avoiding everlasting, helpless, hopeless destruction, are anchored upon thee; they hang upon thy smiles, or drop at thy frown. Oh have mercy upon me, for the sake of this immortal soul of mine! or if not for the sake of mine alone, for the sake of many others, who may, on the one hand, be encouraged by thy mercy to me, or, on the other, may be greatly wounded and discouraged by my helpless despair! I beseech thee, O Lord, for thine own sake, and for the display of thy Father's rich and sovereign grace! I beseech thee by the blood thou didst shed on the cross! I beseech thee by the covenant of grace and peace, into which the Father did enter with thee for the salvation of believing and repenting sinners, save me! Save me, O Lord, who earnestly desire to repent and believe! I am indeed a sinner, in whose final and everlasting destruction thy justice might be greatly glorified. But oh if thou wilt pardon me, it will be a monument raised to the honour of thy grace, and the efficacy of thy blood, in propor-

portion to the degree in which the wretch, to whom thy mercy is extended, was mean and miserable without it. Speak, Lord, by thy blessed Spirit, and banish my fears! Look upon me with love and grace in thy countenance, and say to me, as in the days of thy flesh thou didst to many an humble supplicant, Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace!"

CHAP. XIII.

The doubting soul more particularly assisted in its inquiries as to the sincerity of its faith and repentance.

THERE is inquiry which leads to [illegible] which [illegible] § 1. Inquire seriously, in the first place, what views you have had of sin, and what sentiments you have felt in your soul with regard to it. § 2. Put the inquiries, What views have you had of Christ? and what sentiments have you felt of him? § 3. What views have you had of sin? and what sentiments have you felt of it? § 4. What views have you had of God? and what sentiments have you felt of him? § 5. And what resolutions have you made with regard to your future conduct? § 6. Now [illegible] § 7. The soul submitting to divine [illegible] sincerity of its faith and repentance.

§ 1. In consequence of all the serious things which have been said in the former chapters, I hope it will be no false presumption to imagine, that some religious impressions may be made on hearts which had never felt them before; or may be revived, where they have formerly grown cold and languid. Yet I am very sensible, and I desire that you may be so, how great danger there is of self-flattery on this important head; and how necessary it is to caution men against too hasty a conclusion, that they are really converted, because they have felt some warm emotions on their minds, and have reformed the gross irregularities of their former conduct. A mistake here might be infinitely fatal; it may prove the occasion of that false peace, which shall lead a man to bless himself in his own heart, and to conclude himself secure, while all the threatenings and curses of God's law are sounding in his ears, and lie indeed directly against him; while in the mean time he applies to himself a thousand promises in which he has no share, which may prove therefore like generous wine to a man in a high fever, or strong opiates to one in a lethargy. The stony ground received the word with joy, and a promising harvest seemed to be springing up; yet it soon withered away, and no reaper filled his arms with it. Now, that this may not be the case with you, that all my labours and yours hitherto may not be lost, and that a vain dream of security and happiness may not plunge you deeper in misery and ruin, give me leave to lead you into a serious inquiry into your own heart, that so you may be better able to judge of your case, and to distinguish between what it is at most being only near the kingdom of heaven, and becoming indeed a member of it.

§ 2. Now this depends upon the sincerity of your faith in Christ, when faith is taken in its largest extent, as explained above; that is, as comprehending repentance, and that steady purpose of new and universal obedience, of which, wherever it is real, faith will assuredly be the vital principle. Therefore, to assist you in judging of your state, give me leave to ask you, or rather to entreat you to ask yourself, what views you have had, and now have, of sin, and of Christ? and what your future purposes are, with regard to your conduct in the remainder of life that may lie before you? I shall not reason largely upon the several particulars I suggest under those heads, but rather refer you to your own reading and observation, to judge how agreeable they are to the word of God, the great rule by which our characters must quickly be tried, and our eternal state unalterably determined.

§ 3. Inquire seriously, in the first place, what views you have had of sin, and what sentiments you have felt in your soul with regard to it. There was a time, when it wore a flattering aspect, and made a fair enchanting appearance, so that all your heart was charmed with it, and it was the very business of your life to practise it. But you have since been undeceived. You have felt it bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder. You have beheld it with an abhorrence, far greater than the delight which it ever gave you. So far it is well. It is thus with every true penitent, and with some, I fear, who are not of that number. Let me therefore inquire further, whence arose this abhorrence? Was it merely from a principle of self-love? Was it merely because you had been wounded by it? Was it merely because you had thereby brought condemnation and ruin upon your own soul? Was there no sense of its deformity, of its baseness, of its malignity, as committed against the blessed God, considered as a glorious, a bountiful, and a merciful Being? Were you never pierced by an apprehension of its vile ingratitude? And as for those purposes which have arisen in your heart against it, let me beseech you to reflect, how they have been formed, and how they have hitherto been executed. Have they been universal? Have they been resolute? And yet, amidst all that resolution, have they been humble? When you declared war with sin, was it with every sin? And is it an irreconcilable war, which you determine, by divine grace, to push on till you have entirely conquered it, or die in the attempt? And are you accordingly active in your endeavours to subdue and destroy it? If so, what are the fruits worthy of repentance which you bring forth? It does not, I hope, all flow away in floods of grief. Have you ceased to do evil? Are you learning to do well? Doth your reformation show, that you repent of your sins? or do your renewed relapses into sin prove, that you repent even of what you call your repentance? Have you an inward abhorrence of all sin, and an unfeigned zeal against it? And doth that produce a care to guard

against the occasions of it, and temptations to it? Do you watch against the circumstances that have ensnared you? And do you particularly exercise your guard against that sin which does most easily beset you? Is that laid aside, that the Christian race may be run? Said aside with a firm determination, that you will return to it no more, that you will hold no more parley with it, that you will never take another step towards it?

§ 4. Permit me also further to inquire, what your views of Christ have been? what think you of him, and of your concern with him? Have you been fully convinced, that there must be a correspondence settled between him and your soul? And do you see and feel, that you are not only to pay him a kind of distant homage, and transient compliment, as a very wise, benevolent, and excellent person, whose name and memory you have a reverence for; but that, as he lives and reigns, as he is ever near you, and always observing you, so you must look to him, must approach him, must humbly transact business with him, and that business of the highest importance, on which your salvation depends?

§ 5. You have been brought to inquire, wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? And once, perhaps, you were thinking of sacrifices, which your own stores might have been sufficient to furnish out. Are you now convinced they will not suffice; and that you must have recourse to the Lamb which God hath provided? Have you had a view of Jesus, as taking away the sin of the world? as made a sin-offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him? Have you viewed him as perfectly righteous in himself? and despairing of being justified by any righteousness of your own, have you submitted to the righteousness of God? Has your heart ever been brought to a deep conviction of this important truth, that if ever you are saved at all, it must be through Christ; that if ever God extend mercy to you at all, it must be for his sake; that if ever you are fixed in the temple of God above, you must stand there as an everlasting trophy of that victory which Christ has gained over the powers of hell, who would otherwise have triumphed over you?

§ 6. Our Lord says, Look unto me, and be ye saved: he says, If I be lifted up, I shall draw all men unto me. Have you looked to him as the only Saviour? Have you been drawn unto him by that sacred magnet, the attracting influence of his dying love? Do you know what it is, to come to Christ as a poor, weary, and heavy laden sinner, that you may find rest? Do you know what it is, in a spiritual sense, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man; that is, to look upon Christ crucified as the great support of your soul, and to feel a desire after him, earnest as the appetite of nature after its necessary food? Have you known what it is cordially to surrender yourself to Christ, as a poor creature whom love has made his property? Have you committed your immortal soul to him, that he may purify and save it; that he may govern it by the dictates of his word and the influences of his Spirit; that he may use it for his glory; that he may appoint it to what exercise and discipline he pleases, while it dwells here in flesh; and that he may receive it at death, and fix it among those spirits who with perpetual songs of praise surround his throne, and are his servants for ever? Have you heartily consented to this? and do you, on this account of the matter, renew your consent? Do you renew it deliberately and determinately, and feel your whole soul, as it were, saying Amen, while you read this? If this be the case, then I can with great pleasure give you, as it were, the right hand of fellowship, and salute and embrace you as a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, as one who is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of the Son of God. I can then salute you in the Lord, as one to whom, as a minister of Jesus, I am commissioned and charged to speak comfortably, and to tell you, not that I absolve you from your sins, for it is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, but that the blessed God himself absolveth you; that you are one to whom he has said in his gospel, and is continually saying, Your sins are forgiven you; therefore go in peace, and take the comfort of it.

§ 7. But if you are a stranger to these experiences, and to this temper, which I have now described, the great work is yet undone; you are an impenitent and unbelieving sinner, and the wrath of God abideth on you. However you may have been awakened and alarmed, whatever resolutions you may have formed for amending your life, how right soever your notions may be, how pure soever your forms of worship, how ardent soever your zeal, how severe soever your mortification, how humane soever your temper, how inoffensive soever your life may be, I can speak no comfort to you. Vain are all your religious hopes, if there has not been a cordial humiliation before the presence of God for all your sins; if there has not been this avowed war declared against every thing displeasing to God; if there has not been this sense of your need of Christ, and of your ruin without him; if there has not been this earnest application to him, this surrender of your soul into his hands by faith, this renunciation of yourself, that you might fix on him the anchor of your hope; if there has not been this unreserved dedication of yourself to be at all times, and in all respects, the faithful servant of God through him; and if you do not with all this acknowledge, that you are an unprofitable servant, who have no other expectations of acceptance or

of pardon, but only through his righteousness and blood, and through the riches of divine grace in him; I repeat it again, that all your hopes are vain, and you are building on the sand. The house you have already raised must be thrown down to the ground, and the foundation be removed and laid anew, or you, and all your hopes, will shortly be swept away with it, and buried under it in everlasting ruin.

The soul submitting to divine examination, the sincerity of its repentance and faith.

"O LORD God, thou searchest all hearts, and triest the reins of the children of men. Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Doth not conscience, O Lord, testify in thy presence, that my repentance and faith are such as have been described, or at least that it is my earnest prayer, that they may be so? Come therefore, O thou blessed Spirit, who art the author of all grace and consolation, and work this temper more fully in my soul! Oh represent sin to my eyes in all its most odious colours, that I may feel a mortal and irreconcilable hatred to it! Oh represent the majesty and mercy of the blessed God in such a manner, that my heart may be alarmed, and that it may be melted! smite the rock, that the waters may flow; waters of genuine, undissembled, and filial repentance! Convince me, O thou blessed Spirit, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment! Show me that I have undone myself, but that my help is found in God alone, in God through Christ, in whom alone he will extend compassion and help to me! According to thy peculiar office, take of Christ and show it unto me! Show me his power to save! Show me his willingness to exert that power! Teach my faith to behold him, as extended on the cross, with open arms, and with a piercing bleeding side; and so telling me, in the most forcible language, what room there is in his very heart for me! May I know what it is to have my whole heart subdued by love; so subdued as to be crucified with him; as to be dead to sin, and dead to the world, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ! In his power and love may I confide! To him may I without any reserve commit my spirit! His image may I bear! His laws may I observe! His service may I pursue! And may I remain, through time and eternity, a monument of the efficacy of his gospel, and a trophy of his victorious grace!

"Oh blessed God! if there be any thing wanting towards constituting me a sincere Christian, discover it to me, and work it in me! Beat down, I beseech thee, every false and presumptuous hope, how costly soever that building may have been which is thus laid in ruins, and how proud soever I may have been of its vain ornaments! Let me know the worst of my case, be that knowledge ever so distressful, and if there be remaining danger, O let my heart be fully sensible of it, sensible while yet there is remedy!

"If there be any secret sin yet lurking in my soul, which I have not sincerely renounced, discover it to me, and rend it out of my heart, though it should have shot its roots ever so deep, and should have wrapped them all around it, so that every nerve should be pained by the separation! Tear it away, O Lord, by a hand graciously severe! And by degrees, yea, Lord, by speedy advances, go on, I beseech thee, to perfect what is still lacking in my faith! Accomplish in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness: enrich me, O heavenly Father, with all the graces of thy Spirit: form me to the complete image of thy dear Son: and then, for his sake, come unto me, and manifest thy gracious presence in my soul, till it is ripened for that state of glory for which all these operations are intended to prepare it! Amen."

CHAP. XIV.

A more particular view of the several branches of the Christian temper, by which the reader may be further assisted in judging what he is, and what he should endeavour to be.

The importance of the case proposed [illegible] a more particular view of the several branches of the Christian temper, by which the reader may be further assisted in judging what he is, and what he should endeavour to be. As [illegible] to direct us [illegible] by which [illegible] temper, [illegible] As [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

acquainted with it. Happy will you be, happy beyond expression, if, as you go on from one article to another, you can say, "This is my temper and character." Happy, in no inconsiderable degree, if you can say, "This is what I desire, what I pray for, and what I pursue, in preference to every opposite view, though it be not what I have as yet attained."

§ 2. Search then, and try what manner of spirit you are of. And may he that searcheth all hearts direct the inquiry, and enable you so to judge yourself, that you may not be condemned of the Lord!

§ 3. Know in the general, that if you are a Christian indeed, you have been renewed in the spirit of your mind; so renewed, as to be regenerated and born again. It is not enough to have assumed a new name, to have been brought under some new restraints, or to have made a partial change in some particulars of your conduct. The change must be great and universal. Inquire then, whether you have entertained new apprehensions of things, have formed a practical judgment different from what you formerly did; whether the ends you propose, the affections which you feel working in your heart, and the course of action to which, by those affections, you are directed, be on the whole new or old?* Again, if you are a Christian indeed, you are partaker of a divine nature; divine in its original, its tendency, and its resemblance. Inquire therefore, whether God hath implanted a principle in your heart, which tends to him, and which makes you like him.—Search your soul attentively, to see if you have really the image there of God's moral perfections, of his holiness and righteousness, his goodness and fidelity; for the new man is after God created in righteousness and true holiness, and is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

§ 4. For your further assistance inquire, whether the same mind be in you which was also in Christ! whether you bear the image of God's incarnate Son, the brightest and fairest resemblance of the Father, which earth or heaven has ever beheld? The blessed Jesus designed himself to be a model for all his followers; and he is certainly a model most fit for our imitation; an example in our own nature, and in circumstances adapted to general use; an example, recommended to us at once by its spotless perfection, and by the endearing relations in which he stands to us, as our Master, our Friend, and our Head; as the person by whom our everlasting state is to be fixed, and in a resemblance to whom our final happiness is to consist, if ever we be happy at all. Look then into the life and temper of Christ, as described and illustrated in the gospels, and search whether you can find any thing like it in your own life. Have you any thing of his devotion, love, and resignation to God? Any thing of his humility, meekness, and benevolence to men? Any thing of his purity and wisdom, his contempt of the world, his patience, his fortitude, his zeal? And indeed all the other branches of the Christian temper, which do not imply previous guilt in the person by whom they are exercised, may be called in to illustrate and assist your inquiries under this head.

§ 5. Let me add, if you are a Christian, you are in the main spiritually minded, as knowing that it is life and peace, whereas to be carnally-minded is death. Though you live in the flesh, you will not war after it; you will not take your orders and your commands from it. You will indeed attend to its necessary interests, as matter of duty, but it will still be with regard to another and a nobler interest, that of the rational and immortal spirit. Your thoughts, your affections, your pursuits, your choice, will be determined by a regard to things spiritual, rather than carnal. In a word, you will walk by faith, and not by sight. Future, invisible, and in some degree incomprehensible, objects, will take up your mind. Your faith will act on the being of God, his perfections, his providences, his precepts, his threatenings, and his promises. It will act upon Christ, whom having not seen, you will love and honour. It will act on that unseen world, which it knows to be eternal, and therefore infinitely more worthy of your affectionate regard, than any of those things which are seen, and are temporal.

§ 6. These are general views of the Christian temper, on which I would entreat you to examine yourself. And now I would go on to lead you into a survey of the grand branches of it, as relating to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; and of those qualifications, which must attend each of these branches, such as sincerity, constancy, tenderness, zeal, and prudence. And I beg your diligent attention, while I lay before you a few hints with regard to each, by which you may judge the better, both of your state and your duty.

§ 7. Examine then, I entreat you, the temper of your heart, with regard to the blessed God. Do you find there a reverential fear, and a supreme love and veneration for his incomparable excellences, a desire after him as the highest good, and a cordial gratitude towards him as your supreme Benefactor? Can you trust his care? Can you credit his testimony? Do you desire to pay an unreserved obedience to all that he commands, and a humble submission to all the disposals of his providence? Do you design his glory as your noblest end, and make it the great business of your life to approve yourself to him? Is it your governing care to imitate him, and to serve him in spirit and in truth?

§ 8. Faith in Christ I have already described at large; and therefore shall say nothing further, either of that persuasion of his power and grace, which is

* The reader may see these thoughts illustrated at large in the three first of my Sermons on Regeneration.

the great foundation of it; or of that acceptance of Christ under all his characters, or that surrender of the soul into his hands, in which its peculiar and distinguishing nature consists.

§ 9. If this faith in Christ be sincere, it will undoubtedly produce a love to him; which will express itself in affectionate thoughts of him; in strict fidelity to him; in a careful observation of his charge; in a regard to his Spirit, to his friends, and to his interests; in a reverence to the memorials of his dying love which he has instituted; and in an ardent desire after that heavenly world where he dwells, and where he will at length have all his people to dwell with him.

§ 10. I may add, agreeably to the word of God, that thus believing in Christ, and loving him, you will also rejoice in him; in his glorious design, and in his complete fitness to accomplish it; in the promises of his word, and in the privileges of his people. It will be matter of joy to you, that such a Redeemer has appeared in this world of ours; and your joy for yourselves will be proportionable to the degree of clearness with which you discern your interest in him, and relation to him.

§ 11. Let me further lead you into some reflections on the temper of your heart towards the blessed Spirit. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his. If we are not led by the Spirit of God, we are not the children of God. You will then, if you are a real Christian, desire that you may be filled with the Spirit, that you may have every power of your soul subject to his authority; that his agency on your heart be more constant, more operative, and more delightful. And to cherish these sacred influences, you will often have recourse to serious consideration and meditation; you will abstain from those sins, which tend to grieve him; you will improve the tender seasons, in which he seems to breathe upon your soul; you will strive earnestly with God in prayer, that you may have him shed on you still more abundantly through Jesus Christ; and you will be desirous to fall in with the great end of his mission, which was to glorify Christ, and to establish his kingdom. You will desire his influences as the Spirit of adoption, to render your acts of worship free and affectionate, your obedience vigorous, your sorrow for sin overflowing and tender, your resignation meek, and your love ardent; in a word, to carry you through life and death, with the temper of a child, who delights in his father, and who longs for his more immediate presence.

§ 12. Once more, if you are a Christian indeed, you will be desirous to obtain the spirit of courage. Amidst all that humility of soul to which you will be formed, you will wish to commence a hero in the cause of Christ, opposing with a vigorous resolution the strongest efforts of the powers of darkness, the inward corruption of your own heart, and all the outward difficulties you may meet with in the way of your duty, while in the cause and in the strength of Christ you go on conquering and to conquer.

§ 13. All these things may be considered as branches of godliness; of that godliness which is profitable unto all things, and hath the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

§ 14. Let me now further lay before you some branches of the Christian temper, which relate more immediately to ourselves. And here, if you are a Christian indeed, you will undoubtedly prefer the soul to the body, and things eternal to those that are temporal. Conscious of the dignity and value of your immortal part, you will come to a firm resolution to secure its happiness, whatever is to be resigned, whatever is to be endured, in that view.—If you are a real Christian, you will also be clothed with humility. You will have a deep sense of your own imperfections, both natural and moral; of the short extent of your knowledge; of the uncertainty and weakness of your resolutions; and of your continual dependence upon God, and upon almost every thing about you. And especially, you will be deeply sensible of your guilt, the remembrance of which will fill you with shame and confusion, even when you have some reason to hope it is forgiven. This will forbid all haughtiness and insolence in your behaviour to your fellow-creatures. It will teach you, under afflictive providences, with all holy submission to bear the indignation of the Lord, as those that know they have sinned against him.—Again, if you are a Christian indeed, you will labour after purity of soul, and maintain a fixed abhorrence of all prohibited sensual indulgence. A recollection of past impurities will fill you with shame and grief; and you will endeavour for the future to guard your thoughts and desires, as well as your words and actions; and to abstain, not only from the commission of evil, but from the distant appearance and probable occasions of it; as conscious of the perfect holiness of that God with whom you converse, and the purifying nature of that hope, which by his gospel he hath taught you to entertain.

§ 15. With this is nearly allied that amiable virtue of temperance, which will teach you to guard against such a use of meats and drinks as indisposes the body for the service of the soul: or such an indulgence in either as will rob you of that precious jewel, your time, or occasion an expense beyond what your circumstances will admit, and beyond what will consist with those liberalities to the poor which your relation and theirs to God and each other will require. In short, you will guard against whatever has a tendency to increase a sensual disposition; against whatever would alienate the soul

from communion with God, and would diminish its zeal and activity in his service.

§ 16. The divine philosophy of the blessed Jesus will also teach you a contented temper. It will moderate your desires of those worldly enjoyments, after which many feel such an insatiable thirst, ever growing with indulgence and success. You will guard against an immoderate care about those things which would lead you into a forgetfulness of your heavenly inheritance. If Providence disappoint your undertakings, you will submit. If others be more prosperous, you will not envy them; but rather will be thankful for what God is pleased to bestow upon them, as well as for what he gives you. No unlawful methods will be used to alter your present condition; and whatever it is, you will endeavour to make the best of it; remembering, it is what infinite wisdom and goodness have appointed you, and that it is beyond all comparison better than you have deserved; yea, that the very deficiencies and inconveniences of it may conduce to the improvement of your future and complete happiness.

§ 17. With contentment, if you are a disciple of Christ, you will join patience too, and in patience will possess your souls. You cannot indeed be quite insensible, either of afflictions, or of injuries; but your mind will be calm and composed under them, and steady in the prosecution of proper duty, though afflictions press, and though your hopes, your dearest hopes and prospects, be delayed. Patience will prevent rash and hasty conclusions, and fortify you against seeking irregular methods of relief; disposing you in the mean time, till God shall be pleased to appear for you, to go on steadily in the way of your duty, committing yourself to him in well doing. You will also be careful, that patience may have its perfect work, and prevail in proportion to those circumstances which demand its peculiar exercise. For instance, when the successions of evil are long and various, so that deep calls to deep, and all God's waves and billows seem to be going over you one after another; when God touches you in the most tender part; when the reasons of his conduct to you are quite unaccountable; when your natural spirits are weak and decayed; when unlawful methods of redress seem near and easy; still your reverence for the will of your heavenly Father will carry it against all, and keep you waiting quietly for deliverance in his own time and way.

[N. B. *If this chapter seem too long to be read at once, it may properly be divided here.*]

§ 18. I have thus led you into a brief review of the Christian temper, with respect to God and ourselves: permit me now to add, that the gospel will teach you another set of very important lessons with respect to your fellow creatures. They are all summed up in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; and whatsoever thou wouldst that is, whatsoever thou couldst in an exchange of circumstances fairly and reasonably desire, that others should do unto thee, do thou likewise the same unto them. The religion of the blessed Jesus, when it triumphs in your soul, will conquer the predominancy of an irregular self-love, and will teach you candidly and tenderly to look upon your neighbour as another self. As you are sensible of your own rights, you will be sensible of his; as you support your own character, you will support his. You will desire his welfare, and be ready to relieve his necessity, as you would have your own consulted by another. You will put the kindest construction upon his dubious words and actions. You will take pleasure in his happiness; you will feel his distress, in some measure, as your own. And most happy will you be, when this obvious rule is familiar to your mind; when this golden law is written upon your heart; and when it is habitually and impartially consulted by you, upon every occasion, whether great or small.

§ 19. The gospel will also teach you to put on meekness, not only with respect to God, submitting to the authority of his word, and the disposal of his providence, as was urged before; but also with regard to your brethren of mankind. Its gentle instructions will form you to calmness of temper under injuries and provocations, so that you may not be angry without or beyond just cause. It will engage you to guard your words, lest you provoke and exasperate those you should rather study by love to gain, and by tenderness to heal. Meekness will render you slow in using any rough and violent methods, if they can by any means be lawfully avoided; and ready to admit, and even to propose, a reconciliation, after they have been entered into, if there may yet be hope of succeeding. So far as this branch of the Christian temper prevails in your heart, you will take care to avoid every thing which might give unnecessary offence to others; you will behave yourself in a modest manner, according to your station; and it will work, both with regard to superiors and inferiors; teaching you duly to honour the one, and not to overbear or oppress, to grieve or insult, the other. And in religion itself, it will restrain all immoderate sallies and harsh censures; and will command down that wrath of man, which instead of working, so often opposes, the righteousness of God, and shames and wounds that good cause, in which it is boisterously and furiously engaged.

§ 20. With this is naturally connected a peaceful disposition. If you are a Christian indeed, you will have such a value and esteem for peace, as to endeavour to obtain and to preserve it, as much as lieth in you, as much as you fairly and honour-

ably can. This will have such an influence upon your conduct, as to make you not only cautious of giving offence, and slow in taking it, but earnestly desirous to regain peace as soon as may be, when it is in any measure broken; that the wound may be healed while it is green, and before it begins to rankle and fester. And more especially this disposition will engage you to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; whom, if you truly love, you will also love all those whom you have reason to believe to be his disciples and servants.

§ 21. If you be yourselves indeed of that number, you will also put on bowels of mercy. The mercies of God, and those of the blessed Redeemer, will work on your heart, to mould it to sentiments of compassion and generosity, so that you will feel the wants and sorrows of others; you will desire to relieve their necessities, and, as you have an opportunity, you will do good both to their bodies and their souls; expressing your kind affections in suitable actions, which may both evince their sincerity, and render them effectual.

§ 22. As a Christian, you will also maintain truth inviolable, not only in your solemn testimonies, when confirmed by an oath, but likewise in common conversation. You will remember, too, that your promises bring an obligation upon you which you are by no means at liberty to break through. On the whole, you will be careful to keep a strict correspondence between your words and your actions, in such a manner as becomes a servant of the God of truth.

§ 23. Once more, as amidst the strictest care to observe all the divine precepts, you will still find many imperfections, on account of which you will be obliged to pray, that God would not enter into strict judgment with you, as well knowing that in his sight you cannot be justified; you will be careful not to judge others in such a manner as should awaken the severity of his judgment against yourself. You will not, therefore, judge them pragmatically, that is, when you have nothing to do with their actions; nor rashly, without inquiring into circumstances; nor partially, without weighing them attentively and fairly; nor uncharitably, putting the worst construction upon things in their own nature dubious, deciding upon intentions as evil further than they certainly appear to be so, pronouncing on the state of men, or on the whole of their character, from any particular action, and involving the innocent with the guilty. There is a moderation contrary to all these extremes, which the gospel recommends; and if you receive the gospel in good earnest into your heart, it will lay the axe to the root of such evils as these.

§ 24. Having thus briefly illustrated the principal branches of the Christian temper and character, I shall conclude the representation with reminding you of some general qualifications, which must be mingled with all, and give a tincture to each of them; such as sincerity, constancy, tenderness, zeal, and prudence.

§ 25. Always remember, that sincerity is the very soul of true religion. A single intention to please God, and to approve ourselves to him, must animate and govern all that we do in it. Under the influence of this principle, you will impartially inquire into every intimation of duty, and apply to the practice of it so far as it is known to you. Your heart will be engaged in all you do. Your conduct in private and in secret will be agreeable to your most public behaviour. A sense of the divine authority will teach you to esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and to hate every false way.

§ 26. Thus are you in simplicity and godly sincerity to have your conversation in the world. And you are also to charge it upon your soul to be stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. There must not only be some sudden fits and starts of devotion, or of something which looks like it; but religion must be an habitual and permanent thing. There must be a purpose to adhere to it at all times. It must be made the stated and ordinary business of life. Deliberate and presumptuous sins must be carefully avoided; a guard must be maintained against the common infirmities of life; and falls of one kind or of another must be matter of proportionable humiliation before God, and must occasion renewed resolutions for his service. And thus you are to go on to the end of your life, not discouraged by the length and difficulty of the way; nor allured on the one hand, or terrified on the other, by all the various temptations which may surround and assault you. Your soul must be fixed on this basis, and you are still to behave yourself as one who knows he serves an unchangeable God, and who expects from him a kingdom which cannot be moved.

§ 27. Again, so far as the gospel prevails in your heart, your spirit will be tender, and the stone will be transformed into flesh. You will desire, that your apprehension of divine things may be quick, your affections ready to take proper impressions, your conscience always easily touched, and, on the whole, your resolutions pliant to the divine authority, and cordially willing to be, and to do, whatever God shall appoint. You will have a tender regard to the word of God, a tender caution against sin, a tender guard against the snares of prosperity, a tender submission to God's afflicting hand; in a word, you will be tender, wherever the divine honour is concerned; and careful, neither to do any thing yourself, nor to allow any thing in another, so far as you can influence, by which God should be offended, or religion reproached.

§ 28. Nay more than all this, you will, so far as true Christianity governs in your mind, exert a holy zeal in the service of your Redeemer and your Father. You will be zealously affected in every good thing, in proportion to its apprehended goodness and importance. You will be zealous, especially, to correct what is irregular in yourselves, and to act to the utmost of your ability for the cause of God. Nor will you be able to look with an indifferent eye on the conduct of others in this view; but so far as charity, meekness, and prudence, will admit, you will testify your disapprobation of every thing in it which is dishonourable to God, and injurious to men. And you will labour, not only to reclaim men from such courses, but to engage them to religion, and to quicken them in it.

§ 29. And once more, you will desire to use the prudence which God hath given you, in judging what is, in present circumstances, your duty to God, your neighbour, and yourself; what will be, on the whole, the most acceptable manner of discharging it, and how far it may be most advantageously pursued; as remembering, that he is indeed the wisest and the happiest man, who, by constant attention of thought, discovers the greatest opportunities of doing good, and with ardent and animated resolution breaks through every opposition, that he may improve those opportunities.

§ 30. This is such a view of the Christian temper as could conveniently be thrown within such narrow limits: and I hope it may assist many in the great and important work of self-examination. Let your own conscience answer, how far you have already attained it, and how far you desire it; and let the principal topics here touched upon be fixed in your memory and in your heart, that you may be mentioning them before God in your daily addresses to the throne of grace, in order to receive from him all necessary assistances for bringing them into practice.

A Prayer chiefly in Scripture language, in which the several branches of the Christian temper are more briefly enumerated in the order laid down above.

"Blessed God, I humbly adore thee, as the great Father of lights, and the giver of every good and every perfect gift. From thee therefore I seek every blessing, and especially those which may lead me to thyself, and prepare me for the eternal enjoyment of thee. I adore thee, as the God who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. May I know what manner of spirit I am of, and be preserved from mistaking, where the error might be infinitely fatal!

"May I, O Lord, be renewed in the spirit of my mind! A new heart do thou give me, and a new spirit do thou put within me! Make me partaker of a divine nature; and as he who hath called me is holy, may I be holy in all manner of conversation! May the same mind be in me which was in Christ Jesus: and may I so walk even as he walked! Deliver me from being carnally minded, which is death; and make me spiritually minded, since that is life and peace. And may I, while I pass through this world of sense, walk by faith, and not by sight; and be strong in faith, giving glory to God!

"May thy grace, O Lord, which hath appeared unto all men, and appeared to me with such glorious evidence and lustre, effectually teach me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly! Work in my heart that godliness which is profitable unto all things, and teach me by the influence of thy blessed Spirit, to love thee, the Lord my God, with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength. May I yield myself unto thee, as alive from the dead; and present my body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in thy sight, which is my most reasonable service. May I entertain the most faithful and affectionate regards to the blessed Jesus, thine incarnate Son, the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person. Though I have not seen him, may I love him; and in him, though now I see him not, yet believing, may I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: and may the life which I live in the flesh be daily by the faith of the Son of God. May I be filled with the Spirit, and may I be led by it; and so may it be evident to others, and especially to my own soul, that I am a child of God, and an heir of glory. May I not receive the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby I may be enabled to cry, Abba, Father! May he work in me as the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind; that so I may add to my faith virtue. May I be strong, and very courageous, and quit myself like a man and like a Christian, in the work to which I am called; and in that warfare which I had in view when I listed under the banner of the great Captain of my salvation!

"Teach me, O Lord, seriously to consider the nature of my own soul, and to set a suitable value upon it! May I labour not only, or chiefly, for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life! May I humble myself under thy mighty hand, and be clothed with humility; decked with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price! May I be pure in heart, that I may see God; mortifying my members which are on the earth, so that if a right eye offend me, I may pluck it out, and if a right hand offend me, I may cut it off! May I be temperate in all

things, content with such things as I have, and instructed to be so, in whatsoever state I am! May patience also have its perfect work in me, that I may be in that respect complete and wanting nothing!

"Form me, O Lord, I beseech thee, to a proper temper towards my fellow-creatures! May I love my neighbour as myself: and whatsoever I would that others should do unto me, may I also do the same unto them! May I put on meekness under the greatest injuries and provocations; and if it be possible, as much as lieth in me, may I live peaceably with all men. May I be merciful, as my Father in heaven is merciful. May I speak the truth from my heart; and may I speak it in love, guarding against every instance of a censorious and malignant disposition; and taking care not to judge severely, as I would not be judged with a severity which thou, Lord, knowest, and which my own conscience knows, I should not be able to support!

"I entreat thee, O Lord, to work in me all those qualifications of the Christian temper, which may render it peculiarly acceptable to thee, and may prove ornamental to my profession in the world. Renew, I beseech thee, a right spirit within me; make me an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no allowed guile. And while I feast on Christ, as my passover sacrificed for me, may I keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Make me, I beseech thee, O thou almighty and unchangeable God, stedfast and immovable, always abounding in thy work, as knowing that my labour in the Lord shall not be finally in vain. May my heart be tender, easily impressed with thy word and providence, touched with an affectionate concern for thy glory, and sensible of every impulse of thy Spirit. May I be zealous for my God, with a zeal according to knowledge and charity, and teach me in thy service to join the wisdom of the serpent with the boldness of the lion, and the innocence of the dove. Thus render me, by thy grace, a shining image of my dear Redeemer; and at length bring me to wear the bright resemblance of his holiness and his glory in that world where he dwells; that I may ascribe everlasting honours to him, and to thee, O thou Father of mercies, whose invaluable gift he is, and to thine Holy Spirit, through whose gracious influences I would humbly hope I may call thee my Father, and Jesus my Saviour! Amen."

CHAP. XV.

The reader reminded how much he needs the assistance of the Spirit of God, to form him to the temper described above, and what encouragement he has to expect it.

Forward resolutions may prove ineffectual, § 1. Yet religion is not to be given up in despair, but divine grace sought, § 2. A general view of its reality and necessity, from reason, § 3, and Scripture, § 4. The Spirit to be sought of Christ, § 5. And that we may obtain strength of the Spirit, § 6. The encouragement there is to [illegible] for the communication of it, § 7. A [illegible] for the [illegible] § 8. And a humble address to God, pursuant to these considerations.

§ 1. I HAVE now laid before you a plan of that temper and character which the gospel requires, and which, if you are a true Christian, you will desire and pursue. Surely there is in the very description of it something which must powerfully strike every mind, which has any taste for what is truly beautiful and excellent. And I question not, but you, my dear reader, will feel some impression of it upon your heart. You will immediately form some lively purpose of endeavouring after it; and perhaps you may imagine, you shall certainly and quickly attain to it. You see how reasonable it is, and what desirable consequences necessarily attend it, and the aspect which it bears on your present enjoyment, and your future happiness; and therefore are determined you will act accordingly. But give me leave seriously to remind you, how many there have been, (would to God that several of the instances had not happened within the compass of my own personal observation!) whose goodness hath been like a morning cloud, and the early dew, which soon passeth away. There is not room indeed absolutely to apply the words of Joshua, taken in the most rigorous sense, when he said to Israel, (that he might humble their too hasty and sanguine resolutions,) Ye cannot serve the Lord. But I will venture to say, you cannot easily do it. Alas, you know not the difficulties you have to break through; you know not the temptations which Satan will throw in your way; you know not how importunate your vain and sinful companions will be, to draw you back into the snare you may attempt to break; and above all, you know not the subtle artifices which your own corruptions will practise upon you, in order to recover their dominion over you. You think the views you now have of things will be lasting, because the principles and objects to which they refer are so; but perhaps to-morrow may undeceive you, or rather deceive you anew. To-morrow may present some trifle in a new dress, which shall amuse you into a forgetfulness of all this. Nay, perhaps, before you lie down on your bed, the impressions you now feel may wear off. The corrupt desires of your own heart, now perhaps a little charmed down, and lying as if they were dead, may spring up again with new violence, as if they had slept only to recruit their vigour; and if you are not supported by a better strength than your own, this struggle for liberty will only make your future chains the heavier, the more shameful, and the more fatal.

§ 2. What then is to be done? Is the convinced sinner to lie down in despair? to say, "I am a helpless captive; and by exerting myself with violence, may break my limbs sooner than my bonds, and

increase the evil I would remove." God forbid! You cannot, I am persuaded, be so little acquainted with Christianity as not to know "that the doctrine of divine assistance bears a very considerable part in it." You have often, I doubt not, read of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as making us free from the law of sin and death: and have been told that through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body: you have read of doing all things through Christ who strengtheneth us; whose grace is sufficient for us, and whose strength is made perfect in weakness. Permit me, therefore, now to call down your attention to this, as a truth of the clearest evidence, and of the utmost importance.

§ 3. Reason, indeed, as well as the whole tenor of Scripture, agrees with this.* The whole created world has a necessary dependence on God: from him even the knowledge of natural things is derived, and skill in them is to be ascribed to him. Much more loudly does so great and excellent a work, as the new forming the human mind, be speak its divine Author. When you consider how various the branches of the Christian temper are, and how contrary many of them also are to that temper, which hath prevailed in your heart, and governed your life in time past, you must readily see divine influences as necessary to produce and nourish them, as the influences of the sun and rain are to call up the variety of plants, and flowers, and grain, and fruits, by which the earth is adorned, and our life supported. You will yet be more sensible of this, if you reflect on the violent opposition which this happy work must be expected to meet with, of which I shall presently warn you more largely, and which if you have not already experienced, it must be because you have but very lately begun to think of religion.

§ 4. Accordingly, if you give yourself leave to consult Scripture on this head, (and if you would live like a Christian, you must be consulting it every day, and forming your notions and actions by it,) you will see, that the whole tenor of it teaches that dependence upon God, which I am now recommending. You will particularly see, that the production of religion in the soul is matter of divine promise; that when it has been affected, Scripture ascribes it to a divine agency; and that the increase of grace and piety in the heart of those who are truly regenerate, is also spoken of as the work of God, who begins and carries it on, until the day of Jesus Christ.

§ 5. In consequence of all these views, lay it down to yourself as a most certain principle, "that no attempt in religion is to be made in your own strength." If you forget this, and God permit, finally to save you, he will humble you by repeated disappointments, till he teach you better. You will be ashamed of one scheme and effort, and of another, till you settle upon the true basis. He will also probably show you, not only in the general, that your strength is to be derived from heaven, but particularly, that it is the office of the Blessed Spirit, to purify the heart, and to invigorate holy resolutions; and also, that in all these operations he is to be considered as the Spirit of Christ, working under his direction, and as a vital communication from him, under the character of the great Head of the church, the grand treasurer and dispenser of these holy and beneficial influences. On which account it is called the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who is exalted at the right hand of the Father, to give repentance and remission of sins; in whose grace alone we can be strong, and of whose fulness we receive, even grace for grace.

§ 6. Resolve therefore strenuously for the service of God, and for the care of your soul: but "resolve modestly and humbly." Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall; but they who wait on the Lord are the persons who renew their strength. When a soul is almost afraid to declare, in the presence of the Lord, that it will not do this, or that, which has formerly offended him; when it is afraid absolutely to promise that it will perform this or that duty with vigour and constancy; but only expresses its humble earnest desire, that it may by grace be enabled to avoid the one, or pursue the other; then, so far as my observation and experience have reached, it is in the best way to learn the happy art of conquering temptations, and of discharging duty.

§ 7. On the other hand, let not your dependence upon this spirit, and your sense of your own weakness and insufficiency for any thing spiritually good without his continued aid, discourage you from devoting yourself to God, and engaging in a religious life, considering "what abundant reason you have to hope, that these gracious influences will be communicated to you." The light of nature, at the same time that it teaches the need we have of help from God, in a virtuous course, may lead us to conclude, that so benevolent a Being, who bestows on the most unworthy and careless part of mankind so many blessings, will take a peculiar pleasure in communicating to such as humbly ask them, those gracious assistances which may form their deathless souls into his own resemblance, and fit them for that happiness to which their rational nature is suited, and for which it was in its first constitution intended. The word of God will much more abundantly confirm such a hope. You there hear divine wisdom crying, even to those who had long trifled with her instructions, Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you. You hear the apostle say, in, Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that

* See Dr. Clarke's [illegible] Sermon, vol. ii. Serm. 2, beginning [illegible].

we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. Yea, you there hear our Lord himself arguing in this sweet and convincing manner: If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit unto them that ask him? This gift and promise of the Spirit was given unto Christ, when he ascended up on high, in trust for all his true disciples. God hath shed it abundantly upon us in him. And I may add, that the very desire you feel after the further communication of the Spirit, is the result of the first-fruits of it already given: so that you may with peculiar propriety interpret it as a special call, to open your mouth wide, that he may fill it. You thirst, and therefore you may cheerfully plead that Jesus hath invited you to come unto him and drink; with a promise, not only that you shall drink if you come unto him, but also, that out of your belly shall flow, as it were, rivers of living water for the edification and refreshment of others.

§ 8. Go forth, therefore, with humble cheerfulness, to the prosecution of all the duties of the Christian life. Go, and prosper, in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only. And as a token of further communications, may your heart be quickened to the most earnest desires, after the blessings I have now been recommending to your pursuit! May you be stirred up to pour out your soul before God in such holy breathings as these! And may they be your daily language in his gracious presence!

An humble Supplication for the influences of Divine Grace, to form and strengthen religion in the soul.

"Blessed God! I sincerely acknowledge before thee mine own weakness and insufficiency for any thing that is spiritually good. I have experienced it a thousand times: and yet my foolish heart would again trust itself, and form resolutions in its own strength. But let this be the first-fruits of thy gracious influence upon it, to bring it to a humble distrust of itself, and to a repose on thee!

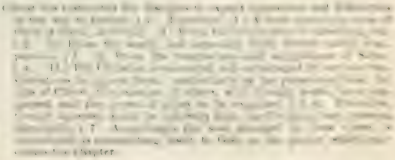
"Abundantly do I rejoice, O Lord, in the kind assurances which thou givest me, of thy readiness to bestow liberally and richly so great a benefit. I do therefore, according to thy condescending invitation, come with boldness to the throne of grace, that I may find grace to help in every time of need. I mean not, O Lord God, to turn thy grace into wantonness or perverseness, or to make my weakness an excuse for negligence and sloth. I confess, thou hast already given me more strength than I have used, and I charge it upon myself, and not on thee, that I have not long since received still more abundant supplies. I desire for the future to be found diligent in the use of all appointed means: in the neglect of which I well know that petitions like these would be a profane mockery, and might much more probably provoke thee to take away what I have, than prevail upon thee to impart more. But firmly resolving to exert myself to the utmost, I earnestly entreat the communications of thy grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil that resolution.

"Be surety, O Lord, unto thy servant for good! Be pleased to shed abroad thy sanctifying influences on my soul, to form me for every duty thou requirest! Implant, I beseech thee, every grace and virtue deep in mine heart; and maintain the happy temper in the midst of those assaults, from within and from without, to which I am continually liable, while I am still in this world, and carry about with me so many infirmities! Fill my breast, I beseech thee, with good affections towards thee, my God, and towards my fellow-creatures! Remind me always of thy presence; and may I remember that every secret sentiment of my soul is open to thee! May I, therefore, guard against the first risings of sin, and the first approaches to it! And that Satan may not find room for his evil suggestions, I earnestly beg thou, Lord, wouldst fill my heart by thine Holy Spirit, and take up thy residence there! Dwell in me, and walk with me; and let my body be the temple of the Holy Ghost!

"May I be so joined to Christ Jesus my Lord, as to be one Spirit with him, and feel his invigorating influences continually bearing me on, superior to every temptation and to every corruption! That while the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall, I may so wait upon the Lord, as to renew my strength, and may go from one degree of faith, and love, and zeal, and holiness, to another, till I appear perfect before thee in Zion, to drink in immortal vigour and joy from thee, as the everlasting fountain of both, through Jesus Christ my Lord, in whom I have righteousness and strength, and to whom I desire ever to ascribe the praise of all mine improvement in both! Amen."

CHAP. XVI

The Christian convert warned of, and armed against, those discouragements which he may expect to meet with, when entering on a religious course.



§ 1. With the utmost propriety has our Divine Master required us, to strive to enter in at the strait gate; thereby, as it seems, intimating, not only that the passage is narrow, but that it is beset with enemies, beset on the right hand and on the left, with enemies cunning and formidable. And be assured, O reader, that whatever your circumstances in life are, you must meet and encounter them. It will, therefore, be your prudence to survey them attentively in your own reflections, that you may see what you are to expect; and may consider in what armour it is necessary you should be clothed, and with what weapons you must be furnished, to manage the combat. You have often heard them marshalled, as it were, under three great leaders, the flesh, the world, and the devil: and according to this distribution, I would call you to consider the forces of each, as setting themselves in array against you. O that you may be excited to take to yourself the whole armour of God, and to acquit yourself like a man and a Christian!

§ 2. Let your conscience answer, whether you do not carry about with you a corrupt and degenerate nature? You will, I doubt not, feel its effects. You will feel, in the language of the apostle, (who speaks of it as the case of Christians themselves,) the flesh lusting against the spirit, so that you will not be able in all instances to do the things that you would. You brought irregular propensities into the world along with you; and you have so often indulged those sinful inclinations, that you have greatly increased their strength; and you will find, in consequence of it, that these habits cannot be broke through without great difficulty. You will, no doubt, often recollect the strong figures in which the prophet describes a case like yours; and you will own, that it is justly represented by that of an Ethiopian changing his skin, and the leopard his spots. It is indeed possible, that at first you may find such an edge and eagerness upon your spirits, as may lead you to imagine that all opposition will immediately fall before you. But alas, I fear that in a little time, these enemies, which seemed to be slain at your feet, will revive, and recover their weapons, and renew the assault in one form or another. And perhaps your most painful combats may be with such as you had thought most easy to be vanquished, and your greatest danger may arise from some of those enemies from whom you apprehended the least; particularly from pride, and from indolence of spirit: from a secret alienation of heart from God, and from an indisposition for conversing with him, through an immoderate attachment to things seen and temporal, which may be oftentimes exceeding dangerous to your salvation, though perhaps they be not absolutely and universally prohibited. In a thousand of these instances you must learn to deny yourself, or you cannot be Christ's disciple.

§ 3. You must also lay your account to find great difficulties from the world: from its manners, customs, and examples. The things of the world will hinder you one way, and the men of the world another. Perhaps you may meet with much less assistance in religion, than you are now ready to expect from good men. The present generation of them is generally so cautious to avoid every thing that looks like ostentation, and there seems something so insupportably dreadful in the charge of enthusiasm, that you will find most of your Christian brethren studying to conceal their virtue and their piety, much more than others study to conceal their vice and their profaneness. But while, unless your situation be singularly happy, you meet with very little aid one way, you will no doubt find great opposition another. The enemies of religion will be bold and active in their assaults, while many of its friends seem unconcerned; and one sinner will probably exert himself more to corrupt you, than ten Christians to secure and save you. They who have once been your companions in sin, will try a thousand artful methods to allure you back again to their forsaken society; some of them, perhaps, with an appearance of tender fondness, and many more by the almost irresistible art of banter and ridicule. That boasted test of right and wrong, as it has been wantonly called, will be tried upon you, perhaps without any regard to decency, or even to common humanity. You will be derided and insulted by those whose esteem and affection you naturally desire; and may find much more propriety than you imagine, in that expression of the apostle, the trial of cruel mockings, which some fear more than either sword or flames. This persecution of the tongue you must expect to go through, and perhaps may be branded as a lunatic, for no other cause than that now you begin to exercise your reason to purpose, and will not join with those who are destroying their own souls, in their wild career of folly and madness.

§ 4. And it is not at all improbable, that in the meantime Satan may be doing his utmost to discourage and distress you. He will, no doubt, raise in your imagination the most tempting idea of the gratifications, the indulgences, and the companions you are obliged to forsake; and give you the most discouraging and terrifying view of the difficulties, severities, and dangers, which are (as he will persuade you) inseparable from religion. He will not fail to represent God himself, the fountain of goodness and happiness, as a hard master, whom it is impossible to please. He will perhaps fill you with the most distressful fears, and with cruel and insolent malice glory over you as his slave, when he knows you are the Lord's freeman. At one time, he will study by his vile suggestions to interrupt you in your duties, as if they gave him an additional power over you.

At another time he will endeavour to weary you of your devotion, by influencing you to prolong it to an immoderate and tedious length, lest his power should be exerted upon you when it ceases. In short, this practised deceiver has artifices which it would require whole volumes to display, with particular cautions against each. And he will follow you with malicious arts and pursuits, to the very end of your pilgrimage; and will leave no method unattempted, which may be likely to weaken your hands and to sadden your heart; that if, through the gracious interposition of God, he cannot prevent your final happiness, he may at least impair your peace and your usefulness, as you are passing to it.

§ 5. This is what the people of God feel: and what you will feel in some degree or other, if you have your lot and your portion among them. But after all, be not discouraged; Christ is the captain of your salvation. It is delightful to consider him under this view. When we take a survey of these hosts of enemies, we may lift up our head amidst them all, and say, More and greater is he that is with us than all those that are against us. Trust in the Lord, and you will be like mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. When your enemies press upon you, remember you are to fight in the presence of God. Endeavour therefore to act a gallant and a resolute part. Endeavour to resist them stedfast in the faith. Remember, he can give power to the faint, and increase strength to them that have no might. He hath done it in ten thousand instances already; and he will do it in ten thousand more. How many striplings have conquered their gigantic foes in all their most formidable armour, when they have gone forth against them, though but as it were with a staff and a sling, in the name of the Lord God of Israel! How many women and children have trodden down the force of the enemy, and out of weakness have been made strong!

§ 6. Amidst all the opposition of earth and hell, look upward, and look forward; and you will feel your heart animated by the view. Your General is near, he is near to aid you; he is near to reward you. When you feel the temptation press the hardest, think of him who endured even the cross itself for your rescue. View the fortitude of your divine Leader, and endeavour to march on in his steps. Hearken to his voice, for he proclaims it aloud, Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. And O, how bright will it shine! and how long will its lustre last! When the gems that adorn the crowns of monarchs, and pass (instructive thought!) from one royal head to another through succeeding centuries, are melted down in the last flame, it is a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

§ 7. It is indeed true, that such as turn aside to crooked paths, will be led forth with the workers of iniquity, to that terrible execution, which the divine justice is preparing for them; and it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn aside from the holy commandment. But I would, by divine grace, hope better things of you. And I make it my hearty prayer for you, my reader, that you may be kept by the mighty power of God, kept as in a garrison, on all sides fortified, in the securest manner, through faith unto salvation.

The soul, alarmed by a sense of these difficulties, committing itself to Divine Protection.

"Blessed God, it is to thine almighty power that I flee. Behold me surrounded with difficulties and dangers, and stretch out thine omnipotent arm to save me, O thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them. This day do I solemnly put myself under thy protection. Exert thy power in my favour, and permit me to make the shadow of thy wings my refuge. Let thy grace be sufficient for me, and thy strength be made perfect in my weakness. I dare not say, I will never forsake thee; I will never deny thee; but I hope I can truly say, O Lord, I would not do it; and that, according to my present apprehension and purpose, death would appear to me much less terrible, than in any wilful and deliberate instance to offend thee. Oh root out those corruptions from my heart, which in an hour of pressing temptation might incline me to view things in a different light, and so might betray me into the hands of the enemy! Strengthen my faith O Lord, and encourage my hope! Inspire me with an heroic resolution in opposing every thing that lies in my way to heaven; and let me set my face like a flint, against all the assaults of earth and hell! If sinners entice me, let me not consent; if they insult me, let me not regard it; if they threaten me, let me not fear! Rather may a holy and ardent, yet prudent and well-governed, zeal, take occasion from that malignity of heart which they discover, to attempt their conviction and reformation. At least, let me never be ashamed to plead thy cause against the most profane deriders of religion. Make me to hear joy and gladness in my own soul; and I will endeavour to teach transgressors thy way, that sinners may be converted unto thee. Yea, Lord, while my fears continue, though I should apprehend myself condemned, I am condemned so righteously for my own folly, that I would be thine advocate, though against myself.

"Keep me, O Lord, now, and at all times! Never let me think, whatever age or station I attain, that I am strong enough to maintain the combat without

thee. Not let me imagine myself, even in this infancy of religion in my soul, so weak that thou canst not support me. Wherever thou leadest me, there let me follow; and whatever station thou appointest me, there let me labour; there let me maintain the holy war against all the enemies of my salvation, and rather fall in it than basely abandon it!

"And thou, O glorious Redeemer, the Captain of my salvation, the great Author and Finisher of my faith, whom I am in danger of denying, as Peter did, look upon me with that mixture of majesty and tenderness, which may either secure me from falling, or may speedily recover me to God and my duty again! And teach me to take occasion, even from my miscarriages, to humble myself more deeply for all that has been amiss, and to redouble my future diligence and caution! Amen."

CHAP. XVII

The Christian is called to, and invested in, an express act of Self-dedication to the service of God.

§ 1. As I would hope, that notwithstanding all the views of opposition which do or may arise, yet, in consideration of those noble supports and motives which have been mentioned in the two preceding chapters, you are heartily determined for the service of God, I would now urge you to make a solemn surrender of yourself unto it. Do not only form such a purpose in your heart, but expressly declare it in the divine presence. Such solemnity in the manner of doing it, is certainly very reasonable in the nature of things, and sure it is highly expedient, for binding to the Lord such a treacherous heart, as we know our own to be. It will be pleasant to reflect upon it, as done at such and such a time, with such and such circumstances of place and method, which may serve to strike the memory and the conscience. The sense of the vows of God which are upon you, will strengthen you in an hour of temptation; and the recollection may also encourage your humble boldness and freedom in applying to him, under the character and relation of your covenant God and Father, as future exigencies may require.

§ 2. Do it therefore; but do it deliberately. Consider what it is that you are to do, and consider how reasonable it is that it should be done, and done cordially and cheerfully; not by constraint, but willingly: for in this sense, and in every other, God loves a cheerful giver. Now, surely there is nothing we should do with greater cheerfulness, or more cordial consent, than making such a surrender of ourselves to the Lord; to the God who created us, who brought us into this pleasant and well-furnished world, who supported us in our tender infancy, who guarded us in the thoughtless days of childhood and youth, who has hitherto continually helped, sustained, and preserved us. Nothing can be more reasonable, than that we should acknowledge him as our rightful Owner and our sovereign Ruler; than that we should devote ourselves to him as our most generous Benefactor, and seek him as our supreme felicity. Nothing can be more apparently equitable, than that we, the product of his power and the price of his Son's blood, should be his, and his for ever. If you see the matter in its just view, it will be the grief of your soul, that you have ever alienated yourself from the blessed God and his service; so far will you be from wishing to continue in that state of alienation another year, or another day. You will be sure to bring back to him his revolted creature; and, as you have in times past yielded your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, you will delight to yield yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and to employ your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

§ 3. The surrender will also be as entire as it is cheerful and immediate. All you are, and all you have, and all you can do, your time, your possessions, your influence over others, will be devoted to him, that for the future it may be employed entirely for him, and to his glory. You will desire to keep back nothing from him, but will solemnly judge that you are then in the truest and noblest sense your own, when you are most entirely his. You are also, on this great occasion, to resign all that you have to the disposal of his wise and gracious providence; not only owning his power, but consenting to his undoubted right, to do what he pleases with you, and all that he has given you, and declaring a hearty approbation of all that he has done, and of all that he may further do.

§ 4. Once more, let me remind you, that this surrender must be perpetual. You must give yourself up to God in such a manner, as never more to pretend to be your own, for the rights of God are, like his nature, eternal and immutable; and with regard to his rational creatures, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

§ 5. I would further advise and urge, that this dedication may be made with all possible solemnity. Do it in express words. And, perhaps, it may be in many cases most expedient, as many pious divines have recommended to do it in writing. Set your hand and seal to it, that on such a day of such a month and year, and at such a place, on full consideration and serious reflection, you came to

this happy resolution, that whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord.

§ 6. Such an instrument you may, if you please, draw up for yourself: or, if you rather choose to have it drawn up to your hand, you may find something of this nature below, in which you may easily make such alterations as shall suit your circumstances, where there is any thing peculiar in them. But whatever you use, weigh it well, meditate attentively upon it, that you may not be rash with your mouth to utter any thing before God. And when you determine to execute this instrument, let the transaction be attended with some more than ordinary religious retirement. Make it, if you conveniently can, a day of secret fasting and prayer; and when your heart is prepared with a becoming awe of the Divine Majesty, with a humble confidence in his goodness, and an earnest desire of his favour, then present yourself on your knees before God, and read it over deliberately and solemnly; and when you have signed it, lay it by in some secure place, where you may review it whenever you please, and make it a rule with yourself, to review it, if possible, at certain seasons of the year, that you may keep up the remembrance of it.

§ 7. At least, take this course, till you see your way clear to the table of the Lord, where you are to renew the same covenant, and to seal it, with more affecting solemnities. And God grant, that you may be enabled to keep it, and in the whole of your conversation to walk according to it! May it be an anchor to your soul in every temptation, and a cordial to it in every affliction! May the recollection of it embolden your addresses to the throne of grace now, and give additional strength to your departing spirit, in a consciousness that it is ascending to your covenant God and Father, and to that gracious Redeemer whose power and faithfulness will securely keep what you commit to him until that day.

An example of Self dedication, or a solemn form of renewing our covenant with God.

"ETERNAL and unchangeable Jehovah! thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in thine awful presence; and earnestly pray, that thou wilt penetrate my very heart with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories!

"Trembling may justly take hold upon me, when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift up my head to thee, presume to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this. Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house? What is my nature or descent, my character and desert, that I should speak of this, and desire that I may be one party in a covenant, where thou, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, art the other? I blush and am confounded, even to mention it before thee. But, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou wilt hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop, must stoop infinitely low. And I know, that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach to thee, and their covenant intercourse with thee; nay, I know, that the scheme and plan is thine own; and that thou hast graciously sent to propose it to us; as none untaught by thee would have been able to form it, or inclined to embrace it even when actually proposed.

"To thee, therefore, do I now come, invited by the name of thy Son, and trusting in his righteousness and grace. Laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and smiting upon my breast, I say with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner! I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have been a great transgressor. My sins have reached unto heaven, and mine iniquities are lifted up unto the skies. The irregular propensities of my corrupted and degenerate nature have, in ten thousand aggravated instances, wrought to bring forth fruit unto death. And if thou shouldst be strict to mark mine offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return unto thee, though I have been a wandering sheep, a prodigal son, a backsliding child. Behold, therefore, O Lord, I come unto thee. I come, convinced not only of my sin, but of my folly. I come, from my very heart ashamed of myself, and with an acknowledgment, in the sincerity and humility of my soul, that I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. I am confounded myself at the remembrance of these things; but be thou merciful to my unrighteousness, and do not remember against me my sins and my transgressions! Pardon me, O Lord, to bring back unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service; and receive, I beseech thee, thy poor revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to him, and desires nothing in the whole world so much as to be thine!

"Blessed God, it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of myself unto thee. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; I avouch the Lord this day to be my God; and I avouch and declare myself this day to be one of his covenant children and people. Hear, O thou God of heaven, and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine. I would not merely consecrate unto thee some of my powers or some of my possessions, or give thee a certain proportion of my services, or all I am capable of for a

limited time, but I would be wholly thine, and thine for ever. From this day, do I solemnly renounce all the former lords which have had dominion over me, every sin and every lust; and bid in thy name an eternal defiance to the powers of hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions which their fatal temptations have introduced into it. The whole frame of my nature, all the faculties of my mind, and all the members of my body, would I present before thee this day, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which I know to be my most reasonable service. To thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions; in thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth, and beg thou wouldst instruct and influence me, so that whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thy honour, and subserve the schemes of thy wise and gracious providence. And I earnestly pray, that whatever influence thou givest me over others, in any of the superior relations of life in which I may stand, or in consequence of any peculiar regard which may be paid to me; thou wouldst give me strength and courage to exert myself to the utmost for thy glory; resolving, not only that I will myself do it, but that all others, so far as I can rationally and properly influence them, shall serve the Lord. In this course, O blessed God, would I steadily persevere to the very end of my life; earnestly praying, that every future day of it may supply the deficiencies, and correct the irregularities, of the former; and that I may, by divine grace, be enabled, not only to hold on in that happy way, but daily to grow more active in it!

"Nor do I only consecrate all that I am, and have, to thy service; but I also most humbly resign, and submit to thy holy and sovereign will, myself, and all that I can call mine. I leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction all I possess, and all I wish; and set every enjoyment, and every interest, before thee, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. Continue, or remove, what thou hast given me; bestow, or refuse, what I imagine I want, as thou Lord shalt see good. And though I dare not say, I will never repine; yet I hope I may venture to say, that I will labour, not only to submit, but to acquiesce; not only to bear what thou dost in thy most afflictive dispensations, but to consent to it, and to praise thee for it; contentedly resolving, in all that thou appointest for me, my will into thine, and looking on myself as nothing, and on thee, O God, as the great eternal All, whose word ought to determine every thing, and whose government ought to be the joy of the whole rational creation.

"Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as the instrument of thy glory, and honour me so far, as, either by doing or suffering what thou shalt appoint, to bring some revenue of praise to thee, and of benefit to the world in which I dwell! And may it please thee, from this day forward, to number me among thy peculiar people, that I may no more be a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God! Receive, O heavenly Father, thy returning prodigal! Wash me in the blood of thy dear Son; clothe me with his perfect righteousness; and sanctify me throughout by the power of thy Spirit! Destroy, I beseech thee, more and more the power of sin in my heart! Transform me more into thine own image, and fashion me to the resemblance of Jesus, whom henceforth I would acknowledge as my teacher and sacrifice, my intercessor and my Lord! Communicate to me, I beseech thee, all needful influences of thy purifying, thy cheering, and thy comforting Spirit; and lift up that light of thy countenance upon me, which will put the sublimest joy and gladness into my soul.

"Dispose my affairs, O God, in a manner which may be most subservient to thy glory and my own truest happiness; and when I have done and borne thy will upon earth, call me from hence, at what time, and in what manner, thou pleasest. Only grant, that in my dying moments, and in the near prospects of eternity, I may remember these my engagements to thee, and may employ my latest breath in thy service! And do thou, Lord, when thou seest the agonies of dissolving nature upon me, remember this covenant too, even though I should then be incapable of recollecting it! Look down, O my heavenly Father, with a pitying eye upon thy languishing, thy dying, child; place thine everlasting arms underneath me for my support, put strength and confidence into my departing spirit: and receive it to the embraces of thine everlasting love! Welcome it to the abodes of them that sleep in Jesus, to wait with them that glorious day, when the last of thy promises to thy covenant people shall be fulfilled in their triumphant resurrection, and that abundant entrance, which shall be administered to them into that everlasting kingdom, of which thou hast assured them by thy covenant, and in the hope of which I now lay hold on it, desiring to live and to die, as with my hand on that hope!

"And when I am thus numbered among the dead, and all the interests of mortality are over with me for ever, if this solemn memorial should chance to fall into the hands of any surviving friends, may it be the means of making serious impressions on their minds! May they read it, not only as my language, but as their own; and learn to fear the Lord my God, and with me to put their trust under the shadow of his wings for time and for eternity! And may they also learn to adore with me that grace, which inclines our hearts to enter into the covenant,

and condescends to admit us into it when so inclined; ascribing with me, and with all the nations of the redeemed, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that glory, honour, and praise, which is so justly due to each divine person for the part he bears in this illustrious work! Amen."

N. B. For the sake of those who may think the preceding form of self-dedication too long to be transcribed, as it is probable many will, I have, at the desire of a much esteemed friend, added the following abridgment of it, which should by all means be attentively weighed in every clause before it is executed, and any words or phrases which may seem liable to exception changed, that the whole heart may consent to it all.

"ETERNAL and ever-blessed God! I desire to present myself before thee, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul; sensible how unworthy such a sinful worm is to appear before the holy Majesty of heaven, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and especially on such an occasion as this, even to enter into a covenant transaction with thee. But the scheme and plan is thine own. Thine infinite condescension hath offered it by thy Son, and thy grace hath inclined my heart to accept of it.

"I come, therefore, acknowledging myself to have been a great offender; smiting on my breast, and saying, with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner! I come, invited by the name of thy Son, and wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness; entreating, that for his sake thou wilt be merciful to my unrighteousness, and wilt no more remember my sins. Receive, I beseech thee, thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to him, and desires nothing so much as that he may be thine!

"This day do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to thee. I renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me; and I consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others; to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to thy commands, as long as thou continuest me in life; with an ardent desire and humble resolution to continue thine through all the endless ages of eternity: ever holding myself in an attentive posture to observe the first intimations of thy will, and ready to spring forward with zeal and joy to the immediate execution of it.

"To thy direction also I resign myself, and all I am and have, to be disposed of by thee in such a manner, as thou shalt in thine infinite wisdom judge most subservient to the purposes of thy glory. To thee I leave the management of all events, and say, without reserve, Not my will, but thine be done; rejoicing with a loyal heart in thine unlimited government, as what ought to be the delight of the rational creation.

"Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as an instrument for thy service! Number me among thy peculiar people! Let me be washed in the blood of thy dear Son! Let me be clothed with his righteousness! Let me be sanctified by his Spirit! Transform me more and more into his image! Impart to me, through him, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit! And let my life be spent under those influences, and in the light of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God!

"And when the solemn hour of death comes, may I remember this thy covenant, well ordered in all things and sure, as all my salvation and all my desire, though every other hope and enjoyment is perishing! And do thou, O Lord, remember it too! Look down with pity, O my heavenly Father, on thy languishing dying child! Embrace me in thine everlasting arms! Put strength and confidence into my departing spirit! and receive it to the abodes of them that sleep in Jesus, peacefully and joyfully to wait the accomplishment of thy great promise to all thy people, even that of a glorious resurrection, and of eternal happiness in thy heavenly presence! And if any surviving friend should, when I am in the dust, meet with this memorial of my solemn transactions with thee, may he make the engagement his own; and do thou graciously admit him to partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Jesus, the great Mediator of it; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit, be everlasting praises ascribed, by all the millions who are thus saved by thee, and by all those other celestial spirits, in whose work and blessedness thou shalt call them to share! Amen."

CHAP. XVIII.

Of entering into Church-communion by an attendance upon the Lord's Supper.

The reader, being already supposed to have entered into covenant with God, [illegible] to urge it publicly upon [illegible] Lord. [illegible] And [illegible] the authority of Christ [illegible] to the ordinance [illegible] Weakness of grace. Secondly, [illegible] At least serious thoughts [illegible] The chapter [illegible] The reader [illegible] tend, yet finds himself pressed with [illegible]

§ 1. I HOPE this chapter will find you, by a most express consent, become one of God's covenant people, solemnly and cordially devoted to his service; and it is my hearty prayer, that the covenant you have made on earth may be ratified in heaven. But for your further instruction and edification give me leave to remind you, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed a peculiar manner of expressing our regard to him, and of solemnly renewing our covenant with him, which, though it does not for-

but any other proper way of doing it, must by no means be set aside or neglected for any human methods, how prudent and expedient soever they may appear to us.

§ 2. Our Lord has wisely ordained, that the advantages of society should be brought into religion; and as by his command professing Christians assemble together for other acts of public worship, so he has been pleased to institute a social ordinance, in which a whole assembly of them is to come to his table, and there to eat the same bread, and drink the same cup. And this they are to do, as a token of their affectionate remembrance of his dying love, of their solemn surrender of themselves to God, and of their sincere love to one another, and to all their fellow Christians.

§ 3. That these are indeed the great ends of the Lord's supper, I shall not now stay to argue at large. You need only read what the apostle Paul has written in the tenth and eleventh chapters of his first epistle to the Corinthians, to convince you fully of this. He there expressly tells us, that our Lord commanded the bread to be eaten, and the wine to be drunk, in remembrance of him, or as a commemoration or memorial of him; so that as often as we attend this institution, we show forth our Lord's death, which we are to do even till he come. And it is particularly asserted, that the cup is the new testament in his blood; that is, it is a seal of that covenant which was ratified by his blood. Now it is evident, that, in consequence of this, we are to approach it with a view to that covenant, desiring its blessings, and resolving by divine grace to comply with its demands. On the whole, therefore, as the apostle speaks, we have communion in the body and the blood of Christ, and partaking of his table and of his cup, we converse with Christ, and join ourselves to him as his people: as the heathens in their idolatrous rites, had communion with their deities, and joined themselves to them; and the Jews, by eating their sacrifices, conversed with Jehovah, and joined themselves to him. He further reminds them, that, though many, they were one bread and one body, being all partakers of that one bread, and being all made to drink into one Spirit; that is, meeting together as if they were but one family, and joining in the commemoration of that one blood which was their common ransom, and of the Lord Jesus, their common head. Now it is evident, all these reasonings are equally applicable to Christians in succeeding ages. Permit me therefore, by the authority of our divine Master, to press upon you the observation of this precept.

§ 4. And let me also urge it, from the apparent tendency which it has to promote your truest advantage. You are setting out in the Christian life, and I have reminded you at large of the opposition you must expect to meet with in it. It is the love of Christ which must animate you to break through all. What then can be more desirable, than to bear about with you a lively sense of it? and what can awaken that sense more, than the contemplation of his death as there represented? Who can behold the bread broken, and the wine poured out, and not reflect, how the body of the blessed Jesus was even torn in pieces by his sufferings, and his sacred blood poured forth like water on the ground? Who can think of the heart-rending agonies of the Son of God, as the price of our redemption and salvation, and not feel his soul melted with tenderness, and inflamed with grateful affection? What an exalted view doth it give us of the blessings of the gospel-covenant, when we consider it as established in the blood of God's only-begotten Son! And when we make our approach to God as our heavenly Father, and give up ourselves to his service in this solemn manner, what an awful tendency has it to fix the conviction, that we are not our own, being bought with such a price! What a tendency has it to guard us against every temptation to those sins which we have so solemnly renounced, and to engage our fidelity to him to whom we have bound our souls as with an oath! Well may our hearts be knit together in mutual love, when we consider ourselves as one in Christ: his blood becomes the cement of the society, joins us in Spirit, not only to each other, but to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: and we anticipate, in pleasing hope, that blessed day, when the assembly shall be complete, and we shall all be for ever with the Lord. Well may these views engage us to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross to follow our crucified Master. Well may they engage us to do our utmost, by prayer and all other suitable endeavours, to serve his followers and his friends; to serve those whom he hath purchased with his blood, and who are to be his associates, and ours, in the glories of a happy immortality.

§ 5. It is also the express institution and command of our blessed Redeemer, that the members of such societies should be tenderly solicitous for the spiritual welfare of each other; and that, on the whole, his churches may be kept pure and holy, that they should withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; that they should mark such as cause offences or scandals amongst them, contrary to the doctrine which they have learned, and avoid them: that if any obey not the word of Christ, by his apostles, they should have no fellowship or communion with such, that they may be ashamed; that they should not eat with such as are notoriously irregular in their behaviour, but, on the contrary, should put away from among themselves such wicked persons. It is evident, therefore, that the institution of such societies is greatly for

the honour of Christianity, and for the advantage of its particular professors. And consequently, every consideration of obedience to our common Lord, and of prudent regard to our own benefit and that of our brethren, will require, that those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, should enter into them and assemble among them, in these their most solemn and peculiar acts of communion at his table.

§ 6. I entreat you therefore, and if I may presume to say it, in his name and by his authority I charge it on your conscience, that this precept of our dying Lord go not, as it were, for nothing with you; but that, if you indeed love him, you keep this, as well as the rest of his commandments.—I know, you may be ready to form objections. I have elsewhere debated many of the chief of them at large, and I hope not without some good effect.* The great question is that which relates to your being prepared for a worthy attendance. And in conjunction with what has been said before, I think that may be brought to a very short issue. Have you, so far as you know your own heart, been sincere in that deliberate surrender of yourself to God, through Christ, which I recommended in the former chapter? If you have, (whether it were with, or without, the particular form or manner of doing it there recommended,) you have certainly taken hold of the covenant, and therefore have a right to the seal of it. And there is not, and cannot be, any other view of the ordinance in which you can have any further objection to it. If you desire to remember Christ's death, if you desire to renew the dedication of yourself to God through him, if you would list yourself among his people, if you would love them and do them good according to your ability, and, on the whole, would not allow yourself in the practice of any one known sin, or in the omission of any one known duty, then I will venture confidently to say, not only that you may be welcome to the ordinance, but that it was instituted for such as you.

§ 7. As for other objections, a few words may suffice by way of reply. The weakness of the religious principle in your soul, if it be really implanted there, is so far from being an argument against your seeking such a method to strengthen it, that it rather strongly enforces the necessity of doing it.—The neglect of this solemnity, by so many that call themselves Christians, should rather engage you so much the more to distinguish your zeal for an institution, in this respect so much slighted and injured.—And as for the fears of aggravating guilt in case of apostasy, do not indulge them. This may, by the divine blessing, be an effectual remedy against the evil you fear; and it is certain, that after what you must already have known and felt, before you could be brought into your present situation, (on the suppositions I have now been making,) there can be no room to think of a retreat; no room even for the wretched hope of being less miserable than the generality of those that have perished. Your scheme therefore must be to make your salvation as sure, and to make it as glorious, as possible. And I know not any appointment of our blessed Redeemer, which may have a more comfortable aspect upon that blessed end, than this which I am recommending to you.

§ 8. One thing I would at least insist upon, and I see not with what face it can be denied. I mean, that you should take this matter into a serious consideration; that you should diligently inquire, whether you have reason, in your conscience, to believe it is the will of God you should now approach to the ordinance, or not? And that you should continue your reflections, your inquiries, and your prayers, till you find further encouragement to come; if that encouragement be hitherto wanting. For of this be assured, that a state in which you are on the whole unfit to approach this ordinance, is a state in which you are destitute of the necessary preparations for death and heaven; in which therefore, if you would not allow yourselves to slumber on the brink of destruction, you ought not to rest so much as one single day.

A Prayer for one who earnestly desires to approach the table of the Lord, yet has some remaining doubts concerning his right to that solemn ordinance.

"Blessed Lord, I adore thy wise and gracious appointments, for the edification of thy church in holiness and in love. I thank thee, that thou hast commanded thy servants to form themselves into societies; and I adore my gracious Saviour, who hath instituted, as with his dying breath, the holy solemnity of his supper, to be through all ages a memorial of his dying love, and a bond of that union which it is his sovereign pleasure that his people should preserve. I hope thou, Lord, art witness to the sincerity with which I desire to give myself up to thee; and that I may call thee to record on my soul, that if I now hesitate about this particular manner of doing it, it is not because I would allow myself to break any of thy commands, or to slight any of thy favours. I trust, thou knowest that my present delay arises only from my uncertainty as to my own duty, and a fear of profaning holy things by an unworthy approach to them. Yet surely, O Lord, if thou hast given me a reverence for thy command, a desire of communion with thee, and a willingness to devote myself wholly to thy service, I may regard it as a token for good, that thou art disposed to

* See the fourth of my Sermons to Young Persons.

receive me, and that I am not wholly unprepared for an ordination which I so highly honour, and so earnestly desire. I therefore make it my humble request unto thee, O Lord, this day, that thou wouldst graciously be pleased to instruct me in my duty, and to teach me the way that I should take! Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart! Is there any secret sin in the heart and practice of which I would indulge? Is there any of thy precepts, in the habitual breach of which I would allow myself? I trust I can appeal to thee as a witness that there is not. Let me not then wrong mine own soul by a groundless and partial censure from thy sacred bible! But grant, O Lord, I beseech thee, that thy word, thy providence, and thy Spirit may so concur as to make my way plain before me! Scatter my remaining doubts, if thou seest they have no just foundation! Fill me with a more assured faith, with a more ardent love; and plead thine own cause with my heart in such a manner, as that I may not be able any longer to delay that approach, which, if I am thy servant indeed, is equally my duty and my privilege! In the mean time, grant that it may never be long out of my thoughts; but that I may give all diligence, if there be any remaining occasion of doubt, to remove it, by a more affectionate concern to avoid whatever is displeasing to the eyes of thine holiness, and to practise the full extent of my duty! May the views of Christ crucified be so familiar to my mind, and may a sense of his dying love so powerfully constrain my soul, that my own growing experience may put it out of all question that I am one of those for whom he intended this feast of love!

"And even now, as joined to thy churches in spirit and in love, though not in so express and intimate a bond as I could wish, would I heartily pray that thy blessing may be on all thy people: that thou wouldst feed thine heritage, and lift them up for ever! May every Christian society flourish in knowledge, in holiness, and in love! May all thy priests be clothed with salvation, that by their means thy chosen people may be made joyful! And may there be a glorious accession to thy churches every where, of those who may fly to them as a cloud, and as doves to their windows! May thy table, O Lord, be furnished with guests, and may all those that love thy salvation say, Let the Lord be magnified, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants! And I earnestly pray, that all who profess to have received Christ Jesus the Lord, may be duly careful to walk in him; and that we may all be preparing for the general assembly of the first-born, and may join in that nobler and more immediate worship, where all these types and shadows shall be laid aside, where even these memorials shall be no longer necessary, but a living, present Redeemer shall be the everlasting joy of those, who here in his absence have delighted to commemorate his death!" Amen. *

CHAP. XIX.

Some more particular Directions for maintaining constant Communion with God, or being in his fear all the day long.

[illegible]

3. I. I would hope that, upon serious consideration, self-examination, and prayer, the reader may by this time be come to a resolution to attend the table of the Lord, and to seal his vows there. I will now suppose that solemn transaction to be over, or some other deliberate act to have passed, by which he has given himself up to the service of God: and that his concern now is to inquire, how he may act according to the vows of God which are upon him. Now, for his further assistance here, besides the general view I have already given of the Christian temper and character, I will propose some more particular directions relating to maintaining that devout, spiritual, and heavenly character, which may, in the language of Scripture, be called a daily walking with God, or being in his fear all the day long. And I know not how I can express the idea and plan, which I have formed of this, in a more clear and distinct manner, than I did in a letter, which I wrote many years ago, † to a young person of eminent piety, with whom I had then an intimate friendship, and who, to the great grief of all that knew him, died a few months after he received it. Yet I hope he lived long enough to reduce the directions into practice, which I wish and pray that every reader may do, so far as they may properly suit his capacities and circumstances in life, considering it as if addressed to himself. I say, and assure it may be observed, that I wish my reader may

* I purposed to have added something here, concerning a proper method of the Lord's supper, a prudent behaviour upon it, and particularly concerning a due care and a full view, which would enable new converts to go to the Lord's table with more satisfaction and advantage. But I have since found, that I have already published my sentiments on that subject, in the Divine Dialogues, and Mr. Clarke's Discourses, which I therefore recommend to the Lord's People, hereby, if I should immediately translate or send them, and which may be had at very many places. Yet for the further satisfaction of devout communicants, I have since compiled a small collection of Scripture Meditations, Addresses, and Prayers, at the Lord's Supper, which I hope may be published, if God spares me to finish my Exposition on the New Testament, and some other pieces, which I have upon the hand.

† [illegible] year 1727.

act on these directions so far as they may properly suit his capacities and circumstances in life, for I would be far from laying down the following particulars as universal rules for all, or for any one person in the world at all times. Let them be practised by those that are able, and when they have leisure: and when you cannot reach them all, come as near the most important of them as you conveniently can. With this precaution I proceed to the letter, which I would hope, after this previous care to guard against the danger of misteking it, will not discourage any, even the weakest Christian. Let us humbly and cheerfully do our best, and rejoice that we have so gracious a Father, who knows all our infirmities, and so compassionate a High Priest, to recommend to divine acceptance the feeblest efforts of sincere duty and love!

My dear Friend,

Since you desire my thoughts in writing, and at large, on the subject of our late conversation, viz. By what particular methods in our daily conduct a life of devotion and usefulness may be most happily maintained and secured? I set myself, with cheerfulness, to recollect and digest the hints which I then gave you; hoping it may be of some service to you in your most important interests; and may also fix on my own mind a deeper sense of my obligations, to govern my own life by the rules I offer to others. I esteem attempts of this kind among the pleasantest fruits, and the surest cements, of friendship; and as I hope ours will last for ever, I am persuaded a mutual care to cherish sentiments of this kind, will add everlasting endearments to it.

§ 2. The directions you will expect from me on this occasion, naturally divide themselves into three heads: How we are to regard God, —in the beginning,—the progress,—and the close of the day. I will open my heart freely to you with regard to each, and will leave you to judge, how far these hints may suit your circumstances: aiming, at least, to keep between the extremes, of a superstitious strictness in trifles, and of an indolent remissness, which, if admitted in little things, may draw after it criminal neglects, and at length more criminal indulgences.

§ 3. [1.] In the beginning of the day, it should certainly be our care to lift up our hearts to God as soon as we wake, and while we are rising; and then, to set ourselves seriously and immediately to the secret devotions of the morning.

§ 4. For the first of these, it seems exceedingly natural. There are so many things that may suggest a great variety of pious reflections and ejaculations, which are so obvious, that one would think a serious mind could hardly miss them. The ease and cheerfulness of our mind at our first awakening; the refreshment we find from sleep; the security we have enjoyed in that defenceless state; the provision of warm and decent apparel; the cheerful light of the returning sun; or even (which is not unfit to mention to you) the contrivances of art, taught and furnished by the great Author of all our conveniences, to supply us with many useful hours of life in the absence of the sun; the hope of returning to the dear society of our friends; the prospect of spending another day in the service of God, and the improvement of our own minds; and above all, the lively hope of a joyful resurrection to an eternal day of happiness and glory: any of these particulars, and many more which I do not mention, may furnish us with matter of pleasing reflection and cheerful praise while we are rising. And for our further assistance, when we are alone at this time, it may not be improper to speak sometimes to ourselves, and sometimes to our heavenly Father, in the natural expressions of joy and thankfulness. Permit me, Sir, to add, that if we find our hearts in such a frame at our first awakening, even that is just matter of praise, and the rather, as perhaps it is an answer to the prayer with which we lay down.

§ 5. For the exercise of secret devotion in the morning, which I hope will generally be our first work, I cannot prescribe an exact method to another. You must, my dear friend, consult your own taste in some measure. The constituent parts of the service are in the general plan. Were I to propose a particular model for those who have half, or three quarters, of an hour at command, (which with prudent conduct I suppose most may have,) it should be this:

§ 6. To begin the stated devotions of the day with a solemn act of praise, offered to God on our knees, and generally with a low, yet distinct, voice; acknowledging the mercies we had been reflecting on while rising: never forgetting to mention Christ, as the great foundation of all our enjoyments and our hopes, or to return thanks for the influences of the blessed Spirit, which have led our hearts to God, or are then engaging us to seek him. This, as well as other offices of devotion afterwards mentioned, must be done attentively and sincerely; for not to offer our praises heartily, is, in the sight of God, not to praise him at all. This address of praise may properly be concluded with an express renewal of our covenant with God, declaring our continued repeated resolutions of being devoted to him, and particularly of living to his glory the ensuing day.

§ 7. It may be proper, after this, to take a prospect of the day before us, so far as we can probably foresee in the general, where and how it may be spent: and seriously to reflect, how shall I employ myself for God this day? What business is to be done, and in what order? What opportunities may

I expect either of doing or of receiving good? What temptations am I like to be assaulted with, in any place, company, or circumstances, which may probably occur? In what instances have I lately failed? And how shall I be safest now?

§ 8. After this review, it would be proper to offer up a short prayer, begging that God would quicken us to each of these foreseen duties; that he would fortify us against each of these apprehended dangers; that he would grant us success in such or such a business undertaken for his glory, and also, that he would help us to discover and improve unforeseen opportunities, to resist unexpected temptations, and to bear patiently, and religiously, any afflictions which may surprise us in the day on which we are entering.

§ 9. I would advise you after this, to read some portion of Scripture; not a great deal, nor the whole Bible in its course, but some select lessons out of its most useful parts, perhaps ten or twelve verses; not troubling yourself much about the exact connexion, or other critical niceties, which may occur, (though at other times I would recommend them to your inquiry, as you have ability and opportunity,) but considering them merely in a devotional and practical view. Here take such instructions as readily present themselves to your thoughts, repeat them over to your own conscience, and charge your heart religiously to observe them and act upon them, under a sense of the divine authority which attends them. And if you pray over the substance of this scripture with your Bible open before you, it may impress your memory and your heart yet more deeply, and may form you to a copiousness and variety, both of thought and expression, in prayer.

§ 10. It might be proper to close these devotions with a psalm or hymn; and I rejoice with you, that through the pious care of Dr. Watts, and some other sacred poets, we are provided with so rich a variety for the assistance of the closet and family on these occasions, as well as for the service of the sanctuary.

§ 11. [II.] The most material directions which have occurred to me, relating to the progress of the day, are these:—That we be serious in the devotions of the day;—that we be diligent in the business of it, that is, in the prosecution of our worldly callings; that we be temperate and prudent in the recreations of it;—that we carefully remark the providences of the day;—that we cautiously guard against the temptations of it;—that we keep up a humble and lively dependence upon the divine influence, suitable to every emergency of it;—that we govern our thoughts well in the solitude of the day, and our discourses well in the conversations of it. These, Sir, were the heads of a sermon which you lately heard me preach on this occasion, and to which I know you referred in that request which I am now endeavouring to answer. I will therefore touch upon the most material hints which fell under each of these particulars.

§ 12. (1.) For seriousness in devotion, whether public or domestic: Let us take a few moments, before we enter upon such solemnities, to pause, and to reflect, on the perfections of the God we are addressing, on the importance of the business we are coming about, on the pleasure and advantage of a regular and devout attendance, and on the guilt and folly of a hypocritical formality. When engaged, let us maintain a strict watchfulness over our own spirits, and check the first wanderings of thought. And when the duty is over, let us immediately reflect on the manner in which it has been performed, and ask our own consciences whether we have reason to conclude, that we are accepted of God in it? For there is a certain manner of going through these offices, which our own hearts will immediately tell us, it is impossible for God to approve: and if we have inadvertently fallen into it, we ought to be deeply humbled before God for it, lest our very prayer become sin.

§ 13. (2.) As for the hours of worldly business; whether it be, as with you, that of the hands; or whether it be the labour of a learned life, not immediately relating to religious matters: Let us set to the prosecution of it with a sense of God's authority, and with a regard to his glory. Let us avoid a dreaming, sluggish, indolent temper, which nods over its work, and does only the business of one hour in two or three. In opposition to this, which runs through the life of some people, who yet think they are never idle, let us endeavour to despatch as much as we well can in a little time; considering, that it is but a little we have in all. And let us be habitually sensible of the need we have of the divine blessing, to make our labours successful.

§ 14. (3.) For seasons of diversion: Let us take care, that our recreations be well chosen; that they be pursued with a good intention, to fit us for a renewed application to the labours of life; and thus, that they be only used in subordination to the honour of God, the great end of all our actions. Let us take heed, that our hearts be not estranged from God by them; and that they do not take up too much of our time; always remembering that the faculties of the human nature, and the advantages of the Christian revelation, were not given us in vain; but that we are always to be in pursuit of some great and honourable end, and to indulge ourselves in amusements and diversions no further, than as they make a part in a scheme of rational and manly, benevolent and pious, conduct.

§ 15. (4.) For the observation of providences. It will be useful to regard the divine interposition, in our comforts, and in our afflictions. In our com-

forts, whether more common or extraordinary: that we find ourselves in continued health; that we are furnished with food for support and pleasure; that we have so many agreeable ways of employing our time; that we have so many friends, and those so good, and so happy; that our business goes on prosperously; that we go out and come in safely; and that we enjoy composure and cheerfulness of spirit, without which nothing else could be enjoyed: all these should be regarded as providential favours, and due acknowledgments should be made to God on these accounts, as we pass through such agreeable scenes. On the other hand, Providence is to be regarded in every disappointment, in every loss, in every pain, in every instance of unkindness from those who have professed friendship: and we should endeavour to argue ourselves into a patient submission, from this consideration, that the hand of God is always mediately, if not immediately, in each of them; and that, if they are not properly the work of Providence, they are at least under its direction. It is a reflection, which we should particularly make with relation to those little cross accidents, (as we are ready to call them,) and those infirmities and follies in the temper and conduct of our intimate friends, which may else be ready to discompose us. And it is the more necessary to guard our minds here, as wise and good men often lose the command of themselves on these comparatively little occasions; who, calling up reason and religion to their assistance, stand the shock of great calamities with fortitude and resolution.

§ 16. (5.) For watchfulness against temptations: It is necessary, when changing our place, or our employment, to reflect, "What snares attend me here?" And as this should be our habitual care, so we should especially guard against those snares which in the morning we foresaw. And when we are entering on those circumstances in which we expected the assault, we should reflect, especially if it be a matter of great importance, "Now the combat is going to begin; now God and the blessed angels are observing, what constancy, what fortitude, there is in my soul; and how far the divine authority, and the remembrance of my own prayers, and resolutions, will weigh with me, when it comes to a trial.

§ 17. (6.) As for dependence on divine grace and influence: It must be universal; and since we always need it, we must never forget that necessity. A moment spent in humble fervent breathings after the communications of the divine assistance, may do more good than many minutes spent in mere reasonings. And though indeed this should not be neglected, since the light of reason is a kind of divine illumination; yet, still it ought to be pursued in a due sense of our dependence upon the Father of lights, or, where we think ourselves wisest, we may become vain in our imaginations. Let us therefore always call upon God, and say, for instance, when we are going to pray, "Lord, fix my attention! awaken my holy affections, and pour out upon me the spirit of grace and of supplication!" When taking up the Bible, or any other good book, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law! Enlighten my understanding! Warm my heart! May my good resolutions be confirmed, and all the course of my life in a proper manner regulated!" When addressing ourselves to any worldly business, "Lord, prosper thou the work of my hands upon me, and give thy blessing to my honest endeavours!" When going to any kind of recreation, "Lord, bless my refreshments! Let me not forget thee in them, but still keep thy glory in view!" When coming into company, "Lord, may I do and get good! Let no corrupt communication proceed out of my mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers!" When entering upon difficulties, "Lord, give me that wisdom which is profitable to direct! Teach me thy way, and lead me in a plain path!" When encountering with temptations, "Let thy strength, O gracious Redeemer, be made perfect in my weakness!" These instances may illustrate the design of this direction, though they be far from a complete enumeration of all the circumstances in which it is to be regarded.

§ 18. (7.) For the government of our thoughts in solitude, let us accustom ourselves on all occasions to exercise a due command over our thoughts. Let us take care of those entanglements of passion, and those attachments to any present interest and view, which would deprive us of our power over them. Let us set before us some profitable subject of thought; such as, the perfections of the blessed God, the love of Christ, the value of time, the certainty and importance of death and judgment, and the eternity of happiness or misery which is to follow. Let us also at such intervals reflect on what we have observed as to the state of our own souls, with regard to the advance or decline of religion; or on the last sermon we have heard, or the last portion of Scripture we have read. You may perhaps, in this connexion, Sir, recollect what I have (if I remember right) proposed to you in conversation; that it might be very useful to select some one verse of Scripture, which we had met with in the morning, and to treasure it up in our mind, resolving to think of that at any time when we are at a loss for matter of pious reflection, in any intervals of leisure for entering upon it. This will often be as a spring, from whence many profitable and delightful thoughts may arise, which perhaps we did not before see in that connexion and force. Or if it should not be so, yet I am persuaded it will be much better to repeat the same Scripture in our mind a hundred

times in a day, with some pious ejaculation formed upon it, than to leave our thoughts at the mercy of all those various trifles which may otherwise intrude upon us, the variety of which will be far from making amends for their vanity.

§ 19. (8.) Lastly, for the government of our discourse in company: We should take great care, that nothing may escape us, which can expose us, or our Christian profession, to censure and reproach; nothing injurious to those that are absent, or to those that are present; nothing malignant, nothing insincere, nothing which may corrupt, nothing which may provoke, nothing which may mislead those about us. Nor should we, by any means, be content, that what we say is innocent; it should be our desire, that it may be edifying to ourselves and others. In this view, we should endeavour to have some subject of useful discourse always ready, in which we may be assisted by the hints given, about furniture for thought, under the former head. We should watch for decent opportunities of introducing useful reflections; and if a pious friend attempt to do it, we should endeavour to second it immediately. When the conversation does not turn directly on religious subjects, we should endeavour to make it improving some other way: we should reflect on the character and capacities of our company, that we may lead them to talk of what they understand best; for their discourses on those subjects will probably be most pleasing to themselves, as well as most useful to us. And in pauses of discourse, it may not be improper to lift up a holy ejaculation to God, that his grace may assist us and our friends in our endeavours to do good to each other; that all we say and do may be worthy the character of reasonable creatures and Christians.

§ 20. [III.] The directions for a religious closing of the day, which I shall here mention, are only two.—Let us see to it, that the secret duties of the evening be well performed;—and let us lie down on our beds in a pious frame.

§ 21. (1.) For secret devotion in the evening, I would propose a method something different from that in the morning; but still, as then, with due allowances for circumstances, which may make unthought-of alterations proper. I should, Sir, advise you to read a portion of Scripture in the first place, with suitable reflections, and prayers, as above: then to read a hymn or psalm: after this to enter on self-examination, to be followed by a longer prayer than that which followed reading, to be formed on this review of this day. In this address to the throne of grace, it will be highly proper to entreat that God would pardon the omissions and offences of the day; to praise him for mercies temporal and spiritual; to recommend ourselves to his protection for the ensuing night; with proper petitions for others, whom we ought to bear on our hearts before him, and particularly for those friends with whom we have conversed or corresponded in the preceding day. Many other concerns will occur, both in morning and evening prayer, which I have not here hinted at: but I did not apprehend that a full enumeration of these things belonged, by any means, to our present purpose.

§ 22. Before I quit this head, I must take the liberty to remind you, that self-examination is so important a duty, that it will be worth our while to spend a few words upon it. And this branch of it is so easy, that when we have proper questions before us, any person of a common understanding may hope to go through it with advantage, under the divine blessing. I offer you therefore the following queries, which I hope you will, with such alterations as you may judge requisite, keep near you for daily use:—"Did I awake as with God this morning, and rise with a grateful sense of his goodness? How were the secret devotions of the morning performed? Did I offer my solemn praises, and renew the dedication of myself to God, with becoming attention and suitable affections? Did I lay my scheme for the business of the day wisely and well? How did I read the Scripture, and any other devotional or practical piece, which I might afterwards conveniently review? Did it do my heart good, or was it a mere amusement? How have the other stated devotions of the day been attended, whether in the family or in public? Have I pursued the common business of this day with diligence and spirituality; doing every thing in season, and with all convenient despatch, and as unto the Lord? What time have I lost this day, in the morning or the forenoon, in the afternoon, or the evening;" (for these divisions will assist your recollection:) "and what has occasioned the loss of it? With what temper, and under what regulations, have the recreations of this day been pursued? Have I seen the hand of God in my mercies, health, cheerfulness, food, clothing, books, preservation in journeys, success of business, conversation, and kindness of friends, &c.? Have I seen it in afflictions, and particularly in little things which had a tendency to vex and disquiet me? And with regard to this interposition, have I received my comforts thankfully, and my afflictions submissively? How have I guarded against the temptations of the day, particularly against this or that temptation, which I foresaw in the morning? Have I maintained a humble dependence on divine influences? Have I lived by faith in the Son of God, and regarded Christ, this day, as my teacher and governor, my atonement and intercessor, my example and guardian, my strength and portion? Have I been looking forward to death and eternity this day, and considered myself as a probationer for heaven, and through grace an expectant of it? Have I governed my thoughts well, especially in

such or such an interval of solitude. How was my subject of thought this day chosen, and how was it regarded? Have I governed my discourses well in such and such company? Did I say nothing passionate, mischievous, slanderous, imprudent, impertinent? Has my heart this day been full of love to God, and to all mankind; and have I sought, and found, and improved, opportunities of doing and of getting good? With what attention and improvement have I read the Scripture this evening? How was self-examination performed the last night? and how have I profited this day by any remarks I then made on former negligences and mistakes? With what temper did I then lie down and compose myself to sleep?"

§ 23. You will easily see, Sir, that these questions are so adjusted, as to be an abridgment of the most material advices I have given in this letter, and I believe I need not, to a person of your understanding, say any thing as to the usefulness of such inquiries. Conscience will answer them in a few minutes; but if you think them too large and particular, you may make a still shorter abstract for daily use, and reserve these, with such obvious alterations as will then be necessary, for seasons of more than ordinary exactness in review, which I hope will occur at least once a week. Secret devotion being thus performed, before drowsiness render us unfit for it, the interval between that and our going to rest, must be conducted by the rules mentioned under the next head. And nothing will further remain to be considered here, but,

§ 24. (2.) The sentiments with which we should lie down, and compose ourselves to sleep. Now here it is obviously suitable to think of the divine goodness, in adding another day, and the mercies of it, to the former days and mercies of our life; to take notice of the indulgence of Providence, in giving us commodious habitations and easy beds, and continuing to us such health of body, that we can lay ourselves down at ease upon them, and such serenity of mind as leaves us any room to hope for refreshing sleep: a refreshment to be sought, not merely as an indulgence to animal nature, but as what our wise Creator, in order to keep us humble in the midst of so many infirmities, has been pleased to make necessary to our being able to pursue his service with renewed alacrity. Thus may our sleeping, as well as our waking, hours, be in some sense devoted to God. And when we are just going to resign ourselves to the image of death, (to what one of the ancients beautifully calls its lesser mysteries,) it is also evidently proper to think seriously of that end of all the living, and to renew those actings of repentance and faith which we should judge necessary if we were to wake no more here. You have once, Sir, seen a meditation of that kind in my hand, I will transcribe it for you in the postscript and therefore shall add no more to this head, but here put a close to the directions you desire.

§ 25. I am persuaded the most important of them have, in one form or another, been long regarded by you, and made governing maxims of your life. I shall greatly rejoice, if the review of these, and the examination and trial of the rest, may be the means of leading you into more intimate communion with God, and so of rendering your life more pleasant and useful, and your eternity, whenever that is to commence, more glorious. There is not a human creature upon earth whom I should not delight to serve in these important interests; but I can faithfully assure you, that I am with particular respect,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant.

§ 26. This, reader, with the alteration of a very few words, is the letter I wrote to a worthy friend, (now, I doubt not, with God,) about sixteen years ago. And I can assuredly say, that the experience of each of these years has confirmed me in these views, and established me in the persuasion, that one day thus spent is preferable to whole years of sensuality, and the neglect of religion. I chose to insert the letter as it is, because I thought the freedom and particularity of the advice I had given in it, would appear most natural in its original form; and as I propose to enforce these advices in the next chapter, I shall conclude this with that meditation which I promised my friend as a postscript; and which I could wish you to make so familiar to yourself, as that you might be able to recollect the substance of it, whenever you compose yourself to sleep.

A serious view of death, proper to be taken as we lie down on our beds.

"O my soul, look forward a little with seriousness and attention, and learn wisdom by the consideration of thy latter end. Another of thy mortal days is now numbered and finished: and as I have put off my clothes, and laid myself upon my bed, for the repose of the night; so will the day of life quickly come to its period, so must the body itself be put off, and laid to its repose in a bed of dust. There let it rest: for it will be no more regarded by me, than the clothes which I have now laid aside. I have another far more important concern to attend. Think, oh my soul, when death comes, thou art to enter upon the eternal world, and to be fixed either in heaven or in hell. All the schemes and cares, the hopes and fears, the pleasures and sorrows, of life, will come to their period, and the world of spirits will open upon thee. And oh, how soon may it open! Perhaps before the returning sun bring on the light of another day. To-morrow's

sun may not enlighten mine eyes, but only shine round a senseless corpse, which may lie in the place of this animated body. At least, the death of many in the flower of their age, and many who were superior to me in capacity, piety, and the prospects of usefulness, may loudly warn me not to depend on a long life, and engage me rather to wonder that I am continued here so many years, than to be surprised if I am speedily removed.

"And now, oh my soul, answer as in the sight of God, art thou ready? Art thou ready? Is there no sin unforsaken, and so unrepented of, to fill me with anguish in my departing moments, and to make me tremble on the brink of eternity? Dread to remain under the guilt of it, and this moment renew thy most earnest applications to the mercy of God, and the blood of a Redeemer, for deliverance from it.

"But if the great account be already adjusted, if thou hast cordially repented of thy numerous offences, if thou hast sincerely committed thyself by faith into the hands of the blessed Jesus, and hast not renounced thy covenant with him by returning to the allowed practice of sin, then start not at the thoughts of a separation: it is not in the power of death to hurt a soul devoted to God, and united to the great Redeemer. It may take me from my worldly comforts; it may disconcert and break my schemes for service on earth; but, oh my soul, diviner entertainments, and nobler services, wait thee beyond the grave. For ever blessed be the name of God, and the love of Jesus, for these quieting, encouraging, joyful views! I will now lay me down in peace, and sleep; free from the fears of what shall be the issue of this night, whether life or death be appointed for me. Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth, and therefore I can cheerfully refer it to thy choice, whether I shall awake in this world or another."

CHAP. XX.

A serious persuasive to such a method of spending our days, as is represented in the former chapters.

Christians by their example [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

against the whole, which may, in their consequences, affect particulars against which no reasonable man would presume to make any objection at all. Recollect, O Christian, and carry it with you in your memory and your heart, while you are pursuing this review, that you are the creature of God, that you are purchased with the blood of Jesus; and then say, whether these relations in which you stand, do not demand all that application and resolution which I would engage you to. Suppose all the counsels I have given reduced into practice; suppose every day begun and concluded with such devout breathings after God, and such holy retirements for morning and evening converse with him and with your own heart; suppose a daily care, in contriving how your time may be managed, and in reflecting how it has been employed: suppose this regard to God, this sense of his presence, and zeal for his glory, to run through your acts of worship, your hours of business and recreation: suppose this attention to Providence, this guard against temptations, this dependence upon divine influence, this government of the thoughts in solitude, and of the discourses in company: nay, I will add further, suppose every particular direction given to be pursued, excepting when particular cases occur, with respect to which you shall be able in conscience to say—I wave it, not from indolence and carelessness, but because I think it will be just now more pleasing to God to be doing something else, which may often happen in human life, where general rules are best concerted: suppose, I say, all this to be done, not for a day or a week, but through the remainder of life, whether longer or shorter; and suppose this to be reviewed at the close of life, in the full exercise of your rational faculties; will there be reason to say in the reflection, I have taken too much pains in religion; the Author of my being did not deserve all this from me; less diligence, less fidelity, less zeal than this, might have been an equivalent for the blood which was shed for my redemption. A part of my heart, a part of my time, a part of my labours, might have sufficed for him, who hath given me all my powers; for him who hath delivered me from that destruction which would have made them my everlasting torment; for him who is raising me to the regions of a blissful immortality. Can you, with any face, say this? If you cannot, then surely your conscience bears witness, that all I have recommended under the limitations above, is reasonable, that duty and gratitude require it; and, consequently, that by every allowed failure in it, you bring guilt upon your own soul, you offend God, and act unworthy your Christian profession.

§ 4. I entreat you further to consider, whether such a conduct as I have now been recommending, would not conduce much to your comfort and usefulness in life. Reflect seriously, what is true happiness? Does it consist in distance from God, or in nearness to him? Surely you cannot be a Christian, surely you cannot be a rational man, if you doubt, whether communion with the great Father of our spirits be a pleasure and felicity; and if it be, then surely they enjoy most of it who keep him most constantly in view. You cannot but know in your own conscience, that it is this which makes the happiness of heaven; and therefore the more of it any man enjoys upon earth, the more of heaven comes down into his soul. If you have made any trial of religion, though it be but a few months or weeks since you first became acquainted with it, you must be some judge of it upon your own experience, which have been the most pleasant days of your life. Have they not been those, in which you have acted most upon these principles; those in which you have most steadily and resolutely carried them through every hour of time, and every circumstance of life? The check which you must in many instances give to your own inclinations might seem disagreeable; but it would surely be overbalanced in a most happy manner, by the satisfaction you would find in a consciousness of self-government; in having such a command of your thoughts, affections, and actions, as is much more glorious than any authority over others can be.

§ 5. I would also entreat you to consider the influence, which such a conduct as this might have upon the happiness of others. And it is easy to be seen it must be very great; as you would find your heart always disposed to watch every opportunity of doing good, and to seize it with eagerness and delight. It would engage you to make it the study and business of your life, to order things in such a manner, that the end of one kind and useful action might be the beginning of another; in which you would go on as naturally, as the inferior animals do in those productions and actions by which mankind are relieved or enriched; or as the earth bears her successive crops of different vegetable supplies. And though mankind be, in this corrupt state, so unhappily inclined to imitate evil examples rather than good; yet it may be expected, that while your light shines before men, some seeing your good works, will endeavour to transcribe them in their own lives, and so to glorify your Father which is in heaven. The charm of such beautiful models would surely impress some, and incline them at least to attempt an imitation; and every attempt would dispose to another. And thus, through the divine goodness, you might be entitled to a share in the praise, and the reward, not only of the good you had immediately done yourself, but likewise of that which you had engaged others to do. And no eye, but that of an all-searching God, can see into what distant times or places the blessed consequences

may reach. In every instance in which these consequences appear, it will put a generous and sublime joy into your heart, which no worldly prosperity could afford, and which would be the liveliest emblem of that high delight which the blessed God feels in seeing and making his creatures happy.

6. It is true indeed, that, amidst all these pious and benevolent views, afflictions may occur, and in some measure interrupt you in the midst of your projected schemes. But surely these afflictions will sit much lighter, when your heart is gladdened with the peaceful and joyful reflection of your own mind, and with so honourable a testimony of conscience before God and men. Delightful will it be, to go back to past scenes in your pleasing review, and to think, that you have not only been sincerely humbling yourself for those past offences, which afflictions may bring to your remembrance; but that you have given substantial proofs of the sincerity of that humiliation by a real reformation of what has been amiss, and by acting with strenuous and vigorous resolution on the contrary principle. And while converse with God, and doing good to men, are made the great business and pleasure of life, you will find a thousand opportunities of enjoyment, even in the midst of those afflictions, which would render you so incapable of relishing the pleasures of sense, that the very mention of them might in those circumstances seem an insult and a reproach.

7. At length death will come, that solemn and important hour, which hath been passed through by so many thousands who have in the main lived such a life, and by so many millions who have neglected it. And let conscience say, if there was ever any one of these millions, who had then any reason to repent in that neglect; or any one, among the most strict and exemplary Christians, who then lamented that his heart and life had been too zealously devoted to God? Let me once more say, whether they have wished to have a part of that time which they have thus employed, given back to them again, that they might be more conformed to this world; that they might plunge themselves deeper into its amusements, or pursue its honours, its possessions, or its pleasures, with greater eagerness than they had done? If you were yourself dying, and a dear friend or child stood near you, and the book and the last chapter of it should chance to come into your thoughts, would you caution that friend or child against conducting himself by such rules as I have advanced? The question may perhaps seem unnecessary, where the answer is so plain and so certain. Well then, let it assist you to know how you should live, by reflecting how you would then, and what course you would wish to look back upon, when you are just quitting this world, and entering upon another. Think seriously: what if death should surprise you on a sudden, and you should be called into eternity at an hour's or a minute's warning, would you not wish that your last day should have been thus begun, and the course of it, if it were a day of health and activity, should have been thus managed? Would not you wish that your last thoughts should have been employed in such meditations and in such purposes? Would not the passage, the flight from earth to heaven, be most easy, most pleasant in this view and connexion? And on the other hand, if death should make more gradual approaches, would not the remembrance of such a pious, holy, humble, diligent, and useful life, make a dying bed much softer and easier, than it would otherwise be? You would not die reproaching upon those things. God forbid that you should! Sensible of your many imperfections, you would no doubt desire to throw yourself at the feet of Christ, that you might appear before God adorned with his righteousness, and washed from your sins in his blood. You would also, with your dying breath, ascribe to the riches of His grace every good disposition you had found in your heart, and every worthy action you had been enabled to perform. But would it not give you a delight worthy of being purchased with a thousand worlds, to reflect, that his grace had wrought upon you had not been in vain; but that you had from an humble principle of grateful love, glorified your heavenly Father on earth, and in some degree, though not with the perfection you could desire, finished the work which he had given you to do, that you had been living for many past years as on the borders of heaven, and endeavouring to form your heart and life to the temper and manners of its inhabitants.

8. And once more, let me entreat you to reflect on the view you will have of this matter, when you come into a world of glory, as (which I hope will be the happy case) divine mercy conduct you thither. Will not your reception there be affected by your care, or negligence, in this your course? Will it appear an indifferent thing in the eye of the blessed Jesus, who distributes the crowns, and allots the thrones there, whether you have been among the most zealous, or the most indolent, of his servants? Surely you must wish to have an entrance ministered unto you abundantly into the Kingdom of your Lord and Saviour: and what can more certainly conduce to it than to be always abounding in this work? You cannot think so meanly of that glorious state as to imagine, that you shall there look round about you with a secret disappointment, and say in your heart, that you overvalued the endeavours you have exerted, and practised it with too much carefulness. You will not wonder, that it had so many of your thoughts and cares. But on the contrary, you have the highest reason to believe, that if any thing were capable of exciting your indignation and your grief there, it would be, that,

amidst so many motives, and so many advantages, you exerted yourself no more in the prosecution of such a prize.

§ 9. But I will not enlarge on so clear a case, and therefore conclude the chapter with reminding you, that to allow yourself deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperfect attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it.

A Prayer suited to the state of a soul, who desires to attain the life recommended above.

"Blessed God, I cannot contradict the force of these reasonings: oh that I may feel more than ever the lasting effects of them! Thou art the great fountain of being, and of happiness, and as from thee my being was derived, so from thee my happiness directly flows: and the nearer I am to thee, the purer and the more delicious is the stream. With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light may I see light! The great object of my final hope is to dwell for ever with thee. Give me now some foretaste of that delight! Give me, I beseech thee, to experience the blessedness of that man who feareth the Lord, and who delighteth greatly in his commandments; and so form my heart by thy grace, that I may be in the fear of the Lord all the day long!

"To thee may my awakening thoughts be directed; and with the first ray of light that visits mine opening eyes, lift up, O Lord, the light of thy countenance upon me! When my faculties are roused from that broken state, in which they lay, while buried, and as it were annihilated, in sleep, may my first actions be consecrated to thee, O God, who givest me light; who givest me, as it were, every morning a new life and a new reason! Enable my heart to pour out itself before thee, with a filial reverence, freedom, and endearment! And may I hearken to God as I desire he should hearken unto me! May thy word be read with attention and pleasure; may my soul be delivered into the mould of it, and may I hide it in mine heart, that I may not sin against thee! Animated by the great motives there suggested, may I every morning be renewing the dedication of myself to thee, through Jesus thy beloved Son; and be deriving from him new supplies of that blessed Spirit of thine, whose influences are the life of my soul!

"And being thus prepared, do thou, Lord, lead me forth by the hand to all the duties and events of the day! In that calling wherein thou hast been pleased to call me, may I abide with thee; not being slothful in business but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord! May I know the value of time, and always improve it to the best advantage, in such duties as thou hast assigned me, how low soever they may seem, or how painful soever they may be! To thy glory, O Lord, may the labours of life be pursued; and to thy glory may the refreshments of it be sought! Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, may that end still be kept in view, and may it be attained; and may every refreshment and release from business, prepare me to serve thee with greater vigour and resolution!

"May mine eye be watchful to observe the descent of mercies from thee, and may a grateful sense of thine hand in them add a savour and a relish to all! And when afflictions come, which in a world like this I would accustom myself to expect, may I remember that they come from thee; and may that fully reconcile me to them, while I firmly believe, that the same love which gives us our daily bread, appoints us our daily crosses; which I would learn to take up, that I may follow my dear Lord, with a temper like that which he manifested, when ascending Calvary for my sake, saying like him, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? And when I enter into temptation, do thou, Lord, deliver me from evil! Make me sensible, I intreat thee, of my own weakness, that my heart may be raised to thee for present communications of proportionable strength! When I am engaged in the society of others, may it be my desire and my care, that I may do and receive as much good as possible; and may I continually answer the great purposes of life, by honouring thee, and diffusing useful knowledge and happiness in the world! And when I am alone, may I remember my heavenly Father is with me; and may I enjoy the pleasure of thy presence, and feel the animating power of it, awakening my soul to an earnest desire to think and act as in thy sight!

"Thus let my days be spent, and let them always be closed in thy fear, and under a sense of thy gracious presence! Meet me, O Lord, in my evening retirements! May I choose the most proper time for them; may I diligently attend to reading and prayer, and when I review my conduct, may I do it with an impartial eye! Let not self-love spread a false colouring over it; but may I judge myself, as one that expects to be judged of the Lord, and is very solicitous he may be approved by thee, who searchest all hearts, and canst not forget any of my works! Let my prayer come daily before thee as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be as the morning and the evening sacrifice! May I resign my powers to sleep in sweet calmness and security, conscious that I have lived to God in the day, and cheerfully persuaded that I am accepted of and in Christ Jesus my Lord, and humbly hoping in thy

mercy, through him whether my days on earth be prolonged, or the resolve of them be cut off in the midst.' If death comes by a leisurely advance may it find me thus employed: and if I am called on a sudden to exchange worlds, may my last days and hours be found to have been conducted by such maxims as these: that I may have a sweet and easy passage from the services of time to the infinitely nobler services of an immortal state.' I ask it through him, who while on earth was the truest pattern and example of every virtue and grace, and who now lives and reigns with that able to save unto the uttermost. To him having done all I would fly with humble acknowledgment that I am an unprofitable servant: to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAP. XXI.

A Caution against various Temptations, by which the young convert may be drawn aside from the course recommended above.

[illegible]

§ 1. THY representation I have been making of the pleasure and advantage of a life spent in devotedness to God and communion with him, as I have described it above, will I hope engage you, my dear reader, to form some purposes, and make some attempt, to obtain it. But from considering the nature and observing the course of things, it appears exceedingly evident, that besides the general opposition which I formerly mentioned as likely to attend you in your first entrance on a religious life, you will find, even after you have resolutely broken through this, a variety of hinderances in any attempts of exemplary piety, and in the prosecution of a remarkably strict and edifying course, will present themselves daily in your path. And whereas you may, by a few resolute efforts, battle some of the former sort of enemies; these will be perpetually renewing their onsets, and a vigorous struggle must be continually maintained with them. Give me leave now, therefore, to be particular in my cautions against some of the chief of these. And here I would insist upon the deliberties which will arise from indolence and the love of pleasure, from vain company, and worldly cares. Each of these may prove insnaring to any, and especially to young persons, to whom I would now leave some particular regard.

§ 2. I entreat you, therefore, in the first place, that you will guard against a sluggish and indolent temper. The love of ease insinuates itself into the heart, under a variety of plausible pretences, which are often allowed to pass, when temptations of a grosser nature would not be admitted. The misspending a little time seems to wise and good men but a small matter; yet this sometimes runs them into great inconveniences. It often leads them to break in upon the seasons regularly allotted to devotion, and to defer business which might immediately be done, but being put off from day to day, is not done at all: and thereby the services of life are at least diminished, and the rewards of eternity diminished proportionably: not to insist upon it, that very frequently this lays the soul open to further temptations, by which it falls, in consequence of being found unemployed. Be therefore suspicious of the first approaches of this kind. Remember, that the soul of man is an active being, and that it must find its pleasure in activity. Gird up therefore the loins of your mind. Endeavour to keep yourself always well employed. Be exact, if I may with humble reverence use the expression, in your appointments with God. Meet him early in the morning: and say not with the sluggard, when the proper hour of rising is come, a little more sleep, a little more slumber. That time which prudence shall advise you give to conversation, and to other recreations. But when that is elapsed, and no unforeseen and important engagement presents, rise and be gone. Quit the company of your dearest friends, and retire to your proper business, whether it be in the field, the shop, or the closet. For by acting contrary to the secret dictates of your mind, as to what it is just at the present moment best to do, though it be but in the manner of spending half an hour, some degree of guilt is contracted, and a habit is cherished, which may draw after it much worse consequences. Consider, therefore, what duties are to be despatched, and in what seasons. Form your plan as prudently as you can, and pursue it resolutely; unless any unexpected incident arise, which leads you to conclude, that duty calls you another way. Allowances for such unthought-of interruptions must be made; but if in consequence of this, you are obliged to omit any thing of importance which you proposed to have done to-day, do it if possible to-morrow: and do not cut yourself out new work till the former plan be despatched; unless you really judge it, not merely more amusing, but more important. And always remember that a servant of Christ should see to it, that he determine on these occasions as in his Master's presence.

§ 3. Guard also against an excessive love of sensitive and outward pleasure, as that which will be a great hinderance to you in that religious course which I have now been urging. You cannot but know

that Christ has told us, that a man must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, if he desire to become his disciple. Christ, the Son of God, the maker and the heir of all things, pleased not himself, but submitted to want, to difficulties, and hardships, in the way of duty, and some of them of the extremest kind and degree, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. In this way we are to follow him; and as we know not how soon we may be called even to resist unto blood, striving against sin, it is certainly best to accustom ourselves to that discipline which we may possibly be called out to exercise even in such rigorous heights. A soft and delicate life will give force to temptations, which might easily be subdued by one who has habituated himself to endure hardships, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It also produces an attachment to this world, and an unwillingness to leave it: which ill becomes those who are strangers and pilgrims on earth, and who expect so soon to be called away to that better country which they profess to seek. Add to this, that what the world calls a life of pleasure is necessarily a life of expense too, and may perhaps lead you, as it has done many others, and especially many who have been setting out in the world, beyond the limits which providence has assigned; and so, after a short course of indulgence, may produce proportionable want. And while in other cases it is true that pity should be shown to the poor, this is a poverty that is justly contemptible, because it is the effect of a man's own folly: and when your want thus comes upon you as an armed man, you will not only find yourself stripped of the capacity you might otherwise have secured, for performing those works of charity which are so ornamental to a Christian profession, but probably will be under strong temptations to some low artifice or mean compliance, quite beneath the Christian character, and that of an upright man. Many who once made a high profession, after a series of such sorry and scandalous shifts, have fallen into the infamy of bankrupts, and of the worst kind of bankrupts; I mean, such as have lavished away on themselves what was indeed the property of others, and so have injured, and perhaps ruined, the industrious, to feed a foolish, luxurious, or ostentatious humour, which while indulged was the shame of their own families, and when it can be indulged no longer, is their torment. This will be a terrible reproach to religion; such a reproach to it, that a good man would rather choose to live on bread and water, or indeed to die for want of them, than to occasion it.

§ 4. Guard, therefore, I beseech you, against any thing which might tend that way, especially by diligence in business, and by prudence and frugality in expense; which, by the divine blessing, may have a very happy influence to make your affairs prosperous, your health vigorous, and your mind easy. But this cannot be attained without keeping a resolute watch over yourself, and strenuously refusing to comply with many proposals, which indolence or sensuality will offer in very plausible forms, and for which it will plead, that it asks but very little. Take heed, lest in this respect you imitate those fond parents, who, by indulging their children in every little thing they have a mind to, encourage them, by insensible degrees, to grow still more encroaching and imperious in their demands; as if they chose to be ruined with them, rather than to check them in what seems a trifle. Remember and consider that excellent remark, sealed by the ruin of so many thousands; "He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little."

§ 5. In this view, give me leave also seriously and tenderly to caution you, my dear reader, against the snares of vain company. I speak not, as before, of that company which is openly licentious and profane. I hope there is something now in your temper and views which would engage you to turn away from such with detestation and horror. But I beseech you to consider that those companions may be very dangerous who might at first give you but very little alarm; I mean those, who though not the declared enemies of religion, and professed followers of vice and disorder, yet nevertheless have no practical sense of divine things on their hearts, so far as can be judged by their conversation and behaviour. You must often of necessity be with such persons, and Christianity not only allows, but requires, that you should, on all expedient occasions of intercourse with them, treat them with civility and respect; but choose not such for your most intimate friends, and do not contrive to spend most of your leisure moments among them. For such converse has a sensible tendency to alienate the soul from God, and to render it unfit for all spiritual communion with him. To convince you of this, do but reflect on your own experience, when you have been for many hours together among persons of such a character. Do you not find yourself more indisposed for devotional exercises? Do you not find your heart, by insensible degrees, more and more inclined to a conformity to this world, and to look with a secret disrelish on those objects and employments to which reason directs as the noblest and the best? Observe the first symptoms, and guard against the snare in time: and for this purpose, endeavour to form friendships founded in piety, and supported by it. Be a companion of them that fear God, and of them that keep his precepts. You well know, that in the sight of God they are the excellent of the earth; let them therefore be all your delight. And that the peculiar benefit of their friendship may not be lost, endeavour to make the best of the hours you spend with them. The wisest of men has ob-

served, that when counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, that is, when it lies low and concealed, a man of understanding will draw it out. Endeavour therefore on such occasions, so far as you can do it with decency and convenience, to give the conversation a religious turn. And when serious and useful subjects are started in your presence, lay hold of them, and cultivate them; and for that purpose, let the word of Christ dwell richly in you, and be continually made the men of your counsel.

1 6. If it be so, it will secure you, not only from the enervating illness and luxury, but from the contagion of every bad example. And it will also engage you to guard against those excessive hurries of worldly business, which would fill up all your time and thoughts, and thereby choke the good seed of God, and render it in a great measure, if not quite, unfruitful. Young people are generally of an enterprising disposition: having experienced comparatively little of the fatigue of business, and of the disappointments and encumbrances of life, they easily swallow them up, and accumulate them in their imagination, and fancy that their spirit, their application, and address, will be able to encounter and surmount every obstacle or hinderance. But the event proves it otherwise. Let me entreat you, therefore, to be cautious how you plunge yourself into a greater variety of business than you are capable of managing as you ought, that is, in consistency with the care of your souls, and the service of God: which certainly ought not on any pretence to be neglected. It is true, indeed, that a prudent regard to your worldly interest would require such a caution as it is obvious to every careful observer, that multitudes are undone by grasping at more than they can conveniently manage. Hence it has frequently been seen, that while they have seemed resolved to be rich, they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows, have ruined their own families and drawn down many others into destruction with them. Whereas, could they have been contented with moderate employments and moderate gains, they might have prospered in their business, and might by some degrees, under a divine blessing, have advanced to great and honourable increase. But if there were no danger at all to be apprehended on this head, if you were as certain of becoming rich and great as you would perplexing and fattening yourself in the attempt, consider, I beseech you how precarious those enjoyments are. Consider how often a plentiful table becomes a snare, and that which should have been for a man's welfare, becomes a trap. Forget not that short lesson, which is so comprehensive of the highest wisdom, One thing is needful. Be daily thinking, while the joy and the great things of life are glittering before your eyes, how soon death will come, and approach you at once: how soon it will strip you of all possessions, but those which a naked soul can carry along with it into eternity, when it drops the body in the grave. ETERNITY! ETERNITY! ETERNITY! Carry the word of it about with you. If it be possible, through every hour of waking life: and be fully persuaded that you have no business in life, that is inconsistent with it. For whatsoever would be injurious to your soul, is not your business, is not your interest. You are indeed, that the generality of men are, as if they thought the great thing which God required of them was to be as successful in trade, as to get as much of the world as possible; at least, as much as they can without any great inconvenience, and without risking the loss of all, for making a little addition. And so it were to stay this course they will either not perhaps feel themselves, they only seek opportunities of greater carelessness. But in effect if they mean any thing more by this, than a capacity of usefulness, which when they have it they will not exert, they generally deceive themselves: and one way or another, it is a vain pretence. In most instances men seek the world rather that they may heap up riches, for the mean and scandalous satisfaction of looking upon them while they are living, and of thinking, that when they are dead it will be said of them, that they have left so many hundreds or thousands of pounds behind them; very probably to insnare their children in their hurry, for the vanity is not peculiar to those who have children of their own) or else that they may lavish away their riches on their lusts, and drown themselves in a gulf of sensuality, in which, if reason be not lost, religion is soon swallowed up, and with it all the noblest pleasures which can enter into the heart of man. In this view, the generality of rich people appear to me objects of much greater compassion than the poor: especially as, when both live, which is frequently the case, without any fear of God before their eyes, the rich abuse the greater variety and abundance of his favours, and therefore will probably feel in that world of future ruin which awaits impenitent sinners, a more exquisite sense of their misery.

1 7. And let me observe to you, my dear reader, lest you should think yourself secure from such a dreadful danger, that we have great reason to apprehend there are many now in a very wretched state, who once thought seriously of religion, when they were first setting out, in lower circumstances of life, but they have since forsaken God for mammon and are now pitching themselves in those golden places, which, to all probability, before it be long will leave them to remain in those of darkness. When, therefore, an attachment to the world may be followed with such fatal consequences, let me entreat you to stand upon your guard, and do not run out of a desire of gaining what they have, be guilty of such folly as to expose yourself to this double danger, of losing

in the attempt, or of being undone by the success of it. Contract your desires; endeavour to be easy and content with a little; and if Providence call you out to act on a larger sphere, submit to it in obedience to Providence, but number it among the trials of life, which it will require a large proportion of grace to bear well. For be assured, that as affairs and interests multiply, cares and duties will certainly increase, and probably disappointments and sorrows will increase in an equal proportion.

§ 8. On the whole, learn by divine grace to die to the present world; to look upon it as a low state of being, which God never intended for the final and complete happiness, or the supreme care, of any one of his children. A world, where something is indeed to be enjoyed, but chiefly from himself; where a great deal is to be borne with patience and resignation; and where some important duties are to be performed, and a course of discipline to be passed through, by which you are to be formed for a better state, to which, as a Christian, you are near, and to which God will call you, perhaps on a sudden, but undoubtedly, if you hold on your way, in the fittest time and the most convenient manner. Refer, therefore, all this to him. Let your hopes and fears, your expectations and desires, with regard to this world, be kept as low as possible; and all your thoughts be united as much as may be in this one centre—What it is that God would, in present circumstances, have you to be; and what is that method of conduct by which you may most effectually please and glorify him!

The young convert's Prayer for divine protection, against the danger of these snares.

"Blessed God! in the midst of ten thousand snares and dangers which surround me from without and from within, permit me to look up unto thee with my humble entreaty, that thou wouldst deliver me from them that rise up against me, and that thine eyes may be upon me for good! When sloth and indolence are ready to seize me, awaken me from that idle dream, with lively and affectionate views of that invisible and eternal world, to which I am tending! Remind me of what infinite importance it is, that I diligently improve those transient moments, which thou hast allotted to me as the time of my preparation for it.

"When sinners entice me, may I not consent! May holy converse with God give me a disrelish for the converse of those who are strangers to thee, and who would separate my soul from thee! May I honour them that fear the Lord, and walking with such wise and holy men, may I find I am daily advancing in wisdom and holiness! Quicken me, O Lord, by their means, that by me thou mayst also quicken others! Make me the happy instrument of enkindling and animating the flame of divine love in their breasts, and may it catch from heart to heart, and grow every moment in its progress!

"Guard me, O Lord, from the love of sensual pleasures! May I seriously consider, that to be carnally minded is death! May it please thee, therefore, to purify and refine my soul by the influences of thine holy Spirit, that I may always shun unlawful gratifications more solicitously than others pursue them; and that those indulgences of animal nature which thou hast allowed, and which the constitution of things renders necessary, may be soberly and moderately used! May I still remember the superior dignity of my spiritual and intelligent nature, and may the pleasures of the man and the Christian be sought as my noblest happiness! May my soul rise on the wings of holy contemplation to the regions of invisible glory; and may I be endeavouring to form myself, under the influences of divine grace, for the entertainments of those angelic spirits, that live in thy presence in a happy incapacity of those gross delights, by which spirits dwelling in flesh are so often insnared, and in which they so often lose the memory of their high original, and of those noble hopes which alone are proportionable to it!

"Give me, O Lord, to know the station in which thou hast fixed me, and steadily to pursue the duties of it! But deliver me from those excessive cares of this world, which would so engross my time and my thoughts, that the one thing needful should be forgotten! May my desires after worldly possessions be moderated, by considering their uncertain and unsatisfying nature; and while others are laying up treasures on earth, may I be rich towards God! May I never be too busy to attend to those great affairs which lie between thee and my soul; never be so engrossed with the concerns of time, as to neglect the interests of eternity! May I pass through earth with my heart and hopes set upon heaven, and feel the attractive influence stronger and stronger as I approach still nearer and nearer to that desirable centre: till the happy moment come, when every earthly object shall disappear from my view, and the shining glories of the heavenly world shall fill my improved and strengthened sight, which shall then be cheered with that which would now overwhelm me! Amen."

CHAP. XXII.

The case of spiritual decay and barrenness in religion.

[illegible]

§ 1. If I am so happy as to prevail upon you in the exhortations and cautions I have given you, you probably go on with pleasure and comfort in religion, and your path will generally be like the morning light which shineth more and more until the perfect day. Yet I dare not flatter myself with an expectation of such success as shall carry you above those varieties of temper, conduct, and state, which have been more or less the complaint of the best of men. Much do I fear, that how warmly soever your heart may now be impressed with the representations I have been making, though the great objects of your faith and hope continue unchangeable, your temper towards them will be changed. Much do I fear, that you will feel your mind languish and tire in the good ways of God. Nay that you may be prevailed upon to take some step out of them, and may thus fall a prey to some of those temptations, which you now look upon with a holy scorn. The probable consequence of this will be, that God will hide his face from you, that he will stretch forth his afflicting hand against you, and that you will see those sorrowful moments, how cheerfully soever you may now be rejoicing in the Lord, and joying in the God of your salvation. I hope, therefore, it may be of some service, if this too probable event should happen, to consider these cases a little more particularly; and I heartily pray, that God would make what I shall say concerning them the means of restoring, comforting, and strengthening your soul, if he ever suffers you in any degree to deviate from him.

§ 2. We will first consider the case of spiritual declensions, and languor in religion. And here I desire, that, before I proceed any further, you would observe, that I do not comprehend under this head every abatement of that fervour, which a young convert may find when he first becomes experimentally acquainted with divine things. Our natures are so framed, that the novelty of objects strikes them in something of a peculiar manner: not to urge, how much more easily our passions are impressed in the earlier years of life, than when we are more advanced in the journey of it. This, perhaps, is not sufficiently considered. Too great a stress is commonly laid on the flow of affections, and in consequence of this, a Christian who is ripened in grace, and greatly advanced in his preparation for glory, may sometimes be ready to lament imaginary rather than real decays, and to say, without any just foundation, O that it were with me as in months past! Therefore you can hardly be too frequently told, that religion consists chiefly "in the resolution of the will to God, and in a constant care to avoid whatever we are persuaded he would disapprove, to despatch the work he has assigned us in life, and to promote his glory in the happiness of mankind." To this we are daily to attend, having in all to the simplicity and purity of those motives from which we act, which we know are chiefly regarded by that God who searches the heart, humbling ourselves before him at the same time under a sense of our many imperfections, and flying to the blood of Christ and the grace of the gospel.

§ 3. Having given this precaution, I will now a little more particularly describe the case which I call the state of a Christian who is declining in religion: so far as it does not fall in with those which I shall consider in the following chapters. And I must observe, that it chiefly consists "in the languid views of divine objects, and a coldness in those various duties, to which we should be excited by that solemn surrender which we have made of ourselves to the service of God." There will be a variety of symptoms, according to the different circumstances and relations in which the Christian is placed; but some will be of a more universal kind. It will be peculiarly proper to touch on these; and so much the rather, as these declensions are often unobserved, like the gray hairs which were upon Ephraim, when he knew it not.

§ 4. Should you, my good reader, fall into this state, it will probably first discover itself by a failure of the duties of the closet. Not that I suppose they will at first, or certainly conclude that they will at all, be wholly omitted; but they will be run over in a cold and formal manner. Sloth, or some of those other causes which I mentioned you against in the former chapter, will so far prevail upon you, that though perhaps you know and recollect that the proper season of retirement is come, you will sometimes indulge yourself upon your bed in the morning, sometimes in conversation or business in the evening, so as not to have convenient time for it. Or perhaps, when you come into your closet at that season, some favourite book you are desirous to read, some correspondence that you choose to carry on, or some other amusement, will present itself and plead to be despatched first. This will probably take up more time than you imagined; and then secret prayer will be hurried over, and perhaps reading the Scriptures quite neglected. You will plead, perhaps, that it is but for once; but the same allowance will become a second and a third time; and it will grow more easy and familiar to you each time, than it was the last. And thus God will be mocked, and your soul will be defrauded of its spiritual meals. If I may be allowed the expression, the meal of God will be slighted, and self-examination quite dismissed, and secret prayer itself will pass a burthen rather than a delight: a trifling ceremony rather than a decent homage fit for the acceptance of our Father who is in heaven.

§ 5. If immediate and resolute measures be not taken for your recovery from these declensions, they will spread further, and reach the acts of social worship. You will feel the effect in your families and in public ordinances. And if you do not feel it, the symptoms will be so much the worse. Wandering thoughts will (as it were) eat out the very heart of these duties. It is not, I believe, the privilege of the most eminent Christians, to be entirely free from them; but probably in these circumstances you will find but few intervals of strict attention, or of any thing which wears the appearance of inward devotion. And when these heartless duties are concluded, there will scarcely be a reflection made, how little God hath been enjoyed in them, how little he hath been honoured by them. Perhaps the sacrament of the Lord's supper, being so admirably adapted to fix the attention of the soul, and to excite its warmest exercise of holy affections, may be the last ordinance in which these declensions will be felt. And yet who can say that the sacred table is a privileged place? Having been unnecessarily straitened in your preparations, you will attend with less fixedness and enlargement of heart than usual. And perhaps a dissatisfaction in the review, when there has been a remarkable alienation or insensibility of mind, may occasion a disposition to forsake your place and your duty there. And when your spiritual enemies have once gained this point upon you, it is probable you will fall by swifter degrees than ever, and your resistance to their attempts will grow weaker and weaker.

§ 6. When your love to God our Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ fails, your fervour of Christian affection to your brethren in Christ will proportionably decline, and your concern for usefulness in life abate; especially where any thing is to be done for spiritual edification. You will find one excuse or another for the neglect of religious discourse, perhaps not only among neighbours and Christian friends, when very convenient opportunities offer, but even with regard to those who are members of your own families, and to those who, if you are fixed in the superior relations of life, are committed to your care.

§ 7. With this remissness, an attachment, either to sensual pleasure, or to worldly business, will increase. For the soul must have something to employ it, and something to delight itself in; and as it turns to one or the other of these, temptations of one sort or another will present themselves. In some instances, perhaps, the strictest bounds of temperance, and the regular appointments of life, may be broken in upon, through a fondness for company, and the entertainments which often attend it. In other instances, the interests of life appearing greater than they did before, and taking up more of the mind, contrary interests of other persons may throw you into disquietude, or plunge you in debate and contention; in which it is extremely difficult to preserve either the serenity or the innocence of the mind. And perhaps, if ministers and other Christian friends observe this, and endeavour in a plain and faithful way to reduce you from your wandering, a false delicacy of mind, often contracted in such a state as this, will render these attempts extremely disagreeable. The ulcer of the soul (if I may be allowed the expression) will not bear being touched, when it most needs it; and one of the most generous and self-denying instances of Christian friendship, shall be turned into an occasion of coldness and distaste, yea, perhaps of enmity.

§ 8. And possibly, to sum up all, this disordered state of mind may lead you into some prejudices against those very principles, which might be most effectual for your recovery: and your great enemy may succeed so far in his attempts against you, as to persuade you, that you have lost nothing in religion, when you have almost lost all. He may very probably lead you to conclude, that your former devotional frames were mere fits of enthusiasm; and that the holy regularity of your walk before God was an unnecessary strictness and scrupulosity. Nay, you may think it a great improvement in understanding, that you have learnt from some new masters, that if a man treat his fellow-creatures with humanity and good nature, judging and reviling those only who would disturb others by the narrowness of their notions, (for these are generally exempted from other objects of the most universal and disinterested benevolence so often boasted of,) he must necessarily be in a very good state, though he pretend not to converse much with God, provided that he think respectfully of him, and do not provoke him by any gross immoralities.

§ 9. I mention this in the last stage of religious declensions, because I apprehend that to be its proper place: and I fear, it will be found by experience to stand upon the very confines of that gross apostasy into deliberate and presumptuous sin, which will claim our consideration under the next head, and [illegible] which most effectually tends to prevent the success, and even the use, of [illegible] in consequence of a fond and fatal apprehension, that they are needless. It is, if I may borrow the simile, like those fits of [illegible] drowsiness, which often precede apoplexies and death.

§ 10. It is by no means my design at this time to reckon up, much less to consider at large, those dangerous principles which are now ready to possess the mind, and to lay the foundation of a false and treacherous peace. Indeed they are in different instances various, and sometimes run into opposite extremes. But I could wish you to read your Bible with attention, and give you to feel the spirit

with which it is written, almost every page will find in many of us upon the mind, and spread a light to search out and dispose them to shame and confusion.

§ 11. What I chiefly intend in this address is to engage you, if possible, to attend to your guiltiness, the first symptoms of your declension, to the spirit you gained, and to endeavour to repentfully as possible to recover yourself from them. And I would counsel you, that the moment your heart begins to whisper that your cause of complaint prevailed, I mean in the closet. Take some time for meditation, and ask your own conscience seriously, how matters stand between you and the blessed God. And your soul! Whether they are as they once were, and as you could wish them to be. If you saw your life run down to a period, and were to pass immediately into the eternal state? One serious thought of eternity shows you the most vain excuses, with which, in the forgetfulness of it, we are ready to delude our own souls. And when you feel that secret misgiving of heart, which will naturally arise on this occasion, do not endeavour to palliate the matter, and to find out slight and artful coverings for what you cannot but see and severely condemning; but honestly fall under the conviction, and be humbled for it. Pour out your heavy before God, and seek the renewed influences of his Spirit and grace. Return with more exactness to secret devotion, and to self-examination. Read the Scripture with yet greater diligence, and especially the more devotional and spiritual parts of it. Labour to ground it in your heart, and to feel, what you have reason to believe the sacred penmen felt when they wrote, as far as circumstances were alike. Open your soul with all simplicity to every lesson which the word of God would teach you; and guard against those things which you perceive to alienate your mind from inward religion, though there be nothing criminal in the things themselves. They may perhaps in the general be lawful, because possibly they may be expedient; but if they produce such an effect as was mentioned above, it is certain they are not convenient for you. In these circumstances above all seek the conversation of those Christians who so progress in religion as to be most remarkable, and who adorn their profession in the most amiable manner. Labour to obtain their temper and sentiments, and lay open your case and your heart to them, with all the freedom which prudence will permit. Employ yourself at seasons of leisure in reading practical and devotional books, in which the mind and heart of the pious author is transfused into the work, and in which you can like it well taste the genuine spirit of Christianity. And to conclude, take the first opportunity that presents, of making an approach to the table of the Lord, and spare neither time nor pains in the most serious preparation for it. There renew your covenant with God; put your soul anew into the hand of Christ, and endeavour to view the wonders of his dying love with such a sensibility as may provide the language, the tears, and gratitude you fly to more vigorous resolutions than ever, to live only to him who died for you. And watch over your own heart, that the good impressions you then feel may continue. Rest not, till you have attained or continued a state as near to heaven as you can leave. Rest not, till you have made a greater progress than before, for it is certain, nearly to yesterday; and it is only by a zeal to go forward, that you can be secure from the danger of going backward, and of travelling more and more.

§ 12. Lastly, add, that it is necessary to take these precautions as soon as possible, or you will probably find it much harder progress than you are aware to the thousand evils, and you may possibly be left of God to feel him some grave and aggravated sin, so as to fill your conscience with an agony and horror, where the pain of broken bones can but imperfectly express.

A Prayer for one under spiritual decays

"Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! thy perfections and glories are, like thy being, immutable. Jesus! thy Soul is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The enemy with whom I am now engaging is always equally augmented, and presses upon the attentive mind for a more fixed and solemn regard, in proportion to the degree in which it comes nearer and nearer. But, alas, my views, and my affections, and my best resolutions are continually varying, like this gay body, which goes through daily and hourly alterations in its state and circumstances. Whence, O Lord, whence this sad change which I now experience in the frame and temper of my mind towards thee? Whence this alienation of my soul from thee? Why can I not come to thee with all the circumstances of filial love, as I once could? Why is thy service so unwisely attended, if attended at all? And why are the exercises of it, which were once my greatest pleasure, become a burthen to me? Where, O God, is the blessedness I once spoke of, when my joy in thee as my heavenly Father, was so conspicuous, that strangers might have observed it; and when my heart did so overflow with love to thee, and with zeal for thy service, that it was matter of self-denial to me to limit and restrain the generous expressions of those strong emotions of my soul, even when prudence and duty required it?

"Alas, Lord, whither am I fallen! Thou canst see me still; but O how unlike what it once was to thee! Cold and insensible as I am, I must bleed on to-day's sin. I must secret sin in secret, and sweet sin, perhaps, often amusing myself with trifles in those seasons which I used solemnly to devote to thee.

immediate service. Thou seest me, coming into thy presence as by constraint; and when I am before thee, so straitened in my spirit, that I hardly know what to say to thee, though thou art the God with whom I have to do, and though the keeping up a humble and dutiful correspondence with thee is beyond all comparison the most important business of my life. And even when I am speaking to thee, with how much coldness and formality is it! It is perhaps the work of the imagination, the labour of the lips, but where are those ardent desires, those intense breathings after God, which I once felt? Where is that pleasing repose in thee, which I was once conscious of, as being near my divine rest, as being happy in that nearness, and resolving that, if possible, I would no more be removed from it? But O, how far am I now removed? When these short devotions, it they may be called devotions, are over, in what long intervals do I forget thee, and appear so little animated with thy love, so little devoted to thy service, that a stranger might converse with me a considerable time, without knowing that I had ever formed any acquaintance with thee, without discovering that I had so much as known or heard any thing of God! Thou callest me to thy house, O Lord, on thine own day; but how heartless are my services there! I offer thee no more than a carcass. My thoughts and affections are engrossed with other objects, while I draw near thee with my mouth, and honour thee with my lips. Thou callest me to thy table; but my heart is so frozen, that it hardly melts even at the foot of the cross; hardly feels any efficacy in the blood of Jesus. O wretched creature that I am! Unworthy of being called thine! Unworthy of a place among thy children, or of the meanest situation in thy family; rather worthy to be cast out, to be forsaken, yea, to be utterly destroyed!

"Is this, Lord, the service which I once promised, and which thou hast so many thousand reasons to expect? Are these the returns I am making for thy daily providential care, for the sacrifice of thy Son, for the communications of thy Spirit, for the pardon of my numberless aggravated sins, for the hopes, the undeserved and so often forfeited hopes, of eternal glory? Lord, I am ashamed to stand or to kneel before thee. But pity me, I beseech thee, and help me; for I am a pitiable object indeed! My soul cleaveth unto the dust, and lays itself as in the dust before thee; but oh, quicken me according to thy word! Let me trifle no longer, for I am upon the brink of a precipice! I am thinking of my ways; oh give me grace to turn my feet unto thy testimonies; to make haste, without any further delay, that I may keep thy commandments! Search me, O Lord, and try me! Go to the first root of this distemper, which spreads itself over my soul; and recover me from it. Represent sin unto me, O Lord, I beseech thee, that I may see it with abhorrence! and represent the Lord Jesus Christ to me, in such a light that I may look upon him and mourn, that I may look upon him and love! May I awaken from this stupid lethargy, into which I am sinking, and may O thou give me [illegible] degrees of spiritual life and activity than I have ever yet exercised! And may I be [illegible] and animated by him, that I may more than recover the ground I have lost, and may make a more speedy and exemplary progress, than in my best days I have ever yet done! Send down upon me, O Lord, in a more rich and abundant effusion, thy good Spirit! May he dwell in me, as in a temple which he has consecrated to himself: and while all the service is directed and governed by him, may holy and acceptable sacrifices be continually offered. May the incense be constant, and may it be fragrant! May the sacred fire burn and blaze perpetually; and may none of its vessels ever be profaned, by being employed to an unholy or forbidden use! Amen."

CHAP. XXIII.

The sad case of a Religious [illegible] who, after many [illegible] of Christ, and some progress made in religion

[illegible]

[illegible] Thy doubtless was what I have described in the foregoing chapter must be acknowledged worthy of deep lamentation. But happy will you be, my dear reader, if you never know, by experience, a circumstance yet more melancholy than this. Perhaps, when you consider the view of things which you now have, you imagine that no considerations can ever bring you, in any single instance, to act contrary to the present dictates or suggestions of your conscience, and of the Spirit of God setting it on work. No, you think it would be better for you to die. And you think rightly. Even Peter thought, and said so too: Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee; and yet after all he fell: and therefore be not high-minded, but fear. It is not impossible but that you may fall into that very sin, of which you imagine you [illegible] or into that against which you have most solemnly resolved, and of which you have already most bitterly repented. You may relapse into it again and again: but oh, if you do, say if you [illegible]

heavenly and precious seed fall but some hard deep soil of gross unbelief? How should you pay for all the glorious gain which the temptation has been baited! How will this separate between God and you? What a desolation, what a dreadful desolation will it spread over your soul! It is gracious to think of it. Perhaps in such a state you can feel some agony and distress in your own conscience when you come seriously to reflect: then you ever felt when you were first awakened and reclaimed; because the sea will be observed with some very high aggravations, beyond those of your unregenerate state. I well know the reason that said: "The sickness of a disease in the first pangs of his repentance were not to be mentioned on the same day with those of the backsliden in heart, who finds his conscience filled with his own ways."

§ 2. Indeed it is enough to wound one's heart to think how yours will be wounded; how all your comforts, all your evidences, all your hopes, will be clouded; what thick darkness will spread itself on every side, so that neither sun nor moon, nor stars, will appear in your heaven. Your spiritual consolations will be gone, and your temporal enjoyments will also be rendered tasteless and insipid. And if afflictions be sent, as they probably may, in order to reclaim you, a consciousness of guilt will sharpen and envenom the dart. Then will the enemy of your soul, with all his art and power rise up against you, encouraged by your fall and labouring to trample you down in utter hopeless ruin. He will persuade you that you are already undone beyond recovery. He will suggest that it signifies nothing to attempt it any more: for that every effort, every amendment, every act of repentance will but make your case so much the worse, and plunge you lower and lower into hell.

§ 3. Thus will he endeavour by terrors to keep you from that sure remedy, which yet remains. But yield not to him. Your case will indeed be sad; and if it be now your case, it is deplorably so, and to rest in it would be still much worse. Your heart would be hardened yet more and more; and nothing could be expected but sudden and aggravated destruction. Yet, blessed be God, it is not quite hopeless. Your wounds are corrupted, because of your backslidings; but the gangrene is not incurable. There is balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there. Do not therefore render your condition indeed hopeless, by thus saying there is no hope, and drawing a fatal argument from that false supposition for going after the idols you have loved. Let me address you in the language of God to the backsliding people whose sins were made to upbraid them that to be their case, and to draw such a conclusion from it: only return unto me, saith the Lord. Cry for renewed grace, and in the strength of it labour to return. Cry daily David under the like guilty fears: turn away also thy servant; seek thy servant for I do not forget thy commandments; and that consciousness of them as I hope is taking too good. But I thus with others at all, do it immediately. Take not one step more in that fatal path to which thou hast turned aside. Think not to wind one step more to the westward and then to return: as it would be but the same thing on the whole. The second step may be more than the first; it may make way for much more guilt, and draw on a terrible train of consequences, beyond all you can now imagine. Make haste, therefore, and do not delay. Escape, and fly as for thy life, before the dart strike through thy liver. Give not sleep to thy eyes, nor slumber to thy eyelids: lie not down upon thy bed under unpardoned guilt, lest evil overtake thee, lest the sword of divine justice should smite thee: and whilst thou purposest to return to-morrow thou shouldst this night go and take possession of hell.

§ 4. Return immediately; and permit me to add, return solemnly. Some very pious and excellent divines have expressed themselves upon this head in a manner which seems liable to dangerous abuse; when they urge men after a fall, not to stay to survey the ground, nor consider how they came to be thrown down, but immediately to get up and renew the race. In slighter cases the advice is good, but when conscience has suffered such violent outrage by the commission of known wilful sins deliberate sin, (a case which one would hope should but seldom happen to those who have once sincerely entered on a religious course,) I can by no means think that either reason or Scripture countenances such a method. Especially would it be improper, if the action itself has been of so heinous a nature, that even to have fallen into it on the most sudden surprise of temptation, must have greatly ashamed, and terrified, and distressed the soul. Such an affair is dreadfully solemn, and should be treated accordingly. If this has been the sad case with you, my then unhappy reader, I would pity you, and mourn over you. And would humbly ask, as you tender your peace, your recovery to health and the very life of your soul, that you would not loiter away an hour. Before you attend to business or Pleasure, Book Owings, other engagements and employments unless they be such as you cannot in conscience delay for a few hours, which can seldom happen in the circumstances I am supposing. This is the one thing needful. Set yourself to it therefore, as in the presence of God, and hear at large, patiently and humbly, what conscience has to say. Though it chide and reproach severely. Yea, especially pray that God would speak to you by convincing and make you more thoroughly to know and feel what an evil and bitter thing it is that you have thus forsaken him. Think of all the aggra-

vating circumstances attending your offence, and especially think of those which arise from abused mercy and goodness, which arise, not only from your solemn vows and engagements to God, but from the views you have had of a Redeemer's love, sealed even in blood. And are these the returns? Was it not enough that Christ should have been thus injured by his enemies? Must he be wounded in the house of his friends too? Were you delivered to work such abominations as these? Did the blessed Jesus groan and die for you, that you might sin with boldness and freedom, that you might extract, as it were, the very spirit and essence of sin, and offend God to a height of ingratitude and baseness, which would otherwise have been in the nature of things impossible? O think how justly God might cast you out from his presence! How justly he might number you among the most signal instances of his vengeance! And think how your heart would endure, or your hands be strong, if he should deal thus with you! Alas, all your former experiences would enhance your sense of the ruin and misery, that must be felt in an eternal banishment from the divine presence and favour.

§ 5. Indulge such reflections as these. Stand the humbling sight of your sins in such a view as this. The more odious and the more painful it appears, the greater prospect there will be of your benefit by attending to it. But the matter is not to rest here. All these reflections are intended, not to grieve but to cure; and to grieve no more, than may promote the cure. You are indeed to look upon sin; but you are also, in such a circumstance, if ever, to look upon Christ, to look upon him, whom you have now pierced deeper than before, and to mourn for him with sincerity and tenderness. The God whom you have injured and affronted, whose laws you have broken, and whose justice you have (as it were) challenged by this foolish wretched apostasy, is nevertheless a most merciful God. You cannot be so ready to return to him as he is to receive you. Even now does he, as it were, solicit a reconciliation, by those tender impressions which he is making upon your heart. But remember how he will be reconciled. It is in the very same way in which you made your first approach to him; in the name, and for the sake, of his dear Son. Come, therefore, in a humble dependence upon him. Renew your application to Jesus, that his blood may (as it were) be sprinkled upon your soul, that your soul may thereby be purified, and your guilt be removed. This very sin of yours, which the blessed God foresaw, increased the weight of your Redeemer's sufferings. It was concerned in shedding his blood. Humbly go, and place your wounds, as it were, under the droppings of that precious balm, by which alone they can be healed. That compassionate Saviour will delight to restore you, when you lie as a humble suppliant at his feet, and will graciously take pleasure even in that peace and pleasure which he gives. Let him renew your covenant with God, that broken covenant, the breach of which divine justice might teach you to know by terrible things in righteousness; but mercy allows of an accommodation. Let the consciousness and remembrance of that breach engage you to enter into covenant anew, under a deeper sense than ever of your own weakness, and a more cordial dependence on divine grace for your security, than you have ever yet entertained. I know you will be ashamed to present yourself among the children of God in his sanctuary, and especially at his table, under a consciousness of so much guilt; but break through that shame if Providence open you the way. You will be humbled before your offended Father: but surely there is no place where you are more likely to be humbled, than when you see yourself in his house, and no ordinance administered there can lay you lower than that in which Christ is evidently set forth as crucified before your eyes. Sinners are the only persons who have business there. The best of men come to that sacred table, as sinners. As such make your approach to it; you, as the greatest of sinners, as one who needs the blood of Jesus, as much as any creature upon earth.

§ 6. And let me remind you of one thing more. If your fall has been of such a nature as to give any scandal to others, be not at all concerned to save appearances, and to moderate those mortifications which deep humiliation before them would occasion. The depth and pain of that mortification is indeed an excellent medicine, which God has in his wise goodness appointed for you in such circumstances as these. In such a case, confess your fault with the greatest frankness; aggravate it to the utmost: entreat pardon, and prayer, from those whom you have offended. Then, and never till then, will you be in the way to peace: not by palliating a fault, not by making vain excuses, not by objecting to the manner in which others may have treated you; as if the least excess of rigour in a faithful admonition, were a crime equal to some great immorality that occasioned it. This can only proceed from the madness of pride and self-love: it is the sensibility of a wound, which is hardened, swelled, and inflamed, and it must be reduced, and cooled, and suppled, before it can possibly be cured. To be censured and condemned by men, will be but a little grievance to a soul thoroughly humbled and broken under a sense of having incurred the condemning sentence of God. Such a one will rather desire to glorify God by submitting to deserved blame; and will fear deceiving others into a more favourable opinion of him than he inwardly knows himself to deserve. Those are the generous views which God gives to the sincere penitent, to exalt a con-

and by this means be restored from time to time to that credit and regard among others, which he does not know how to seek, but which nevertheless for the sake both of his comfort and usefulness, God wills that he should have; and which it is, humanly speaking, impossible for him to recover any other way. But there is something so honourable in the frank acknowledgement of a fault, and a deep humiliation for it, that all who see it must needs approve it. They pity an offender, who is brought to such a disposition; and endeavour to comfort him with returning expressions, not only of their love, but also of their esteem.

7. Excuse this digression, which may suit some cases, and which would suit many more, if a regular discipline were to be exercised in churches. For on such a supposition, the Lord's supper could not be approached after visible and scandalous falls, without solemn confession of the offence, and declarations of repentance. On the other hand, there may be instances of sad apostasy where the crime, though highly aggravated before God, may not fall under human notice. In this case remember, that your business is with him, to whose piercing eye every thing appears in its just light. Before him therefore prostrate your soul, and seek a solemn reconciliation with him, confirmed by the memorials of his dying Son. And when this is done, imagine not, that because you have received the tokens of pardon, the guilt of your apostasy is to be forgot at once. Bear it still in your memory for future caution. Lament it before God, in the frequent returns of secret devotion especially. And view with humiliation the scars of those wounds which your own folly occasioned, even when by divine grace they are thoroughly healed. For God establishes his covenant, not to remove the sense of every past abomination, but that thou mayest remember thy ways, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, even when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.

8. And now, upon the whole, if you desire to attain such a temper, and to return by such steps as these, then immediately fall down before God, and pour out your heart in his presence, in language like this:

A Prayer for one who has fallen into some sin, after religious resolutions and engagements.

"O most Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God! when I seriously reflect on thy spotless purity, and on the strict and impartial methods of thy steady administration, together with that almighty power of Satan, which is able to carry away the thoughts of those most who meditate and hold communion with thee, I may justly tremble before thee this day with shame and horror in confusion and consternation of spirit. This day, O my God, this dark mournful day, would I take occasion to look back to that sad source of our guilt and our misery the apostasy of our common parents, and say, with thine offending servant David, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me! This day would I lament all the fatal consequences of such a descent, with regard to myself. And oh, how many have they been! The remembrance of the sins of my unconverted state, and the failings and infirmities of my after-life, may justly confound me. How much more such a scene as now lies before my conscience, and before thine all-seeing eye! For thou, O Lord, knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee. Thou tellest all my wanderings from thy statutes. Thou seest, and thou recordest, every instance of my disobedience to thee, and of my rebellion against thee. Thou seest it in every aggravated circumstance which I can discern, and in many more which I never observed or reflected upon. How, then, shall I appear in thy presence, or lift up my face to thee! I am full of confusion, and feel a secret regret in the thought of applying to thee. But, O Lord, to whom should I go, but unto thee? Unto thee, on whom depends my life or my death; unto thee, who alone canst take away the burthen of guilt, which now presses me down to the dust; who alone canst restore to my soul that rest and peace which I have lost, and which I deserve for ever to lose!

"Behold me, O Lord God, falling down at thy feet! I hold up pleading guilty in thy presence, and surrendering myself to that justice which I cannot escape! I have not one word to offer in my own vindication, in my own excuse. Words, far from being able to clear up my innocence, can never sufficiently describe the enormity and demerit of my sin. Thou, O Lord, and thou only, knowest to the full, how heinous and how aggravated it is. Thine infinite understanding alone can fathom the infinite depth of its malignity. I am on many accounts most unable to do it. I cannot conceive the glory of thy sacred Majesty, whose authority I have despised, nor the number and variety of those mercies which I have sinned against. I cannot conceive the value of the blood of thy dear Son, which I have so gratuitously trampled under my feet, nor the dignity of that blessed Spirit of thine, whose agency I have, as far as I could, been endeavouring to oppose; and whose work I have long, as with all my might, laboured to undo and to tear up (as it were) that plantation of his grace, which I should rather have been willing to have guarded with my life, and watered with my blood. Oh the baseness and madness of my conduct! that I should thus, as it were, rend open the wounds of my soul, of which I had died long ere now had not thine own hand

applied a remedy, had not thine only Son bled to prepare it! That I should violate the covenant I have made with thee by sacrifice, by the memorials of such a sacrifice too, even of Jesus my Lord, whereby I am become guilty of his body and blood! That I should bring such dishonour upon religion too, by so unsuitable a walk, and perhaps open the mouths of its greatest enemies to insult it upon my account, and prejudice some against it to their everlasting destruction!

"I wonder, O Lord God, that I am here to own all this. I wonder that thou hast not long ago appeared as a swift witness against me; that thou hast not discharged the thunderbolts of thy flaming wrath against me, and crushed me into hell: making me there a terror to all about me, as well as to myself, by a vengeance and ruin, to be distinguished even there, where all are miserable and all hopeless.

"O God, thy patience is marvellous! But how much more marvellous is thy grace, which after all this invites me to thee! While I am here giving judgment against myself, that I deserve to die, to die for ever, thou art sending me the words of everlasting life, and calling, me as a backsliding child, to return unto thee. Behold therefore, O Lord, invited by thy word, and encouraged by thy grace, I come: and great as my transgressions are, I humbly beseech thee freely to pardon them; because I know, that though my sins have reached unto heaven, and are lifted up even unto the skies, thy mercy, O Lord, is above the heavens. Extend that mercy to me, O heavenly Father, and display in this illustrious instance, the riches of thy grace, and the prevalency of thy Son's blood! For surely if such crimson sins as mine may be made white as snow, and as wool, and if such a revolter as I am be brought to eternal glory, earth must, so far as it is known, be filled with wonder, and heaven with praise; and the greatest sinner may cheerfully apply for pardon, if I, the chief of sinners, find it. And oh that, when I have lain mourning, and as it were bleeding, at thy feet, as long as thou thinkest proper, thou wouldst at length heal this soul of mine which has sinned against thee: and give me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness! O that thou wouldst at length restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and make me to hear songs of gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice! Then, when a sense of thy forgiving love is shed abroad upon my heart, and it is cheered with the voice of pardon, I will proclaim thy grace to others; I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee: those that have been backsliding from thee, shall be encouraged to seek thee by my happy experience, which I will gladly proclaim for thy glory, though it be to my own shame and confusion of face. And may this joy of the Lord be my strength! so that as it is, I may serve thee henceforward with a vigour and zeal far beyond what I have hitherto known!

"This I would ask with all humble submission to thy will; for I presume not to insist upon it. If thou shouldst see fit to make me a warning to others, by appointing that I should walk all my days in darkness, and at last die under a cloud, thy will be done! But, O God, extend mercy, for thy Son's sake, to this sinful soul at last; and give me some place, though it were at the feet of all thine other servants, in the regions of glory! Oh bring me at length, though it should be through the gloomiest valley that any have ever passed, into that blessed world, where I shall depart from God no more, where I shall wound my own conscience, and dishonour thy holy name, no more! Then shall my tongue be loosed, how long soever it might here be bound under the confusion of guilt; and immortal praises shall be paid to that victorious blood which has redeemed such an infamous slave of sin, as I must acknowledge myself to be, and brought me, from returns into bondage and repeated pollution, to share the dignity and holiness of those who are kings and priests unto God. Amen."

CHAP. XXIV.

The case of the Christian under the hiding of God's face.

[illegible] (1.) [illegible] (2.) [illegible] (3.) To be humble and patient [illegible] tion of what has been amiss. (4, 5, 6. (3.) To be humble and patient [illegible]

§ 1. THERE is a case which often occurs in the Christian life, which they who accustom themselves much to the exercise of devotion, have been used to call the hiding of God's face. It is a phrase borrowed from the word of God, which I hope may shelter it from contempt at the first hearing. It will be my business in this chapter, to state it as plainly as I can, and then to give some advice as to your own conduct, when you fall into it, as it is very probable you may, before you have finished your journey through this wilderness.

§ 2. The meaning of it may partly be understood by the opposite phrase of God's causing his face to shine upon a person or turning up upon him the

light of his countenance. This seems to carry in it an allusion to the pleasant and delightful appearance which the face of a friend has, and especially if in a superior relation of life, when he converses with those whom he loves and delights in. Thus Job, when speaking of the regard paid him by his attendants, says, If I smiled upon them, they believed it not, and the light of my countenance they cast not down: that is, they were careful in such an agreeable circumstance, to do nothing to displease me, or (as we speak) to cloud my brow. And David, when expressing his desire of the manifestation of God's favour to him, says, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; and as the effect of it, declares, thou hast put gladness into my heart more than if corn and wine increased. Nor is it impossible, that in this phrase, as used by David, there may be some allusion to the bright shining forth of the Shekinah, that is, the lustre which dwelt in the cloud as the visible sign of the divine presence with Israel, which God was pleased peculiarly to manifest upon some public occasions as a token of his favour and acceptance.—On the other hand, therefore, for God to hide his face, must imply the withholding the tokens of his favour, and must be esteemed a mark of his displeasure. Thus Isaiah says: Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. And again, Thou hast hid thy face from us, as not regarding the calamities we suffer, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. So likewise, for God to hide his face from our sins, signifies to overlook them, and to take no further notice of them. The same idea is, at other times, expressed by God's hiding his eyes from persons of a character disagreeable to him, when they come to address him with their petition, not vouchsafing (as it were) to look towards them. This is plainly the scriptural sense of the word; and agreeably to this, it is generally used by Christians to our day, and every thing which seems a token of divine displeasure towards them is expressed by it.

§ 3. It is further to be observed here, that the things which they judge to be manifestations of divine favour towards them, or complacency in them, are not only, nor chiefly, of a temporal nature, or such as merely relate to the blessings of this animal and perishing life. David, though the promises of the law had a continual reference to such, yet was taught to look further, and describes them as preferable to, and therefore plainly distinct from, the blessings of the corn-floor, or the wine-press. And if you, to whom I am now addressing, do not know them to be so, it is plain you are quite ignorant of the subject we are inquiring into, and indeed are yet to take out the first lessons of true religion. All that David says, of beholding the beauty of the Lord, or being satisfied as with marrow and fatness when he remembered him on his bed as well as with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple, is to be taken in the same sense, and can need very little explication to the truly experienced soul. But those that have known the light of God's countenance, and the shinings of his face, will, in proportion to the degree of that knowledge, be able to form some notion of the feeling of his face, or the withdrawing of the tokens he has given his people of his presence and favour, which sometimes greatly imbitters prosperity: as where the contrary is found, it sweetens afflictions, and often swallows up the sense of them.

§ 4. And give me leave to remind you, my Christian friend, (for under that character I now address my reader,) that to be thus deprived of the sense of God's love, and of the tokens of his favour, may soon be the case with you, though you may now have the pleasure to see the candle of the Lord shining upon you, or though it may even seem to be sunshine and high-noon in your soul. You may lose your lively views of the divine perfections and glories, in the contemplation of which you now find that inward satisfaction. You may think of the divine wisdom and power, of the divine mercy and fidelity, as well as of his righteousness and holiness, and feel little inward complacency of soul in the view. It may be, with respect to any lively impressions, as if it were the contemplation merely of a common object. It may seem to you as if you had lost all idea of those important words, though the view has sometimes swallowed up your whole soul in transports of astonishment, admiration, and love. You may lose your delightful sense of the divine favour. It may be matter of great and sad doubt with you, whether you do indeed belong to God; and all the work of his blessed Spirit may be so veiled and shaded in the soul, that the peculiar characters by which the hand of that sacred agent might be distinguished, shall be in a great measure lost, and you may be ready to imagine you have only deluded yourself in all the former hopes you have entertained. In consequence of this, those ordinances in which you now rejoice may grow very uncomfortable to you, even when you do indeed desire communion with God in them. You may hear the most delightful evangelical truths opened, you may hear the privileges of God's children most affectionately represented, and not be aware that you have any part or lot in the matter; and from that very coldness and insensibility may be drawing a further argument, that you have nothing to do with them. And then your heart may meditate terror, and under the distress that overwhelms you, your dearest enjoyments may be reflected upon as adding to the weight of it, and making it more sensible, while you consider that you had once such a taste for these things, and have now lost it all. So that perhaps it

may seem to you, that they who never felt any thing at all of religious impressions are happier than you, or at least are less miserable. You may perhaps, in these melancholy hours, even doubt whether you have ever prayed at all, and whether all that you called your enjoyment of God were not some false delights excited by the great enemy of souls, to make you apprehend that your state was good, that so you might continue his more secure prey.

§ 5. Such as this may be your case for a considerable time; and ordinances may be attended in vain, and the presence of God may be in vain sought in them. You may pour out your soul in private, and then come to public worship, and find little satisfaction in either; but be forced to take up the Psalmist's complaint, My God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent: or that of Job, Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. So that all which looked like religion in your mind, shall seem, as it were, to be melted into grief, or chilled into fear, or crushed into a deep sense of your own unworthiness; in consequence of which, you shall not dare so much as to lift up your eyes before God, and be almost ashamed to take your place in a worshipping assembly, among any that you think his servants. I have known this to be the case of some excellent Christians, whose improvements in religion have been distinguished, and whom God hath honoured above many of their brethren, in what he hath done for them and by them. Give me leave, therefore, having thus described it, to offer you some plain advices with regard to it; and let not that be imputed to enthusiastic fancy, which proceeds from an intimate and frequent view of facts on the one hand, and from a sincere affectionate desire, on the other, to relieve the tender, pious heart in so desolate a state. At least, I am persuaded the attempt will not be overlooked or disapproved by the great Shepherd of the sheep, who has charged us to comfort the feeble minded.

§ 6. And here I would first advise you most carefully to inquire, Whether your present distress does indeed arise from causes which are truly spiritual? Or whether it may not rather have its foundation in some disorder of body, or in the circumstances of life in which you are providentially placed, which may break your spirits and deject your mind? The influence of the inferior part of our nature on the nobler, the immortal spirit, while we continue in this embodied state, is so evident, that no attentive person can, in the general, fail to have observed it; and yet there are cases, in which it seems not to be sufficiently considered; and perhaps your own may be one of them. The state of the blood is often such as necessarily to suggest gloomy ideas even in dreams, and to indispose the soul for taking pleasure in any thing. And when it is so, why should it be imagined to proceed from any peculiar divine displeasure, if it does not find its usual delight in religion? Or why should God be thought to have departed from us, because he suffers natural causes to produce natural effects, without opposing by miracle to break the connexion? When this is the case, the help of the physician is to be sought, rather than that of the divine, or at least, by all means, together with it; and medicine, diet, exercise, and air, may in a few weeks effect that, which the strongest reasonings, the most pathetic exhortations or consolations, might for many months have attempted in vain.

§ 7. In other instances, the dejection and feebleness of the mind may arise from something uncomfortable in our worldly circumstances; these may cloud as well as distract the thoughts, and imbitter the temper, and thus render us, in a great degree, unfit for religious services or pleasures; and when it is so, the remedy is to be sought in submission to divine Providence, in abstracting our affections as far as possible from the present world, in a prudent care to ease ourselves of the burthen so far as we can, by moderating unnecessary expenses, and by diligent application to business, in humble dependence on the divine blessing: in the mean time, endeavouring by faith to look up to him, who sometimes suffers his children to be brought into such difficulties, that he may endear himself more sensibly to them by the method he shall take for their relief.

§ 8. On the principles here laid down, it may perhaps appear on inquiry, that the distress complained of may have a foundation very different from what was at first supposed. But where the health is sound, and the circumstances easy; when the animal spirits are disposed for gaiety and entertainment, while all taste for religious pleasure is in a manner gone; when the soul is seized with a kind of lethargic insensibility, or what I had almost called a paralytic weakness, with respect to every religious exercise; even though there should not be that deep terrifying distress, or pungent amazement, which I before represented as the effect of melancholy; nor that anxiety about the accommodations of life, which strait circumstances naturally produce: I would in that case vary my advice, and urge you, with all possible attention and impartiality, to search into the cause which has brought upon you that great evil, under which you justly mourn. And probably, in the general, the cause is sin; some secret sin, which has not been discovered or observed by the eye of the world; for enormities that draw on them the observation and censure of others, will probably call

under the case mentioned in the former chapter as they must be instances of known and deliberate guilt. Now the eye of God hath seen those evils which have escaped the notice of your fellow creatures; and in consequence of this care to conceal them from others, while you could not but know they were open to him, God has seen himself in a peculiar manner affronted and injured. I had almost said insulted, by them; and hence his righteous displeasure. Oh! let that severe but forgotten, which is so plainly said, so commonly known, so familiar to almost every religious ear, yet too little felt by any of our hearts. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. And this is, on the whole, a merciful dispensation of God, though it may seem severe; regard it not, therefore, merely as your calamity, but as intended to awaken you, that you may not content yourself, even with lying in tears of humiliation before the Lord, but, like Joshua, rise and exert yourself vigorously, to put away from you that accursed thing, whatever it be. Let this be your immediate and earnest care, that your pride may be humbled, that your watchfulness may be maintained, that your affections to the world may be deadened, and that, on the whole, your fitness for heaven may in every respect be increased. These are the designs of your heavenly Father, and let it be your great concern to co-operate with them.

§ 9. Receive it, therefore, on the whole, as the most important advice that can be given you, immediately to enter on a strict examination of your consciences. Attend on its gentlest whispers. If a suspicion arises in your mind, that any thing has not been right, trace that suspicion, search into every secret folding of your heart; improve to the purposes of a fuller discovery the advices of your friends, the reproaches of your enemies; recollect for what your heart hath smitten you, at the table of the Lord, for what it would smite you, if you were upon a dying bed, and within this hour to enter on eternity. When you have made any discovery, note it down, and so on in your search till you can say, these are the remaining corruptions of my heart; these are the sins and follies of my life; this have I neglected; this have I done amiss. And when the account is as complete as you can make it, set yourself in the strength of God to a strenuous reformation, or rather, begin the reformation of every thing that seems amiss in you as soon as ever you discover it: return to the Almighty, and thou shalt be built up, and put iniquity far from thy tabernacle: then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; thou shalt pay thy vows unto him, and his light shall shine upon thy ways.

§ 10. In the mean time, be waiting for God with the deepest humility, and submit yourself to the disciplines of your heavenly Father, acknowledging his justice, and hoping in his mercy: even when your conscience is least severe in its reminstrances, and discovers nothing more than the common infirmities of God's people; yet still bow yourself down before him, and own, that so many are the evils of your best days, so many the imperfections of your best services, that by them you have deserved all, and more than all, that you suffer deserved, not only that your sun should be clouded, but that it should go down, and rise no more, but leave your soul in a state of everlasting darkness. And while the shade continues, be not impatient. Fret not yourself in any wise, but rather, with a holy calmness and gentleness of soul, wait on the Lord. Be willing to stay his time, willing to bear his frown, in humble hope that he will at length return and have compassion on you. He has not utterly forgotten to be gracious, nor resolved that he will be favourable no more. For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. It is comparatively but for a small moment that he hides his face from you; but you may humbly hope, that with great mercies he will gather you, and that with everlasting kindness he will have mercy on you. These suitable words are not mine, but his: and they wear this, as in the very front of them, "That a soul under the hidings of God's face may at last be one whom he will gather, and to whom he will extend everlasting favour."

§ 11. But while the darkness continues, "go on in the way of your duty." Continue in the use of means and ordinances; read and meditate; pray, yea, and sing the praises of God too, though it may be with a heavy heart. Follow the footsteps of his flock: you may perhaps meet the Shepherd of souls in doing it. Please yourself at least in his way. It is possible you may by this means get a kind look from him; and one look, one turn of thought which may happen in a moment, may as it were create a heaven in your soul at once. Go to the table of the Lord. If you cannot rejoice, go and mourn there. Go and mourn that Saviour, whom by your sins you have pierced; go and lament the breaches of that covenant, which you have there so often confirmed. Christ may perhaps make himself known unto you in the breaking of the bread, and you may find by your experience, that he hath blessed you, when you imagined he was at the greatest distance from you; nay, you, whom you thought you were cast out from his presence. Seek your comfort in such simple methods as these, and not in the vain amusements of the world and in the pleasures of sense. I shall never forget that affectionate ex-

pression, which I am well assured broke out from an eminently pious heart, then almost ready to break under its sorrows of this kind! "Lord, if I may not enjoy thee, let me enjoy nothing else; but go down mourning after thee to the grave." I wondered not to hear, that almost as soon as this sentiment had been breathed out before God in prayer, the burthen was taken off, and the joy of God's salvation restored.

§ 12. I shall add but one advice more, and that is, "that you renew your application to the blood of Jesus, through whom the reconcilation between God and your soul has been accomplished." It is he that is our peace, and by his blood it is that we are made nigh. It is in him, as the beloved of his soul, that God declares, he is well pleased; and it is in him that we are made accepted to the glory of his grace. Go therefore, O Christian, and apply by faith to a crucified Saviour; go and apply to him as to a merciful high priest, and pour out thy complaint before him, and show before him thy trouble. Lay open the distress and anguish of thy soul to him, who once knew what it was to say, (O astonishing! that he of all others should ever have said it,) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Look up for pity and relief to him, who himself suffered, being not only tempted, but with regard to sensible manifestations deserted; that he might thus know how to pity those that are in such a melancholy case, and be ready, as well as able, to succour them. He is Immanuel, God with us; and it is only in and through him, that his Father shines forth upon us with the mildest beams of mercy and love. Let it be therefore your immediate care, to renew your acquaintance with him. Review the records of his life and death: hear his words: behold his actions: and when you do so, surely you will find a sacred sweetness diffusing itself over your soul. You will be brought into a calm, gentle, silent frame, in which faith and love will operate powerfully, and God may probably cause the still small voice of his comforting Spirit to be heard, till your soul bursts out into a song of praise, and you may be made glad according to the days in which you have been afflicted. In the mean time, such language as the following supplication speaks may be suitable:

A humble Supplication for one under the hidings of God's face.

"BLESSED GOD! with thee is the fountain of life and of happiness. I adore thy name, that I have ever tasted of thy streams; that I have ever felt the peculiar pleasure arising from the light of thy countenance, and the shedding abroad of thy love on my soul. But alas, these delightful seasons are now to me no more, and the remembrance of them engages me to pour out my soul within me. I would come, as I have formerly done, and call thee, with the same endearment, my Father and my God; but alas, I know not how to do it. Guilt and fear arise, and forbid the delightful language. I seek thee, O Lord, but I seek thee in vain. I would pray, but my lips are sealed up. I would read thy word, and all the promises of it are veiled from mine eyes. I frequent those ordinances, which have been formerly most nourishing and comfortable to my soul, but alas, they are only the shadows of ordinances! the substance is gone, the animating spirit is fled, and leaves them now at best but the image of what I once knew them!

"But, Lord, hast thou cast off for ever, and wilt thou be favourable no more? Hast thou in awful judgment determined, that my soul must be left to a perpetual winter, the sad emblem of eternal darkness! Indeed I deserve it should be so. I acknowledge, O Lord, I deserve to be cast away from thy presence with disdain; to be sunk lower than I am, much lower; I deserve to have the shadow of death upon mine eyelids, and even to be surrounded with the thick gloom of the infernal prison. But hast thou not raised multitudes, who have deserved like me to be delivered into chains of darkness, to the visions of thy glory above, where no cloud can ever interpose between thee and their rejoicing spirits? Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me! and though mine iniquities have now justly caused thee to hide thy face from me, yet be thou rather pleased, agreeably to the gracious language of thy word, to hide thy face from my sins, and to blot out all mine iniquities! Cheer my heart with the tokens of thy returning favour, and say unto my soul, I am thy salvation!

"Remember, O Lord God, remember that dreadful day, in which Jesus thy dear Son endured what my sins have deserved! Remember that agony in which he poured out his soul before thee, and said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! Did he not, O Lord, endure all this, that humble penitents might through him be brought near unto thee, and might behold thee with pleasure, as their Father and their God! Thus do I desire to come unto thee. Blessed Saviour, art thou not appointed to give unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness? O wash away my tears, anoint my head with the oil of gladness, and clothe me with the garments of salvation!

"Oh that I knew where I might find him! Oh that I knew what it is that has engaged thee to depart from me! I am searching and trying my ways, oh that thou wouldst search me and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and if there be any wicked way in me, remove it, and lead me in the way everlasting, even that way, O Lord, I may

find rest and peace for my soul, and feel the discoveries of thy love in Christ!'

'O God, who didst command the light to shine out of darkness, speak but the word and light shall dart into my soul at once! Open thou my eyes, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise: shall burst out into a cheerful song, which shall display to those whom my present dejections may have discouraged, the pleasures and supports of religion!

'Yet, Lord, on the whole, I submit to thy will. If it is thus that my faith must be exercised, by walking in darkness for days and months and years to come, how long soever they may seem, how long soever they may be, I will submit. Still will I adore thee, as the God of Israel, and the Saviour, though thou art a God that hidest thyself: still will I trust in the name of the Lord, and stay myself upon my God; trusting in thee, though thou slay me; and waiting for thee, more than they that watch for the morning, yea, more than they that watch for the morning. Peradventure in the evening time it may be light. I know, that thou hast sometimes manifested thy compassions to thy dying servants, and given them, in the lowest ebb of their natural spirits, a full tide of divine glory, thus turning darkness into light before them. So may it please thee to gild the valley of the shadow of death with the light of thy presence, when I am passing through it, and to stretch forth thy rod and thy staff to comfort me, that my tremblings may cease, and the gloom may echo with songs of praise! But if it be thy sovereign pleasure, that distress and darkness should still continue to the last motion of my pulse, and the last gasp of my breath, oh let it cease with the parting struggle; and bring me to that light which is sown for the righteous, and to that gladness which is reserved for the upright in heart; to the unclouded regions of everlasting splendour and joy, where the full anointings of thy Spirit shall be poured out on all thy people, and thou wilt no more hide thy face from any of them!

'This, Lord, is thy salvation, for which I am waiting; and whilst I feel the desires of my soul drawn out after it, I will never despair of obtaining it. Continue and increase those desires, and at length satisfy and exceed them all, through the riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus. Amen.'

CHAP. XXV

The Christian strengthening under trial and being comforted.

1. SINCE man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward, and when his conduct as well as the sad tale of nature or calamity in their way to him, it will certainly be prudent and necessary that we should all expect to meet with trials and afflictions, and that we, reader, whoever you are, should be endeavouring to find on your heaven, and get yourself into a posture to encounter those trials which will fall to your lot, as a man and a Christian. Prepare yourself to receive afflictions and to endure them in a manner agreeable to both those characters. In this view, when you are sitting under the burthen, consider how possible it is that you may be called out to the very same distresses or to others equal to them.—Put your soul as in the place of theirs. Think, how you could endure the load under which they lie; and endeavour at once to comfort them, and to strengthen your own heart; or rather pray that God would do it. And observing how liable mortal life is to such sorrows, moderate your expectations from it, raise your thoughts above it, and form your schemes of happiness only for that world, where they cannot be disappointed in the most time. Blessing God, that your prosperity is lengthened out thus far, and ascribing it to his special providence, that you continue so long unwounded, when so many showers of arrows are flying around you and so many are falling by them, on the right hand and on the left.

2. When at length your turn comes, as it certainly will, from the first hour in which an affliction seizes you, realize to yourself the hand of God in it, and lose not the view of him in any second cause, which may have procured the immediate occasion. Let it be your first care to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Own that he is just in all that is brought upon you, and that in all those things he punishes you less than your iniquities deserve. Compose yourself to bear his hand with patience, to glorify his name by a submission to his will, and to fall in with the gracious design of this visitation as well as to avert the event of it quietly, whatever the event may be.

3. Now, dear patience may have its perfect work, reflect impartially and deeply upon your own meanness and sinfulness. Consider how dear every mercy has been forfeited, and every judgment deserved. And consider too how long the patience of God hath borne with you, and how wonderfully it is still exerted towards you; and indeed, not only has patience, but its longsuffering too. Although as you are (as I speak to you now as actually under the pressure,) look round and survey your remaining mercies, and be gratefully sensible of them. Make

the supposition of their being removed: what if God should stretch out his hand against you, and add poverty to pain, or pain to poverty, or the loss of friends to both; or the death of surviving friends to that of those whom you are now mourning over? Would not the wound be more grievous? Adore his goodness that this is not the case; and take heed, lest your unthankfulness should provoke him to multiply your sorrows. Consider also the need you have of discipline; how wholesome it may prove to your soul, and what merciful designs our heavenly Father has, in all the corrections he sends upon his children.

§ 4. Nay I will add, that in consequence of all these considerations it may well be expected, not only that you should submit to your afflictions as what you cannot avoid, but that you should sweetly acquiesce in them and approve them; that you should not only justify, but glorify, God in sending them; that you should glorify him with your heart, and with your lips too. Think not praise unsuitable, on such an occasion; nor think that praise alone to be suitable, which takes its rise from remaining comforts; but know that it is your duty, not only to be thankful in your afflictions, but to be thankful on account of them.

§ 5. God himself has said, In every thing give thanks; and he has taught his servants to say, Yea, also we glory in tribulation. And most certain it is, that to true believers they are instances of divine mercy, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth with peculiar and distinguished endearment. View your present afflictions in this light, as chastisements of love; and then let your own heart say, whether love does not demand praise. Think with yourself, "It is thus that God is making me conformable to his own Son; it is thus that he is training me up for complete glory. Thus he kills my corruptions, thus he strengthens my graces; thus he is wisely contriving to bring me nearer to himself, and to ripen me for the honours of his heavenly kingdom. It is, if need be, that I am in heaviness; and he surely knows what that need is, better than I can pretend to teach him, and knows what peculiar property there is in this affliction, to answer my present necessity, and do me that peculiar good which he is graciously intending me by it. This tribulation shall work patience, and patience experience, and experience a more assured hope, even a hope which shall not make ashamed, while the love of God is shed abroad in my heart, and shines through my affliction, like the sun through a gentle descending cloud, darting in light upon the shade, and mingling fruitfulness with weeping."

§ 6. Let it be, then, your earnest care, while you thus look on your affliction, whatever it may be, as coming from the hand of God, to improve it to the purposes for which it was sent. And that you may so improve it, let it be your first concern to know what those purposes are. Summon up all the attention of your soul to hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it; and pray earnestly that you may understand its voice. Examine your life, your words, and your heart; and pray, that God would so guide your inquiries, that you may return unto the Lord that smiteth you. To assist you in this, call in the help of pious friends, and particularly of your ministers; entreat not only their prayers, but their advices too, as to the probable design of Providence; and encourage them freely to tell you any thing which occurs to their minds upon this head. And if such an occasion should lead them to touch upon some of the imperfections of your character and conduct, look upon it as a great token of their friendship, and take it, not only patiently, but thankfully. It does but ill become a Christian, at any time, to resent reproofs and admonitions; and least of all does it become him when the rebukes of his heavenly Father are upon him. He ought rather to seek admonitions at such a time as this, and voluntarily offer his wounds to be searched by a faithful and skilful hand.

§ 7. And when, by one means or another, you have got a ray of light to direct you in the meaning and language of such dispensations, take heed that you do not, in any degree, harden yourself against God, and walk contrary to him. Obstinate reluctance to the apprehended design of any providential stroke is inexpressibly provoking to him. Set yourself, therefore, to an immediate reformation of whatever you discover amiss, and labour to learn the general lessons, of greater submission to God's will, of a more calm indifference to the world, and of a closer attachment to divine converse, and to the views of an approaching invisible state. And whatever particular proportion or correspondence you may observe, between this or that circumstance in your affliction, and your former transgressions, be especially careful to act according to that more peculiar and express voice of the rod. Then you may perhaps have speedy and remarkable reason to say, that it hath been good for you that you have been afflicted; and with a meekened heart, may learn to number the times of your sharpest trials among the sweetest and the most exalted moments of your life. For this purpose, let prayer be your frequent employment; and let such sentiments as these, if not in the very same terms, be often and affectionately poured out before God.

A Humble Address to God under the pressure of bitter afflictions.

"O thou supreme, yet all-righteous and gracious, Governor of the whole universe! mean and incon-

saleable as this little grossness of my spermatic vapour may appear, thou dost not disregard the cattle and its melodiously bad attendant in its connection with the most condescending and gracious regards. Thou respectest and honourest it, as it is indeed a matter of universal joy. I bemoan thy universal providence and care; and I thank thee for thy wise, holy, and kind interposition in every thing which relates to me and to the circumstances of my abode in this world. I would look through all inferior causes unto thee, whose eyes are upon all thy creatures; to thee, who formest the light, and greatest darkness, who makest peace, and greatest evil, to thee, Lord, who at thy pleasure canst exchange the one for the other, canst turn the brightest noon into midnight, and the darkest midnight into noon.

"O thou wise and merciful Governor of the world! I have often said, Thy will be done: and now, thy will is granted to me. But shall I, upon that account, mean what I have so often said? God forbid! Let me rather to lay myself down at thy feet, and to declare my full and free submission to all thy sacred pleasure. O Lord, thou art just and righteous in all! I acknowledge in thy venerable and awful presence, that I have deserved this, and ten thousand times more. I acknowledge, that it is of thy mercy that I am not utterly consumed, and that any, the least, degree of comfort yet remains. O Lord, I most readily confess, that the sins of one day of my life have merited all these chastisements; and that every day of my life hath been more or less sinful. Smite therefore, O thou righteous Judge! and I will still adore thee, that instead of the scourge thou hast not given a commission to the sword, to do all the dreadful work of justice, and to pour out my blood in thy presence.

"But shall I speak unto thee only as my Judge? O Lord, thou hast taught me a tenderer name: thou condescendest to call thyself my Father, and to speak of correction as the effect of thy love. O welcome, welcome those afflictions, which are the tokens of thy paternal affection, the marks of my adoption into thy family! Thou knowest what discipline I need. Thou seest, O Lord, that bundle of folly which there is in the heart of thy poor froward and thoughtless child: and knowest what rod and what strokes are needful to drive it away. I would therefore be in humble subjection to the Father of spirits, who chasteneth me for my profit; would be in subjection to him and live. I would bear thy strokes, not merely because I cannot resist them, but because I love and trust in thee. I would sweetly acquiesce and rest in thy will as well as submit to it; and would say, O God, it is the word of the Lord. And I desire, that not only my lips, but my soul, may acquiesce. Yea, Lord, I would please thee that thou wilt show so much regard to me, as to apply such corrosives as these to the diseases of my mind: and that kindly employ thy power to cure my faults. I have neither courage nor strength against being afflicted in this particular way. The cup which my Father puts into my hand shall I not drink it? By thine assistance and support I will. Only be pleased, O Lord, to stand by me and sometimes to grant me a favourable look in the midst of my sufferings! Support my soul, I beseech thee, by thy consolations mingled with my tribulations; and I shall glory in those tribulations that are thus allayed." It has been the experience of many who have reflected on afflicted days with pleasure, and have acknowledged that their comforts have swallowed up their sorrows. And after all that these have done, are thy mercies restrained? Is thy hand waxed short? or canst thou not still do the same for me?

"If my heart be less tender, less sensible, thou canst cure that disorder, and canst make this affliction the means of curing it. Thus let it be; and at length, in thine own due time, and in the way which thou shall choose, work out salvation for me: and show me thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee! For I well know, that how dark soever this night of affliction seem to those saved, Let there be light, there shall be light. But I would urge nothing, before the time thy wisdom and goodness shall appoint. I am much more concerned, that my afflictions may be sanctified, than that they may be removed. Number me, O God, among the happy persons, whom, while thou chastenest, thou teachest out of thy law! Show me, I beseech thee, wherefore thou contendest with me, and purify me by the fire, which is so painful to me, while I am passing through it! Dost thou not chasten thy children for this very end, that they may be partakers of thy holiness? Thou knowest, O God, it is this my soul is breathing after. I am partaker of thy bounty every day and moment of life. I am partaker of thy gospel, and I hope, in some measure too, a partaker of the grace of it operating on my heart. O may it operate more and more, that I may largely partake of thy holiness too; that I may come nearer and nearer in the temper of my mind to thee, O blessed God, the supreme model of perfection! Let my soul be (as it were melted through with the intense heat of the furnace, if I may but thereby be made to run being delivered into the mould of thy gospel, and bearing thy bright and amiable image."

"O Lord, my soul longeth for thee; it crieth out for the living God! In thy presence and under the support of thy love, I can bear any thing: and am willing to bear it, if I may grow more lovely in thine eyes, and more meet for thy kingdom. The days of my affliction will have an end; the hour will at length come, when thou wilt wipe away all my tears. Though it tarry, I would wait for it. My

foolish heart, in the midst of all its trouble, is ready to grow fond of this earth, disappointing and grievous as it is: and graciously, O God, dost thou deal with me, in breaking those bonds that would tie me faster to it. O let my soul be girding itself up, and, as it were, stretching its wings, in expectation of that blessed hour, when it shall drop all its sorrows and encumbrances at once, and soar away to expatiate with intimate delight in the regions of liberty, peace, and joy! Amen."

CHAP. XXVI.

The Christian assisted in examining into his growth in grace.

The examination important. § 1. False marks of growth to be avoided. § 2. True marks proposed. And first, I. Increase of knowledge. § 3. II. Increase of love. § 4. III. Conscience of the good law. § 5. More successful against sin. § 6. IV. Serenity, and full assurance. § 7, 8. V. Humility. § 9. Some duties as expressed in scripture. Spiritual harmony of mind to God, and the Spirit. § 10. Zeal for the divine honour. § 11. Heavenly-mindedness. § 12. Care to exclude worldly manners. Good shall appear. § 13. Conclusion. § 14. The Christian breathing after growth in grace.

§ 1. If by divine grace you have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even by that word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, not only in the world and the church, but in particular souls in which it is sown; you will, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. And though, in the most advanced state of religion on earth, we are but infants in comparison of what we hope to be, when in the heavenly world we arrive unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; yet as we have some exercise of a sanctified reason, we shall be solicitous that we may be growing and thriving infants. And you, my reader, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, will, I doubt not, feel this solicitude. I would, therefore, endeavour to assist you in making the inquiry whether religion be on the advance in your soul. And here I shall warn you against some false marks of growth; and then shall endeavour to lay down others on which you may depend as more solid. In this view I would observe, that you are not to measure your growth in grace, only or chiefly by your advances in knowledge, or in zeal, or any other passionate impression of the mind; no, nor by the fervour of devotion alone; but by the habitual determination of the will for God, and by your prevailing disposition to obey his commands, to submit to his disposals, and to subserve his schemes in the world.

§ 2. It must be allowed that knowledge and affection in religion are indeed desirable. Without some degree of the former, religion cannot be rational; and it is very reasonable to believe, that without some degree of the latter it cannot be sincere, in creatures whose natures are constituted like ours. Yet there may be a great deal of speculative knowledge, and a great deal of rapturous affection, where there is no true religion at all; and therefore much more, where there is no advanced state in it. The exercise of our rational faculties, upon the evidences of divine revelation, and upon the declaration of it as contained in Scripture, may furnish a very wicked man with a well digested body of orthodox divinity in his head, when not one single doctrine of it has ever reached his heart. An eloquent description of the sufferings of Christ, of the solemnities of judgment, of the joys of the blessed, and the miseries of the damned, might move the breast even of a man who did not firmly believe them; as we often find ourselves strongly moved by well-wrought narrations, or discourses, which at the same time we know to have their foundation in fiction. Natural constitution, or such accidental causes as are some of them too low to be here mentioned, may supply the eyes with a flood of tears, which may discharge itself plenteously upon almost any occasion that shall first arise. And a proud impatience of contradiction, directly opposite as it is to the gentle spirit of Christianity, may make a man's blood boil, when he hears the notions he has entertained, and especially those which he has openly and vigorously espoused, disputed and opposed. This may possibly lead him, in terms of strong indignation, to pour out his zeal and his rage before God, in a fond conceit, that, as the God of truth, he is the patron of those favourite doctrines by whose fair appearances perhaps he himself is misled. And if these speculative refinements, or these affectionate sallies of the mind, be consistent with a total absence of true religion, they are much more apparently consistent with a very low estate of it. I would desire to lead you, my friend, into sublimer notions and juster marks; and refer you to other practical writers, and above all, to the book of God, to prove how material they are. I would therefore entreat you to bring your own heart to answer, as in the presence of God, to such inquiries as these:

§ 3. Do you find divine love, on the whole, advancing in your soul? Do you feel yourself more and more sensible of the presence of God? and does that sense grow more delightful to you than it formerly was? Can you, even when your natural spirits are weak and low, and you are not in any frame for the ardours and ecstasies of devotion, nevertheless find a pleasing rest, a calm repose in heart, in the thought that God is near you, and that he sees the secret sentiments of your soul; while you are, as it were, labouring up the hill, and casting a longing eye towards him, though you cannot say you enjoy any sensible communications from

him? Is it agreeable to you to open your heart to his inspection and regard, to present it to him bare of every disguise, and to say, with David, Thou, Lord, knowest thy servant? Do you find a growing esteem and approbation of that sacred Law of God, which is the transcript of his moral perfections? Do you inwardly esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right? Do you discern, not only the necessity, but the reasonableness, the beauty, the pleasure of obedience, and feel a growing scorn and contempt of those things which may be offered as the price of your innocence, and would tempt you to sacrifice or to hazard your interest in the divine favour and friendship? Do you find an ingenuous desire to please God; not only because he is so powerful, and has so many good and so many evil things entirely at his command, but from a veneration of his most amiable nature and character; and do you find your heart habitually reconciled to a most humble subjection, both to his commanding and to his disposing will? Do you perceive that your own will is now more ready and disposed, in every circumstance, to bear the yoke, and to submit to the divine determination, whatever he appoints to be borne or forborne? Can you in patience possess your soul? Can you maintain a more steady calmness and serenity, when God is striking at your dearest enjoyments in this world, and acting most directly contrary to your present interests, to your natural passions and desires? If you can, it is a most certain and noble sign that grace is grown up in you to a very vigorous state!

§ 4. Examine also, what affections you find in your heart towards those who are round about you, and towards the rest of mankind in general.—Do you find your heart overflow with undissembled and unrestrained benevolence? Are you more sensible than you once were, of those many endearing bonds, which unite all men, and especially all Christians, into one community; which make them brethren and fellow-citizens? Do all the unfriendly passions die and wither in your soul, while the kind social affections grow and strengthen? And though self-love was never the reigning passion since you became a true Christian, yet, as some remainders of it are still too ready to work inwardly, and to show themselves, especially as sudden occasions arise, do you perceive that you get ground of them? Do you think of yourself only as one of a great number, whose particular interests and concerns are of little importance, when compared with those of the community, and ought by all means, on all occasions, to be sacrificed to them!

§ 5. Reflect especially on the temper of your mind towards those, whom an unsanctified heart might be ready to imagine it had some just excuse for excepting out of the list of those it loves, and towards whom you are ready to feel a secret aversion, or at least an alienation from them.—How does your mind stand affected towards those who differ from you in their religious sentiments and practices? I do not say that Christian charity will require you to think every error harmless. It argues no want of love to a friend, in some cases to fear his disorder should prove more fatal than he seems to imagine; nay, sometimes, the very tenderness of friendship may increase that apprehension. But to hate persons because we think they are mistaken, and to aggravate every difference in judgment or practice, into a fatal and damnable error that destroys all Christian communion and love, is a symptom generally much worse than the evil it condemns. Do you love the image of Christ in a person who thinks himself obliged, in conscience, to profess and worship in a manner different from yourself? Nay, further, can you love and honour that which is truly amiable and excellent in those, in whom much is defective; in those, in whom there is a mixture of bigotry and narrowness of spirit, which may lead them perhaps to slight, or even to censure, you? Can you love them, as the disciples and servants of Christ, who through a mistaken zeal may be ready to cast out your name as evil, and to warn others against you as a dangerous person? This is none of the least triumphs of charity, nor any despicable evidence of an advance in religion.

§ 6. And, on this head, reflect further, how can you bear injuries!—There is a certain hardness of soul in this respect, which argues a confirmed state in piety and virtue. Does every thing of this kind hurry and ruffle you, so as to put you on contrivances how you may recompense, or at least how you may disgrace and expose him, who has done you the wrong? Or can you stand the shock calmly, and easily divert your mind to other objects, only when you recollect those things, praying and praying for those who, with the worst tempers and views, are assaulting you? This is a Christ-like temper indeed, and he will own it as such; will own you as one of his soldiers, as one of his heroes, especially if it rises so far, as instead of being overcome of evil, to overcome evil with good. Watch over your spirit, and over your tongue, when injuries are offered; and see whether you be ready to meditate upon them, to aggravate them to yourself, to complain of them to others, and to lay on all the load of blame that you in justice can: or, whether you be ready to put the kindest construction upon the offence, to excuse it as far as reason will allow, and (where, after all, it will wear a black and odious aspect) to forgive it, heartily to forgive it, and that even before any submission is made, or pardon asked; and in token of the sincerity of that forgiveness, to be contriving what can be done, by some benefit or other towards the injurious person, to teach him a better temper.

§ 7. Examine further, with regard to the other evils and calamities of life, and even with regard to its uncertainties, how you can bear them.—Do you find your soul is in this respect gathering strength? Have you fewer foreboding fears and disquieting alarms, than you once had, as to what may happen in life? Can you trust the wisdom and goodness of God, to order your affairs for you, with more complacency and cheerfulness than formerly? Do you find you are able to unite your thoughts more in surveying present circumstances, that you may collect immediate duty from them, though you know not what God will next appoint or call you to? And when you feel the smart of affliction, do you make a less matter of it? Can you transfer your heart more easily to heavenly and divine objects, without an anxious solicitude, whether this or that burthen be removed, so it may but be sanctified to promote your communion with God, and your ripeness for glory?

§ 8. Examine also, whether you advance in humility.—This is a silent but most excellent grace; and they who are most eminent in it, are dearest to God, and most fit for the communications of his presence to them. Do you then feel your mind more emptied of proud and haughty imaginations; not prone so much to look back upon past services, which it has performed, as forward to those which are yet before you, and inward upon the remaining imperfections of your heart? Do you more tenderly observe your daily slips and miscarriages, and find yourself disposed to mourn over those things before the Lord, that once passed with you as slight matters; though when you come to survey them as in the presence of God, you find they were not wholly involuntary, or free from guilt? Do you feel in your breast a deeper apprehension of the infinite majesty of the blessed God, and of the glory of his natural and moral perfections; so as, in consequence of these views, to perceive yourself (as it were) annihilated in his presence, and shrink into less than nothing, and vanity? If this be your temper, God will look upon you with peculiar favour, and will visit you more and more with the distinguishing blessings of his grace.

§ 9. But there is another great branch and effect of Christian humility, which it would be an unpardonable negligence to omit. Let me therefore further inquire; Are you more frequently renewing your application, your sincere, steady, determinate application to the righteousness and blood of Christ, as being sensible how unworthy you are to appear before God, otherwise than in him? And do the remaining corruptions of your heart humble you before him, though the disorders of your life are in a great measure cured? Are you more earnest to obtain the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit; and have you such a sense of your own weakness, as to engage you to depend, in all the duties you perform, upon the communications of his grace to help your infirmities? Can you, at the close of your most religious, exemplary, and useful days, blush before God for the deficiencies of them, while others perhaps may be ready to admire and extol your conduct? And while you give the glory of all that has been right to him, from whom the strength and grace has been derived, are you coming to the blood of sprinkling, to free you from the guilt which mingles itself even with the best of your services? Do you learn to receive the bounties of providence, not only with thankfulness as coming from God, but with a mixture of shame and confusion too, under a consciousness that you do not deserve them, and are continually forfeiting them? And do you justify Providence in your afflictions and disappointments, even while many are flourishing around you in the full bloom of prosperity, whose offences have been more visible at least, and more notorious than yours?

§ 10. Do you also advance in zeal and activity for the service of God, and the happiness of mankind? Does your love show itself solid and sincere, by a continual flow of good works from it? Can you view the sorrows of others with tender compassion, and with projects and contrivances what you may do to relieve them? Do you feel in your breast that you are more frequently devising liberal things, and ready to wave your own advantage or pleasure that you may accomplish them? Do you find your imagination teeming, as it were, with conceptions and schemes, for the advancement of the cause and interest of Christ in the world, for the propagation of his gospel, and for the happiness of your fellow-creatures? And do you not only pray, but act, for it; act in such a manner as to show that you pray in earnest, and feel a readiness to do what little you can in this cause, even though others, who might if they pleased very conveniently do a vast deal more, will do nothing?

§ 11. And, not to enlarge upon this copious head, reflect once more how your affections stand, with regard to this world, and another.—Are you more deeply and practically convinced of the vanity of these things which are seen, and are temporal? Do you perceive your expectations from them, and your attachments to them, to diminish? You are willing to stay in this world as long as your Father pleases; and it is right and well: but do you find your bonds so loosened to it, that you are willing, heartily willing, to leave it at the shortest warning; so that if God should see fit to summon you away on a sudden, though it should be in the midst of your enjoyments, pursuits, expectations, and hopes, you would cordially consent to that remove; without saying, "Lord, let me stay a little longer, to enjoy these

or that agreeable entertainment, to hear this or that scheme?" Can you think with an habitual calmness and hearty approbation, if such be the divine pleasure, of waking no more when you lie down on your bed, of returning home no more when you go out of your house? And yet, on the other hand, how great soever the burthens of life are, do you find a willingness to bear them, in submission to the will of your heavenly Father, though it should be to many future years; and though they should be years of far greater affliction than you have ever yet seen? Can you say calmly and steadily, if not with such overflowings of tender affections as you could desire, "Behold thy servant, thy child, is in thy hand, do with me as seemeth good in thy sight! My will is melted into thine, to be lifted up or laid down, to be carried out or brought in, to be here or there, in this or that circumstance, just as thou pleasest, and as shall best suit with thy great extensive plan, which it is impossible that I, or all the angels in heaven, should mend."

§ 12. These, if I understand matters aright, are some of the most substantial evidences of growth and establishment in religion. Search after them; bless God for them, so far as you discover them in yourself; and study to advance in them daily, under the influences of divine grace, to which I heartily recommend you, and to which I entreat you frequently to recommend yourself.

The Christian breathing earnestly after growth in grace.

"O thou ever-blessed Fountain of natural and spiritual life! I thank thee that I live, and know the exercises and pleasures of a religious life. I bless thee, that thou hast infused into me thine own vital breath, though I was once dead in trespasses and sins; so that I am become, in a sense peculiar to thine own children, a living soul. But it is mine earnest desire, that I may not only live, but grow; grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, upon an acquaintance with whom my progress in it so evidently depends. In this view, I humbly entreat thee, that thou wilt form my mind to right notions in religion, that I may not judge of grace by any wrong conceptions of it, nor measure my advances in it by those things which are merely the effects of nature, and probably its corrupt effects.

"May I be seeking after an increase of divine love to thee, my God and Father in Christ, of unreserved resignation to thy wise and holy will, and of extensive benevolence to my fellow-creatures! May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind, and in a concern, that whether present or absent I may be accepted of the Lord, that whether I live or die it may be for his glory! In a word, as thou knowest I hunger and thirst after righteousness, make me whatever thou wouldst delight to see me! Draw as my soul, by the gentle influences of thy gracious Spirit, every trace and every feature, which thine eye, O heavenly Father, may survey with pleasure, and which thou mayst acknowledge as thine own image!

"I am sensible, O Lord, I have not as yet attained, yea, my soul is utterly confounded to think how far I am from being already perfect: but this one thing (after the great example of thine apostle, and the much greater of his Lord) I would endeavour to do; forgetting the things which are behind, I would press forward to those which are before. Oh that thou wouldst feed my soul by thy word and Spirit! Having been, as I humbly hope and trust, regenerated by it, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even by thy word which liveth and abideth for ever, as a new-born babe I desire the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow thereby. And may my profiting appear unto all men, till at length I come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and after having enjoyed the pleasures of those that flourish eminently in thy courts below, be fixed in the paradise above! I ask and hope it through him, of whose fulness we have all received, even grace for grace: to him be glory, both now and for ever! Amen."

CHAP. XXVII.

The advanced Christian reminded of the mercies of God, and exhorted to the exercises of habitual love to him, and joy in him.

[illegible] to God our progress as well as our duty. [illegible] The Christian [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

of Christianity, to see how low a life the generality even of sincere Christians commonly live in this respect. Rejoice then in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, and of all those other perfections and glories, which are included in that majestic, that wonderful, that delightful name, the Lord thy God! Spend not your sacred moments merely in confession, or in petition, though each must have their daily share; but give a part, a considerable part, to the celestial and angelic work of praise. Yea, labour to carry about with you continually a heart overflowing with such sentiments, warmed and inflamed with such affections.

§ 2. Are there not continually rays enough diffused from the great Father of light and love to enkindle it in our bosom? Come, my Christian friend and brother, come and survey with me the goodness of our heavenly Father; and O that he would give me such a sense of it, that I might represent it in a suitable manner; that while I am musing the fire may burn in my own heart, and be communicated to yours! And O that it might pass with the lines I write, from soul to soul; awakening in the breast of every Christian that reads them, sentiments more worthy of the children of God, and the heirs of glory; who are to spend an eternity in those sacred exercises, to which I am now endeavouring to excite you!

§ 3. Have you not reason to adopt the words of David, and say, How many are thy gracious thoughts unto me, O Lord! how great is the sum of them! When I would count them they are more in number than the sand. You indeed know where to begin the survey, for the favours of God to you began with your being. Commemorate it, therefore, with a grateful heart, that the eyes which saw your substance, being yet imperfect, beheld you with a friendly care, when you were made in secret, and have watched over you ever since; and that the hand, which drew the plan of your members, when as yet there was none of them, not only fashioned them at first, but from that time has been concerned in keeping all your bones, so that not one of them is broken, and that, indeed, it is to this you owe it that you live. Look back upon the path you have trod, from the day that God brought you out of the womb, and say, whether you do not, as it were, see all the road thick-set with the marks and memorials of the divine goodness. Recollect the places where you have lived, and the persons with whom you have most intimately conversed; and call to mind the mercies you have received in those places, and from those persons, as the instruments of the divine care and goodness. Recollect the difficulties and dangers, with which you have been surrounded; and reflect attentively on what God hath done to defend you from them, or to carry you through them. Think how often there has been but a step between you and death, and how suddenly God hath sometimes interposed to set you in safety, even before you apprehended your danger. Think of those chambers of illness, in which you have been confined, and from whence perhaps you once thought you should go forth no more: but said, with Hezekiah, in the cutting off of your days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. God has, it may be, since that time added many years to your life; and you know not how many may be in reserve, or how much usefulness and happiness may attend each. Survey your circumstances in relative life; how many kind friends are surrounding you daily, and studying how they may contribute to your comfort. Reflect on those remarkable circumstances in providence, which occasioned the knitting of some bonds of this kind, which, next to those which join your soul to God, you number among the happiest. And forget not in how many instances, when these dear lives have been threatened, lives perhaps more sensibly dear than your own, God has given them back from the borders of the grave, and so added new endearments, arising from that tender circumstance, to all your after-converse with them. Nor forget in how gracious a manner he hath supported some others in their last moments, and enabled them to leave behind a sweet odour of piety, which hath embalmed their memories, revived you when ready to faint under the sorrows of the first separation, and, on the whole, made even the recollection of their death delightful.

§ 4. But it is more than time that I lead on your thoughts to the many spiritual mercies which God hath bestowed upon you. Look back, as it were, to the rock from whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence you were digged. Reflect seriously on the state wherein divine grace found you; under how much guilt; under how much pollution! In what danger; in what ruin! Think what was, and oh think, with yet deeper reflection, what would have been, the case! The eye of God, which penetrates into eternity, saw what your mind, amused with the trifles of the present time and sensual gratification, was utterly ignorant and regardless of. It saw you on the [illegible] and pitied you; saw, that you would in a little time have been such a helpless, wretched creature, as the sinner that is just now dead, and has, to his infinite surprise and everlasting terror, met his unexpected doom, and would, like him, stand thunderstruck in astonishment and despair. This God saw, and he pitied you; and being unwilling [illegible] be provided in the counsels of his eternal love and grace [illegible] Redeemed for you, and purchased [illegible] himself with the blood of his Son! a price infinitely [illegible] you will praise [illegible] and thank infinitely [illegible]

was most sovereign effect ever to such a degree as to make you fall down before God in wonder and shame, to think that it should ever have been given for you. To account such those blessed purposes he sent his grace into your heart, as that though you were once darkness, you are now light in the Lord. He made that happy change which you now feel in your souls, and by his Holy Spirit which he gave to you, he daily shows that principle of love which is cultivated by this review, and sets it with greater ardour than before. Thus far he hath supported you in your Christian course; and having obtained help from him, it is that you continue even to this day. He hath not only blessed you, but made you a blessing; and though you have not been so useful as it was the generosity of your heart which he has excited would have engaged you to desire, yet some good you have done in the station in which he has fixed you. Some of your brethren of mankind have been relieved, perhaps too some thoughtless creature reclaimed to virtue and happiness, by his blessing on your endeavours. Some in the way to heaven are praising God for you; and some, perhaps, already there are longing for your arrival, that they may thank you in nobler and more expressive forms for benefits, the importance of which they now sufficiently understand, though while here they could never conceive it.

§ 5. Christian, look round on the numberless blessings, of one kind and of another, with which you are already encompassed; and advance your prospect still further, to what faith yet discovers within the veil. Think of those now unknown transports with which thou shalt drop every burthen in the grave, and thy immortal spirit shall mount light and joyful, holy and happy, to God, its original, its support, and its hope; to God, the source of being, of holiness, and of pleasure, to Jesus, through whom all these blessings are derived to thee, and who will appoint thee a throne near to his own, to be for ever the spectator and partaker of his glory. Think of the rapture with which thou shalt attend his triumph in the resurrection day, and receive this poor mouldering corruptible body transformed into his glorious image; and then think, "These hopes are not mine alone, but the hopes of thousands and millions. Multitudes, whom I number among the dearest of my friends upon earth, are rejoicing with me in these apprehensions and views; and God gives me sometimes to see the smiles on their cheeks, the sweet humble hope that sparkles in their eyes, and shines through the tears of tender gratitude; and to hear that little of their inward complacency and joy, which language can express. Yea, and multitudes more, who were once equally dear to me with these, though I have laid them in the grave, and wept over their dust, are living to God, living to the possession of unconceivable delights, and drinking large draughts of the water of life which flow in perpetual streams at his right hand."

§ 6. O Christian, thou art still intimately united and allied to them. Death cannot break a friendship thus cemented and brought out to maturity (resembling in the happiness it gives the friendship of the happiness of those friends, by whose memory that relationship is formed). They live to God as his servants: they serve him, and see his face; and they make but a small part of that glorious assembly. Meditate gratefully on the esteem and affection with the tenderness in heart to heart beyond regrets, and will they not rejoice in their joy? And will thou not adore that overflowing spring of holiness and happiness from whence each of those streams is derived; yea, I would add, while the blessed angels are so kindly regarding us, while they are ministering to thee, O Christian, and hearing thee in their songs as an heir of salvation, wilt thou not rejoice in their felicity too; and will thou not adore that God who gives them all the superior glory of their more exalted nature, and gives them a heaven which fills them with blessedness, even while they seem to withdraw from it that they may attend on thee?

§ 7. Thus, and infinitely more than thus, the blessed God is, and was, and shall ever be. The felicities of the blessed spirits that surround his throne, and thy felicities, O Christian, are immortal. Those heavenly luminaries shall glow with an undecaying flame, and thou shalt shine and burn among them, when the sun and heavens are gone out. Still shall the unchanging Father of lights pour forth his bounties upon them; and the fountain they so love from him, and their happiness in him, shall be everlasting, shall be ever growing. How down, O thou child of God, thou heir of glory! bow down, and let all that is within thee unite in one act of grateful love; and let all that is around thee, all that is before thee in the prospects of an unbounded eternity, concur to elevate and transport thy soul; that thou mayst, as far as possible, begin the work and blessedness of heaven, in falling down before the God of it, in opening thy heart to his gracious influences, and in breathing out before him that incense of praise which those warm beams of his presence and love have so great a tendency to produce, and to ennoble with a fragrancy resembling that of his paradise above.

The grateful and rejoicing sense of the favours of providence and grace with pressing and tender hopes before God in prayer and supplication, are exercises of love and praise.

"O my God, it is enough!" I have mused, and the fire burneth! But oh, in what language shall the flame break forth? What can I say but this, that my heart adores thee, and adores thee and loves

thee! My little vessel is as full as it can hold; and I would pour out all that fulness before thee, that it may grow capable of receiving more and more. Thou art my hope and my help, my glory and the lifter up of my head. My heart rejoiceth in thy salvation; and when I set myself, under the influences of thy good Spirit, to converse with thee, a thousand delightful thoughts spring up at once: a thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed, and flow in upon my soul with such refreshment and joy, that they seem to crowd into every moment the happiness of days, and weeks, and months.

"I bless thee, O God, for this soul of mine, which thou hast created; which thou hast taught to say, and I hope to the happiest purpose, Where is God my Maker? I bless thee for the knowledge with which thou hast adorned it. I bless thee for that grace, with which I trust I may (not without humble wonder) say, thou hast sanctified it; though alas, the celestial plant is fixed in too barren a soil, and does not flourish to the degree I could wish.

"I bless thee also for that body which thou hast given me, and which thou preservest as yet in its strength and vigour; not only capable of relishing the entertainments which thou providest for its various senses, but (which I esteem far more valuable than any of them for its own sake) capable of acting with some vivacity in thy service. I bless thee for that ease and freedom with which these limbs of mine move themselves, and obey the dictates of my spirit, I hope as guided by thine. I bless thee that the keepers of the house do not yet tremble, nor the strong men bow themselves; that they that look out of the windows are not yet darkened, nor the daughters of music brought low: I bless thee, O God of my life, that the silver cords are not yet loosed, nor the golden bowl broken. For it is thy hand that braces all my nerves, and thine infinite skill that prepares those spirits, which flow in so freely, and when exhausted, recruit so soon and so plentifully.

"I praise thee for that royal bounty, with which thou providest for the daily support of mankind in general, and for mine in particular; for the various table which thou spreadest before me, and for the overflowing cup which thou puttest into my hands. I bless thee, that these bounties of thy providence do not serve, as it were, to upbraid a disabled appetite, and are not like messes of meat set before the dead. I bless thee too, that I eat not my morsel alone, but share it with so many agreeable friends, who add the relish of a social life to that of the animal, at our seasons of common repast.—I thank thee for so many dear relatives at home; for so many kind friends abroad, who are capable of serving me in various instances, and disposed to make an obliging use of that capacity.

"Nor would I forget to acknowledge thy favour, in rendering me capable of serving others, and giving me in any instances to know, how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. I thank thee for a heart which feels the sorrows of the necessitous, and a mind which can make it my early care and refreshment to contrive, according to my little ability, for their relief. For this also cometh forth from thee, O Lord, the great author of every benevolent inclination, of every prudent scheme, of every successful attempt to spread happiness around us, or in any instance to lessen distress.

"And surely, O Lord, if I thus acknowledge the pleasures of sympathy with the afflicted, much more must I bless thee for those of sympathy with the happy, with those that are completely blessed. I adore thee for the streams that water paradise, and maintain it in ever-flourishing, ever-growing delight. I praise thee for the rest, the joy, the transport, thou art giving to many that were once dear to me on earth, whose sorrows it was my labour to soothe, and whose pain, especially in their last hour, was the delight of my heart to promote. I praise thee for the blessedness of every saint, and of every angel, that surrounds thy throne above; and I praise thee with accents of distinguished pleasure, for that reviving hope which thou hast implanted in my bosom, that I shall ere long know by clear sight, and by everlasting experience, what that felicity of theirs is, which I now only discover at a distance, through the comparatively obscure glass of faith. Even now, through thy grace, do I feel myself borne forward by thy supporting arm to those regions of blessedness. Even now am I waiting for thy salvation, with that ardent desire, on the one hand, which its sublime greatness cannot but inspire into the believing soul, and that calm resignation, on the other, which the immutability of thy promise establishes.

"And now, O my God, what shall I say unto thee? what, but that I love thee above all the powers of language to express? That I love thee for what thou art to thy creatures, who are, in their various forms, every moment deriving being, knowledge, and happiness, from thee, in measures and degrees far beyond what my narrow imagination can conceive. But oh, I adore and love thee yet far more, for what thou art in thyself, for those stores of perfection which creation has not diminished, and which can never be exhausted by all the effects of it which thou impartest to thy creatures; that infinite perfection, which makes thee thine own happiness, thine own end; amiable, infinitely amiable and venerable, were all derived excellence and happiness forgot.

"O thou first, thou greatest, thou fairest of all objects! thou only great, thou only fair, possess all my soul! And surely thou dost possess it. While I thus feel thy sacred Spirit breathing on my heart, and exciting these fervours of love to thee, I

cannot doubt it any more than I can doubt the reality of this outward life, when I enjoy the actings of it and feel its sweetness. Surely, O ever I know the appetite of hunger, my soul hungers after righteousness, and longs for a greater conformity to thy blessed nature and holy will. If ever my palate felt thirst, my soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God, and panteth for the more abundant communication of his favour. If ever this body, when wearied with labours or pastimes knew what it was to wish for the refreshment of the bed, and rejoiced to rest there, my soul, with sweet acquiescence, rests upon thy gracious bosom, O my heavenly Father, and returns to its repose in the embraces of its God, who hath dealt so bountifully with it. And if ever I saw the face of a beloved friend with complacency and joy, I rejoice in beholding thy face, O Lord, and in calling thee my Father in Christ. Such thou art, and such thou wilt be, for time and for eternity. What have I more to do, but to commit myself to thee for both? Leaving it to thee to choose mine inheritance, and to order my affairs for me, while all my business is to serve thee, and all my delight to praise thee. My soul follows hard after God, because his right hand upholds me. Let it still bear me up, and I shall press on towards thee, till all my desires be accomplished in the eternal enjoyment of thee! Amen."

CHAP. XXVIII

The established Christian invited to exert himself to purposes of usefulness.

§ 1. SUCH as I have described in the former chapter, I trust, are and will be the frequent exercises of your soul before God. Thus will your love and gratitude breathe itself forth in the divine presence; and will, through Jesus the great mediator, come up before it as incense, and yield an acceptable savour. But then you must remember this will not be the only effect of that love to God, which I have supposed so warm in your heart. If it be sincere, it will not spend itself in words alone; but will discover itself in actions, and will produce, as its genuine fruit, an unfeigned love to your fellow-creatures, and an unwearied desire and labour to do them good continually.

§ 2. "Has the great Father of mercies," will you say, "looked upon me with so gracious an eye, has he not only forgiven me ten thousand offences, but enriched me with such a variety of benefits? O what shall I render to him for them all! Instruct me, O ye oracles of eternal truth! Instruct me, ye elder brethren in the family of my heavenly Father! Instruct me above all, O thou Spirit of wisdom and of love, what I may be able to do, to express my love to the great eternal Fountain of love, and to approve my fidelity to him who has already gone so much to engage it, and who will take so much pleasure in owning and rewarding it!"

§ 3. This, O Christian, is the command which we have heard from the beginning, and it will ever continue in unimpaired force, that he who loveth God, should love his brother also; and should express that love, not in word and profession alone, but in deed and in truth. You are to love your neighbour as yourself; to love the whole creation of God, and, so far as your influence can extend, must endeavour to make it happy.

§ 4. "Yes," will you say, "and I do love it. I feel the golden chain of divine love encircling us all, and binding us close to each other, joining us in one body, and diffusing as it were one soul through all. May happiness, true and sublime, perpetuated and ever growing happiness, reign through the whole world of God's rational and obedient creatures, in heaven and on earth! and may every revolted creature, that is capable of being recovered and restored, be made obedient! Yea, may the necessary punishment of those, who are irrecoverable, be overruled by infinite wisdom and love to the good of the whole!"

§ 5. These are right sentiments; and if they are indeed the sentiments of your heart, O reader, and not an empty form of vain words, they will be attended with a serious concern to act in subordination to this great scheme of divine Providence, according to your abilities, in their utmost extent. And to this purpose, they will put you on enquiring the peculiar circumstances of your life and being; that you may discover what opportunities of usefulness they now afford, and how those opportunities and capacities may be improved. Enter therefore into such a survey; not that you may pride yourself in the distinctions of divine Providence or grace towards you, or having received, may glory as if you had not received, but that you may deal faithfully with the great Proprietor, whose steward you are, and by whom you are intrusted with every talent which, with respect to any claim from your fellow-creatures, you may call your own. And here, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us hold the balance with an impartial hand, that so we may determine what it is that God requires of us, which is nothing

less, than doing the most we can invent, contrive, and effect, for the general good. But oh, how seldom is this estimate faithfully made! and how much does the world around us, and how much do our own souls suffer, for want of that fidelity!

§ 6. Hath God given you genius and learning? It was not that you might amuse or deck yourself with it, and kindle a blaze which should only serve to attract and dazzle the eyes of men. It was intended to be the means of leading both yourself and them to the Father of lights. And it will be your duty, according to the peculiar turn of that genius and capacity, either to endeavour to improve and adorn human life, or by a more direct application of it to divine subjects, to plead the cause of religion, to defend its truths, to enforce and recommend its practice, to deter men from courses which would be dishonourable to God and fatal to themselves, and to try the utmost efforts of all the solemnity and tenderness with which you can clothe your addresses, to lead them into the paths of virtue and happiness.

§ 7. Has God invested you with power, whether it be in a larger or smaller society? Remember that this power was given you that God might be honoured, and those placed under your government, whether domestic or public, might be made happy. Be concerned therefore, that whether you be intrusted with the rod or the sword, it may not be borne in vain. Are you a magistrate? Have you any share in the great and tremendous charge of enacting laws? Reverence the authority of the supreme Legislator, the great Guardian of society. Promote none, consent to none, which you do not in your own conscience esteem, in present circumstances, an intimation of his will; and in the establishment of which you do not firmly believe you shall be his minister for good. Have you the charge of executing laws? Put life into them by a vigorous and strenuous execution, according to the nature of the particular office you bear. Retain not an empty name of authority. Permit not yourself, as it were, to fall asleep on the tribunal. Be active, be wakeful, be observant of what passes around you. Protect the upright and the innocent. Break in pieces the power of the oppressor. Unveil every dishonest art. Disgrace, as well as defeat, the wretch, that makes his distinguished abilities the disguise or protection of the wickedness which he ought rather to endeavour to expose, and to drive out of the world with abhorrence.

§ 8. Are you placed only at the head of a private family? Rule it for God. Administer the concerns of that little kingdom with the same views, and on the same principles, which I have been inculcating on the powerful and the great; if, by an unexpected accident, any of them should suffer their eyes to glance upon the passage above. Your children and servants are your natural subjects. Let good order be established among them, and keep them under a regular discipline. Let them be instructed in the principles of religion, that they may know how reasonable such a discipline is, and let them be accustomed to act accordingly. You cannot indeed change their hearts, but you may very much influence their conduct; and by that means may preserve them from many snares, may do a great deal to make them good members of society, and may set them, as it were, in the way of God's steps, if, peradventure, passing by, he may bless them with the riches of his grace. And fail not to do your utmost to convince them of their need of those blessings; labour to engage them to a high esteem of them, and to an earnest desire after them, as incomparably more valuable than any thing else.

§ 9. Again, Has God been pleased to raise you to esteem among your fellow-creatures, which is not always in proportion to a man's rank or possessions in human life? Are your counsels heard with attention? Is your company sought? Does God give you good acceptance in the eyes of men, so that they do not only put the fairest construction on your words, but overlook faults of which you are conscious to yourself, and consider your actions and performances in the most indulgent and favourable light? You ought to regard this, not only as a favour of Providence, and as an encouragement to you cheerfully to pursue your duty, in the several branches of it, for the time to come; but also, as giving you much greater opportunities of usefulness, than in your present station you could otherwise have had. If your character has any weight in the world, throw it into the right scale. Endeavour to keep virtue and goodness and countenance. Affectionately give your hand to modest worth, where it seems to be depressed or overlooked; though shining, when viewed in its proper light, with a lustre which you may think much superior to your own. Be an advocate for truth; be a counsellor of peace; be an example of candour; and do all you can to reconcile the hearts of men, and especially of good men, to each other, however they may differ in their opinions about matters which it is possible for good men to dispute. And let the caution and humility of your behaviour in circumstances of such superior eminence, and amidst so many tokens of general esteem, silently reprove the rashness and haughtiness of those who perhaps are remarkable for little else; or who, if their abilities were indeed considerable, must be despised; and whose talents must be, in a great measure, lost to the public, till that rashness and haughtiness of spirit be subdued. Nor suffer yourself to be interrupted in this generous and worthy course by the little attacks of envy and calumny which you may meet with in it. Be still attentive to the general good, steady and

resolve to your efforts to persuade it, and leave it to Providence to guard it to secure your character from the base assaults of malice and falsehood; which will arise, without your being, entirely, themselves and keep upon the authors greater shame, or (if they are incorrigible to their greater misery) than your humanity will allow you to wish them.

¶ 10. Once more. Has God blessed you with riches? Has he placed you in such circumstances, that you have more than you absolutely need for the subsistence of yourself and your family? remember your approaching account. Remember what an encumbrance these things often prove to men in the way of their salvation and how often, according to our Lord's express declaration, they render it so difficult to enter into the kingdom of God, as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Let it therefore be your immediate, your earnest, and your daily, prayer, that riches may not be a snare and a stone to you, as they are to by far the greater part of their possessors. Appropriate, I beseech you, some certain part and proportion of your estate and revenue to charitable uses; with a provisional increase, as God shall prosper you, in any extraordinary instance. By this means you will always have a fund of charity at hand; and you will probably be more ready to communicate, when you look upon what is so deposited, as not in any sense your own; but as already actually given away to those uses, though not yet affixed to particular objects. It is not for me to say, what that proportion ought to be. To those who have large revenues and no children, perhaps a third or one half may be too little; to those whose incomes are small, and their charge considerable, though they have something more than is absolutely necessary, it is possible a tenth may be too much. But pray, that God would guide your mind; make a trial for one year, on such terms as in your conscience you think will be most pleasing to him; and let your observations on that, teach you to fix your proportion for the next; always remembering, that he requires justice in the first place, and alms-deeds only so far as may consist with that. Yet at the same time take heed of that treacherous, delusive, and in many instances destructive, imagination,—that justice to your own family requires that you should leave your children very rich; which has perhaps cost some parsimonious parents the lives of those darlings for whom they laid up the portion of the poor; and what fatal consequences of divine displeasure may attend it to those that yet survive, God only knows; and I heartily pray, that you or yours may never learn by experience.

¶ 11. And that your heart may yet be more opened, and that your charity may be directed to the best purposes let me kindly mention a variety of good uses, which may call for the consideration of those whom God has in this respect distinguished by an ability to do good. To some the heads I am to offer, may recur on the neighbourhood in which you live. Think how many honest, and industrious, perhaps too I might add religious, people are making very hard shifts to struggle through life. Think what a comfort that would be to them, which you might, without any inconvenience, spare from that superfluous which God hath given you. Hearken also to any extraordinary call of charity which may happen, especially those of a public nature; and help them forward with your example and your interest; which perhaps may be of much greater importance than the sum which you contribute, considered in itself.—Have a tongue to plead for the necessitous, as well as a hand to relieve them, and endeavour to discountenance those poor shameful excuses, which covetousness often dictates to those who art may indeed set some varnish on what they suggest, but so slight a one that the coarse ground will appear through it.—See how many poor children are wandering naked and ignorant about the streets, and in the way to all kinds of vice and misery; and consider what can be done towards clothing some of them at least, and instructing them in the principles of religion. Would every thriving family in a town which is able to afford help on such occasions, cast a pitying eye on one poor family in its neighbourhood, and take it under their patronage, to assist in feeding, and clothing, and teaching the children, in supporting it in affliction, in relieving it from wrongs, and in advising those that have the management of it, as circumstances may require, how great a difference would soon be produced in the appearance of things amongst us! Observe who are sick, that if there be no public infirmary at hand to which you can introduce them, (where your contributions will yield the largest increase) you may do something towards relieving them at home, and supplying them with advice and medicines as well as with proper diet and attendance. Consider also the spiritual necessities of men; in providing for which, I should particularly recommend to you the very important and noble charity of assisting young persons of genius and piety, with what is necessary to support the expenses of their education for the ministry, in a proper course of preparation at academical studies. And grudge not some proportion of what God hath given you to those, who resigning all temporal views to minister to you the gospel of Christ, have surely an equitable claim to be supported by you in a capacity of consecrating you those services, however laborious, to which, for your sakes, and that of our common Lord, they have devoted their lives. And while you are so abundantly satisfied with the goodness of God's house, even of his holy temple, have compassion on those that dwell in a desert land; and remember to do something

towards sending among the distant nations of the heathen world, that glorious gospel which hath so long continued unknown to multitudes, though the knowledge of it, with becoming regard, be life everlasting.—These are a few important charities, which I would point out to those whom Providence has enriched with its peculiar bounties; and it renders gold more precious than it could appear in any other light, that it is capable of being employed for such purposes. But if you should not have gold to spare for them, contribute your silver; or as a farthing or a mite is not overlooked by God, when it is given from a truly generous and charitable heart, let that be cheerfully dropped into the treasury, where richer offerings cannot be afforded.

§ 12. And, that amidst so many pressing demands for charity, you may be better furnished to answer them, seriously reflect on your manner of living. I say not that God requires you should become one of the many poor relieved out of your income. The support of society, as at present established, will not only permit, but require, that some persons should allow themselves in the elegances and delights of life, by furnishing which, multitudes of poor families are much more creditably and comfortably subsisted, with greater advantage to themselves and safety to the public, than they could be, if the price of their labours, or of the commodities in which they deal, were to be given them as an alms; nor can I imagine it grateful to God, that his gifts should be refused, as if they were meant for snares and curses rather than benefits. This were to frustrate the benevolent purposes of the gracious Father of mankind, and, if carried to its rigour, would be a sort of conspiracy against the whole system of nature. Let the bounties of Providence be used; but let us carefully see to it, that it be in a moderate and prudent manner, lest, by your own folly, that which should have been for your welfare, become a trap. Let conscience say, my dear reader, with regard to yourself, what proportion of the good things you possess, your heavenly Father intends for yourself, and what for your brethren; and live not, as if you had no brethren, as if pleasing yourself in all the magnificence and luxury you can devise, were the end for which you were sent into the world. I fear this is the excess of the present age, and not an excess of rigour and mortification. Examine therefore your expenses, and compare them with your income. That may be shamefully extravagant in you, which may not only be pardonable, but commendable, in another of superior estate. Nor can you be sure that you do not exceed, merely because you do not plunge yourself in debt, nor render yourself incapable of laying up any thing for your family. If you be disabled from doing any thing for the poor, or any thing proportionable to your rank in life, by that genteel and elegant way of living which you affect, God must disapprove of such a conduct: and you ought as you will answer it to him, to retrench it. And though the divine indulgence will undoubtedly be exercised to those in whom there is a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and undissembled love to God and man, though it act not to that height of beneficence and excellence which might have been attained; yet be assured of this, that he who rendereth to every one according to his works, will have a strict regard to the degrees of goodness in the distribution of final rewards. So that every neglected opportunity draws after it an irreparable loss, which will go into eternity along with you. And let me add too, that every instance of negligence indulged, renders the mind still more and more indolent and weak, and consequently more indisposed to recover the ground which has been lost, or even to maintain that which has hitherto been kept.

§ 13. Complain not that this is imposing hard things upon you. I am only directing your pleasures into a nobler channel; and indeed that frugality, which is the source of such a generosity, so far from being at all injurious to your reputation, will rather, amongst wise and good men, greatly promote it. But you have far nobler motives before you than those which arise from their regards. I speak to you as to a child of God, and a member of Christ; as joined therefore by the most intimate union to all the poorest of those that believe in him. I speak to you as to an heir of eternal glory, who ought therefore to have sentiments great and sublime, in some proportion to that expected inheritance.

§ 14. Cast about therefore in your thoughts, what good is to be done, and what you can do, either in your own person, or by your interest with others; and go about it with resolution, as in the name and presence of the Lord. And as the Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding, go to the footstool of his throne, and there seek that guidance and that grace, which may suit your present circumstances, and may be effectual to produce the fruits of holiness and usefulness, to his more abundant glory, and to the honour of your Christian profession.

The established Christian breathes after more extensive usefulness.

"O holy and righteous Father, and sovereign Author of all good, whether natural or spiritual! I bless thee for the various talents with which thou hast enriched so undeserving a creature as I must acknowledge myself to be. My soul is in the deepest confusion before thee, when I consider to what little purpose I have hitherto improved them. Alas!

what have I done, in proportion to what thou might-est reasonably have expected with the gifts of nature which thou hast bestowed upon me, with my opportunities of life, with my time, with my possessions, with my influence over others? Alas! through my own negligence and folly I look back on a barren wilderness, where I might have seen a fruitful field and a springing harvest! Justly do I indeed de-serve to be stripped of all to be brought to an im-mediate account for all, to be condemned as in many respects unfaithful to thee, and to the world, and to my own soul; and in consequence of that condemnation, to be cast into the prison of eternal darkness; but thou, Lord, hast freely forgiven the dreadful debt of ten thousand talents. Adored be thy name for it! Accept, O Lord, accept that re-newed surrender which I would now make of my self, and of all I have, unto thy service! I acknow-ledge that it is of thine own that I give thee; make me, I beseech thee, a faithful steward for my great Lord, and may I think of no separate interest of my own, in opposition to thine!

"I adore thee, O thou God of all grace, if, while I am thus speaking to thee, I feel the love of thy creatures arising in my soul, if I feel my heart opening to embrace my brethren of mankind! O make me thy faithful almoner, in distributing to them all that thou hast lodged in mine hand for their relief! and in determining what is my own share, may I hold the balance with an equal hand, and judge impartially between myself and them! The proportion thou allowest may I thankfully take for myself, and those who are immediately mine! the rest may I distribute with wisdom, and fidelity, and cheerfulness! Guide mine hand, O ever mer-ciful Father, whilst thou dost me the honour to make me thine instrument in dealing out a few of thy bounties; that I may bestow them where they are most needed, and where they will answer the best end! And if it be thy gracious will, do thou mul-tiply the seed sown! Prosper me in my worldly affairs, that I may have more to impart to them that need it; and thus lead me on to the region of ever-lasting plenty and everlasting benevolence! There may I meet with many to whom I have been an affectionate benefactor on earth; and if it be thy blessed will, with many whom I have also been the means of conducting into the path to that blissful abode! There may they entertain me in their habi-tations of glory! And in time and eternity do thou, Lord, accept the praise of all, through Jesus Christ; at whose feet I would bow, and at whose feet after the most useful course I would at last die, with as much humility as if I were then exerting the first act of faith upon him, and had never had any oppor-tunity, by one tribute of obedience and gratitude to the services of life, to approve its sincerity!"

CHAP. XXIX.

The Christian rejoicing in the views of death and judgment.

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§ 1. When the visions of the Lord were closing upon John, the beloved disciple in the island of Patmos, it is observable, that he who gave him that revelation, even Jesus the faithful and true witness, concludes with those lively and impatient words:—He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: and John answers, with the greatest readiness and pleasure, Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus! come as thou hast said surely and quick-ly!—And remember, O Christian, whoever you are that are now reading these words, your divine Lord speaks in the same language to you. Behold, I come quickly.—Yes, very quickly will he come by death, to turn the key, to open the door of the grave for thine admittance thither, and to lead thee through it into the now unknown regions of the invisible world. Nor is it long before the Judge, who stand-eth at the door, will appear also to the universal judgment. And though perhaps not only scores but hundreds of years may lie between that period and the present moment, yet it is but a very small point of time to him, who at once views all the un-measurable ages of a past and future eternity. A thousand years are with him but as one day, and one day as a thousand years. In both these senses then does he come quickly. And I trust you can answer, with a glad Amen, that the warning is not terrible nor unpleasant to your ears, but rather that his coming, his certain, his speedy coming, is the object of your delightful hope, and of your longing expectation.

§ 2. I am sure, it is reasonable, it should be so; and yet perhaps nature, fond of life, and unwilling to part with a long known scene, to enter on a state to which it is entirely a stranger, may recoil from the thoughts of dying, or, struck with the awful pomp of an expiring and dissolving world, may look on the judgment day with some mixture of terror. And therefore, my dear brother in the Lord (for as such I can now esteem you), I would endeav-our with you a little on this head, and would entreat you to look more attentively on this solemn object, which will, I trust, soon lose disagreeableness to you as it is more familiarly viewed. Nay, I hope that

instead of starting back from it, you will rather spring forward towards it with joy and delight.

§ 3. Think, O Christian, when Christ comes to call you away by death, he comes, to set you at liberty from your present sorrows, to deliver you from your struggles with remaining corruption, and to receive you to dwell with himself in complete holiness and joy. You shall be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord.

§ 4. He will indeed call you away from this world. But oh, what is this world that you should be fond of it, and cling to it with so much eagerness! How low are all those enjoyments that are peculiar to it, and how many its vexations, its snares, and its sorrows! Review your pilgrimage thus far, and though you must acknowledge that goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life, yet has not that very mercy itself planted some thorns in your paths, and given you some wise and necessary, yet painful, intimations, that this is not your rest? Review the monuments of your withered joys, of your blasted hopes, if there be yet any monuments of them remaining, more than a painful remembrance they have left behind in your afflicted heart. Look upon the graves that have swallowed up many of your dearest and most amiable friends, perhaps in the very bloom of life, and in the greatest intimacy of your converse with them; and reflect, that if you hold it out a few years more, death will renew its conquests at your expense, and devour the most precious of those that yet survive. View the living, as well as the dead, behold the state of human nature under the many grievous marks of its apostasy from God; and say, whether a wise and good man would wish to continue always here. Methinks, were I myself secure from being reached by any of the arrows that fly around me, I could not but mourn to see the wounds that are given by them, and to hear the groans of those that are continually falling under them. The diseases and calamities of mankind are so many, and, which is most grievous of all, the distempers of their minds are so various and so threatening, that the world appears almost like an hospital. And a man, whose heart is tender, is ready to feel his spirits broken as he walks through it, and surveys the sad scene; especially when he sees how little he can do for the recovery of those whom he pities. Are you a Christian and does it not pierce your heart to see how human nature is sunk in vice and in shame!—to see with what amazing insolence some are making themselves openly vile, and how the name of Christ is dishonoured by many, too, that call themselves his people!—to see the unlawful deeds and filthy practices of them that live ungodly, and to behold, at the same time, the infirmities, at least, and irregularities, of those concerning whom we have better hopes! And do you not wish to escape from such a world, where a righteous and compassionate soul must be vexed from day to day by so many spectacles of sin and misery!

§ 5. You to come nearer home, do you not feel something within you which you long to quit, and which would imbitter even paradise itself? something which, were it to continue, would grieve and distress even in the society of the blessed? Do you not feel a remainder of indwelling sin; the sad consequence of the original revolt of our nature from God! Are you not struggling every day with some residue of corruption, or at least mourning on account of the weakness of your graces? Do you not often find your spirits dull and languid, when you would desire to raise them to the greatest fervour in the service of God? Do you not find your hearts too often insensible of the richest instances of his love, and your hands feeble in his service, even when to will is present with you? Does not your life, in its best days and hours, appear a low unprofitable thing, when compared with what you are sensible it ought to be, and with what you wish that it were? Are you not frequently, as it were, stretching the pinions of the mind, and saying, Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest?

§ 6. Should you not then rejoice in the thought, that Jesus comes to deliver you from these complaints?—that he comes to answer your wishes, and to fulfil the largest desires of your hearts; those desires that he himself has inspired?—that he comes to open upon you a world of purity and joy, of active, exalted, and unwearied services!

§ 7. O Christian, how often have you cast a longing eye towards those happy shores, and wished to pass the sea, the boisterous, unpleasant, dangerous sea, that separates you from them! When your Lord has condescended to make you a short visit in his ordinances on earth, how have you blessed the time and the place, and pronounced it, amidst any other disadvantages of situation, to be the very gate of heaven! And is it so delightful to behold this gate, and will it not be much more so to enter into it! Is it so delightful to receive the visits of Jesus for an hour, and will it not be infinitely more so to dwell with him for ever! Lord, may you well say, when I dwell with thee, I shall dwell in holiness, for thou thyself art holiness; I shall dwell in love, for thou thyself art love; I shall dwell in joy, for thou art the fountain of joy, as thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee. Bid welcome to his approach, therefore, to take you at your word, and to fulfil to you that saying of his, on which your soul has so often rested with heavenly peace and pleasure: Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.

§ 8. Surely you may say in this view, "The sooner Christ comes the better." What though the residue of your days be cut off in the midst? What though you leave many expected pleasures in life untasted, and many schemes unaccomplished? Is it not enough, that what is taken from a mortal life shall be added to a glorious eternity; and that you shall spend those days and years in the presence and service of Christ in heaven, which you might otherwise have spent with him, and for him, in imperfect enjoyments and labours on earth?

§ 9. But your prospects reach not only beyond death, but beyond the separate state. For with regard to his final appearance to judgment our Lord says, Surely I come quickly, in the sense illustrated before: and so it will appear to us, if we compare this interval of time with the blissful eternity which is to succeed it; and, probably, if we compare it with those ages which have already passed, since the sun began to measure out to earth its days and its years. And will you not here also sing your part in the joyful anthem, Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus!

§ 10. It is true, Christian, it is an awful day; a day in which nature shall be thrown into a confusion as yet unknown. No earthquake, no eruption of burning mountains, no desolation of cities by devouring flames, or of countries by overflowing rivers or seas, can give any just emblem of that dreadful day; when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, as well as the earth, and all that is therein shall be burned up; when all nature shall flee away in amazement before the face of the universal Judge, and there shall be a great cry, far beyond what was known in the land of Egypt, when there was not a house in which there was not one dead. Your flesh may be ready to tremble at the view, yet your spirit must surely rejoice in God your Saviour. You may justly say, "Let this illustrious day come, even with all its horrors!" Yea, like the Christians described by the apostle, you may be looking for, and hastening to, that day of terrible brightness and universal doom. For your Lord will then come to vindicate the justice of those proceedings which have been in many instances so much obscured, and because they have been obscured, have been also blasphemed. He will come to display his magnificence, descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, taking his seat upon a throne infinitely exceeding that of earthly, or even of celestial, princes, clothed with his Father's glory and his own, surrounded with a numberless host of shining attendants, when coming to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. His enemies shall also be produced to grace his triumph: the serpent shall be seen there rolling in the dust, and trodden under foot by him and by all his servants. Those who once condemned him, shall tremble at his presence; and those who bowed the knee before him in profane mockery, shall in wild despair call to the mountains to fall upon them, and to the rocks to hide them from the face of that Lamb of God, whom they once led away to the most inhuman slaughter.

§ 11. O Christian, does not your loyal heart bound at the thought? And are you not ready, even while you read these lines, to begin the victorious shout in which you are then to join? He justly expects, that your thoughts should be greatly elevated and impressed with the views of his triumph; but at the same time, he permits you to remember your own personal share in the joy and glory of that blessed day; and even now he has the view before him of what his power and love shall then accomplish for your salvation. And what shall it not accomplish? He shall come to break the bars of the grave, and to re-animate your sleeping clay. Your bodies must indeed be laid in the dust, and be lodged there as a testimony of God's displeasure against sin; against the first sin that ever was committed, from the sad consequences of which the dearest of his children cannot be exempted. But you shall then have an ear to hear the voice of the Son of God, and an eye to behold the lustre of his appearance; and shall shine forth like the sun arising in the clear heaven, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. Your soul shall be new dressed, to grace this high solemnity; and be clothed, not with the rags of mortality, but with the robes of glory: for he shall change this vile body, to fashion it like his own glorious body. And when you are thus royally arrayed, he shall confer public honours on you, and on all his people, before the assembled world. You may now, perhaps, be loaded with infamy, called by reproachful names, and charged with crimes, or with views, which your very soul abhors; but he will then bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your salvation as a lamp that burneth. Though you have been dishonoured by men, you shall be acknowledged by God; and though treated as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, he will show you that he regards you as his treasure, in the day that he makes up his jewels. When he shall put away all the wicked of the earth like dross, you shall be pronounced righteous in that full assembly; and though indeed you have broken the divine law, and might in strict justice have been condemned, yet, being clothed with the righteousness of the great Redeemer, even that righteousness which is of God by faith, justice itself shall acquit you, and join with mercy in bestowing upon you a crown of life. Christ will confess you before men and angels, will pronounce you good and faithful servants, and call you to enter into the

joy of your Lord: he will speak of you with endearment as his brethren, and will acknowledge the kindnesses which have been shown to you, as if he had received them in his own person. Yea, then shall you, O Christian, who may perhaps have sat in some of the lowest places in our assemblies, though (it may be) none of the rich and great of the earth would condescend to look upon, or to speak to you, be called to be assessors with Christ on his judgment-seat, and to join with him in the sentence he shall pass on wicked men and rebellious angels.

§ 12. Nor is it merely one day of glory and of triumph, but when the Judge arises and ascends to his Father's court, all the blessed shall ascend with him, and you among the rest: you shall ascend together with your Saviour, to his Father and your Father, to his God and your God. You shall go, to make your appearance in the New Jerusalem, in those new shining forms that you have received, which will no doubt be attended with a correspondent improvement of mind; and take up your perpetual abode in that fulness of joy, with which you shall be filled and satisfied in the presence of God, upon the consummation of that happiness, which the saints in the intermediate state have been wishing and waiting for. You shall go from the ruins of a dissolving world, to the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness for ever dwells. There all the number of God's elect shall be accomplished, and the happiness of each shall be completed. The whole society shall be presented before God, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, whom the eye of its celestial Bridegroom shall survey with unutterable delight, and confess to be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; its character and state being just what he originally designed it to be, when he first engaged to give himself for it, to redeem it to God by his blood. So shall you ever be with each other, and with the Lord; and immortal ages shall roll away, and find you still unchanged: your happiness always the same, and your relish for it the same; or rather, ever growing, as your souls are approaching nearer and nearer to him, who is the source of happiness, and the centre of infinite perfection.

§ 13. And now, look round about upon earth, and single out, if you can, the enjoyments, or the hopes, for the sake of which you would say, Lord, delay thy coming, or for the sake of which you any more should hesitate to express your longing for it, and to cry, Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

The Meditation and Prayer of a Christian, whose heart is warmed with these prospects.

"O blessed Lord! my soul is enkindled with these views, and rises to thee in the flame. Thou hast testified, thou comest quickly; and I repeat my joyful assent, Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come, for I long to have done with this low life; to have done with its burthens, its sorrows, and its snares! Come, for I long to ascend into thy presence, and to see the court thou art holding above!

"Blessed Jesus, death is transformed when I view it in this light. The king of terrors is seen no more as such, so near the King of glory and of grace. I hear with pleasure the sound of thy feet, approaching still nearer and nearer. Draw aside the veil whenever thou pleasest! Open the bars of my prison, that my eager soul may spring forth to thee, and cast itself at thy feet; at the feet of that Jesus, whom having not seen, I love; and in whom, though now I see thee not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Thou, Lord, shalt show me the path of life; thy hand shall guide me to thy blissful abode, where there is fulness of joy, and rivers of everlasting pleasure. Thou shalt assign me a habitation with thy faithful servants, whose separate spirits are now living with thee, while their bodies sleep in the dust. Many of them have been my companions in thy laborious work, and in the patience and tribulation of thy kingdom; my dear companions, and my brethren. O show me, blessed Saviour, how glorious and how happy thou hast made them! Show me, to what new forms of better life thou hast conducted them whom we call the dead! in what nobler and more extensive services thou hast employed them! that I may praise thee better than I now can, for thy goodness to them! And oh, give me to share with them in their blessings and their services, and to raise a song of grateful love, like that which they are breathing forth before thee!

"Yet, O my blessed Redeemer, even there will my soul be aspiring to a yet nobler and more glorious hope; and from this as yet unknown splendour and felicity, shall I be drawing new arguments to look and long for the day of thy final appearance. There shall I long more ardently than I now do, to see thy conduct vindicated, and thy triumph displayed; to see the dust of thy servants re-animated, and death, the last of their enemies and of thine, swallowed up in victory. I shall long for that superior honour that thou intendest me, and that complete bliss to which the whole body of thy people shall be conducted. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, will mingle itself with the songs of paradise, and sound from the tongues of all the millions of thy saints whom thy grace hath transplanted thither.

"In the mean time, O my divine Master, accept the homage which a grateful heart now pays thee, in a sense of the glorious hopes with which thou hast inspired it! It is thou that hast put this joy into it, and hast raised my soul to this glorious ambition, whereas I might otherwise have now been grovelling in the lowest trifles of time and sense, and

been looking with horror on that hour, which is now the object of my most ardent wishes.

"Oh be with me always, even to the end of this mortal life! and give me, while waiting for thy salvation, to be doing thy commandments." May my loins be girded about, and my lamp burning; and mine ears be still watchful for the blessed signal of thine arrival; that my glowing soul may with pleasure spring to meet thee, and be strengthened by death to bear those visions of glory, under the ecstasies of which feeble mortality would now expire."

CHAP. XXX.

The Christian honouring God by his dying behaviour.

Reflections on the sincerity with which the preceding treatise has been given, § 1. The author's desires that it may prove useful to many, and assist the Christian in the hour of death and judgment, § 2, 3. With this view he is induced, 1. To lay down directions for serious cares, § 4. 2. To review the whole scheme of the way to the favour of God, and its application to the Church of Christ, § 5. 3. To form some particular godly resolutions, § 6. 4. To leave the world, to bear an honourable testimony to religion, § 7. 5. To give a solemn charge to survivors, friends, § 8, especially to continue in the faith of Christ, § 9, 10. To keep up a continual communion with God, § 11. And, 7. To commit the departing spirit to God, in the penitent, yet ease of gratitude and repentance, hope and charity, § 12, which are exemplified in the concluding meditation and prayer.

§ 1. THUS, my dear reader, I have endeavoured to lead you through a variety of circumstances; and those not fancied or imaginary, but such as do indeed occur in the human and Christian life. And I can truly and cheerfully say, that I have marked out to you the path which I myself have trod, and in which it is my desire still to go on. I have ventured my own everlasting interests on that foundation, on which I have directed you to adventure yours. What I have recommended as the grand business of your life, I desire to make the business of my own; and the most considerable enjoyments, which I expect or desire in the remaining days of my pilgrimage on earth, are such as I have directed you to seek, and endeavoured to assist you in attaining. Such love to God, such constant activity in his service, such pleasurable views of what lies beyond the grave, appear to me, (God is my witness,) a felicity incomparably beyond any thing else which can offer itself to our affection and pursuit; and I would not for ten thousand worlds resign my share in them, or consent even to the suspension of the delights which they afford, during the remainder of my abode here.

§ 2. I would humbly hope, through the divine blessing, that the hours you have spent in the review of these plain things may have turned to some profitable account, and that in consequence of what you have read, you have been either brought into the way of life and peace, or been induced to quicken your pace to it. Most heartily should I rejoice in being further useful to you, and that even to the last. Now there is one scene remaining, a scene through which you must infallibly pass; which has something in it so awful that I cannot but attempt doing a little to assist you in it; I mean, the dark valley of the shadow of death. I could earnestly wish, that for the credit of your profession, the comfort of your own soul, and the joy and edification of your surviving friends, you might die, not only safely, but honourably too: and therefore I would offer you a few parting advices. I am sensible, indeed, that Providence may determine the circumstances of your death in such a manner, as that you may have no opportunity of acting upon the hints I now give you. Some unexpected accident from without, or from within, may as it were whirl you to heaven before you are aware; and you may find yourself so suddenly there, that it may seem a translation, rather than a death. Or, it is possible, the force of a distemper may affect your understanding in such a manner, that you may be quite insensible of the circumstances in which you are; and so your dissolution (though others may see it visibly and certainly approaching) may be as great a surprise to you, as if you had died in full health.

§ 3. But as it is on the whole probable you may have a more sensible passage out of time into eternity, and as much may, in various respects, depend on your dying behaviour, give me leave to propose some plain directions with relation to it, to be practised, if God give you opportunity, and remind you of them. It may not be improper to look over the twenty-ninth chapter again, when you find the symptoms of any threatening disorder; and I the rather hope, that what I say may be useful to you, as methinks I find myself disposed to address you with something of that peculiar tenderness which we feel for a dying friend; to whom, as we expect that we shall speak to him no more, we send out, as it were, all our hearts in every word.

§ 4. I would advise then, in the first place, that, as soon as possible, you would endeavour to get rid of all further care with regard to your temporal concerns, by settling them in time in as reasonable and Christian a manner as you can. I could wish there may be nothing of that kind to hurry your mind when you are least able to bear it, or to distress or divide those who come after you. Do that which, in the presence of God, you judge most equitable, and which you verily believe will be most pleasing to him. Do it in as prudent and effectual a manner as you can: and then, consider the world as a place you have quite done with, and its affairs as nothing further to you, more than to one actually dead; unless as you may do any good to its inhabitants, while you yet continue among them; and may, by any circumstances in your last actions or words in life, leave a blessing behind you to those who have been your friends and fellow-travellers.

while you have been despatching that journey through it which you are now finishing.

§ 5. That you may be the more at leisure, and the better prepared for this, enter into some serious review of your own state, and endeavour to put your soul into as fit a posture as possible, for your solemn appearance before God. For a solemn thing indeed it is, to go into his immediate presence; to stand before him, not as a supplicant at the throne of his grace, but at his bar as a separate spirit, whose time of probation is over, and whose eternal state is to be immediately determined. Renew your humiliation before God for the imperfections of your life, though it has in the main been devoted to his service. Renew your application to the mercies of God as promised in the covenant of grace, and to the blood of Christ as the blessed channel in which they flow. Resign yourself entirely to the divine disposal and conduct, as willing to serve God, either in this world or the other, as he shall see fit. And, sensible of your sinfulness on the one hand, and of the divine wisdom and goodness on the other, summon up all the fortitude of your soul to bear, as well as you can, whatever his afflicting hand may further lay upon you, and to receive the last stroke of it, as one who would maintain the most entire subjection to the great and good Father of spirits.

§ 6. Whatever you suffer, endeavour to show yourself an example of patience. Let that amiable grace have its perfect work; and since it has so little more to do, let it close the scene nobly. Let there not be a murmuring word; and that there may not, watch against every repining thought; and when you feel any thing of that kind arising, look by faith upon a dying Saviour, and ask your own heart, "Was not his cross much more painful than the bed on which I lie? Was not his situation among blood-thirsty enemies infinitely more terrible, than mine amidst the tenderness and care of so many affectionate friends? Did not the heavy load of my sins press him in a much more overwhelming manner, than I am pressed by the load of these afflictions? And yet he bore all as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter." Let the remembrance of his sufferings be a means to sweeten yours; yea, let it cause you to rejoice, when you are called to bear the cross for a little while, before you wear the crown. Count it all joy, that you have an opportunity yet once more of honouring God by your patience, which is now acting its last part, and will in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, be superseded by complete and everlasting blessedness. And I am willing to hope, that in these views you will not only suppress all passionate complaints, but that your mouth will be filled with the praises of God; and that you will be speaking to those that are about you, not only of his justice, but of his goodness too. So that you will be enabled to communicate your inward joys in such a manner, as may be a lively and edifying comment upon those words of the apostle, Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; even a hope which maketh not ashamed, while the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

§ 7. And now, my dear friend, now is the time, when it is especially expected from you that you bear an honourable testimony to religion. Tell those that are about you, as well as you can, (for you will never be able fully to express it,) what comfort and support you have found in it. Tell them, how it has brightened the darkest circumstances of your life; tell them, how it now reconciles you to the near views of death. Your words will carry with them a peculiar weight at such a season; there will be a kind of eloquence even in the infirmities with which you are struggling, while you give them utterance; and you will be heard with attention, with tenderness, with credit. And therefore, when the time of your departure is at hand, with unaffected freedom breathe out your joy, if you then feel (as I hope you will) a holy joy and delight in God. Breathe out, however, your inward peace and serenity of mind, if you be then peaceful and serene: others will mark it, and be encouraged to tread the steps which lead to so happy an end. Tell them what you feel of the vanity of the world, and they may learn to regard it less: tell them what you feel of the substantial supports of the gospel, and they may learn to value it more: for they cannot but know, that they must lie down on a dying bed too, and must then need all the relief which the gospel itself can give them.

§ 8. And to enforce the conviction the more, give a solemn charge to those that are about you, that they spend their lives in the service of God, and govern themselves by the principles of real religion. You may remember, that Joshua, and David, and other good men, did so; when they perceived that the days drew near in which they should die. And you know not how the admonitions of a dying friend, or (as it may be with respect to some) of a dying parent, may impress those who have disregarded what you and others may have said to them before. At least, make the trial; and die labouring to glorify God, to save souls, and generously to sow the seeds of goodness and happiness in a world, where you have no more harvests to reap. Perhaps they may spring up in a plentiful crop, when the clods of the valley are covering your body; but if not, God will approve it; and the angels that wait around your bed to receive your departing soul, will look upon each other with marks of approbation in their countenance, and own that this

is to expire like a Christian, and to make a glorious improvement of mortality.

§ 9. And in this last address to your fellow-mortals, whoever they are that Providence brings near you, be sure that you tell them, how entirely and how cheerfully your hopes and dependence in this season of the last extremity are fixed, not upon your own merits and obedience, but on what the great Redeemer has done and suffered for sinners. Let them see, that you die as it were at the foot of the cross; nothing will be so comfortable to yourself, nothing so edifying to them. Let the name of Jesus, therefore, be in your mouth, while you are able to speak; and when you can speak no longer, let it be in your heart, and endeavour that the last act of your soul, while it continues in the body, may be an act of humble faith in Christ. Come unto God by him; enter into that which is within the veil, as with the blood of sprinkling fresh upon you. It is an awful thing for such a sinner (as you, my Christian friend, with all the virtues the world may have admired, know yourself to be) to stand before that infinitely pure and holy Being, who has seen all your ways, and all your heart, and has a perfect knowledge of every mixture of imperfection which has attended the best of your duties; but venture in that way, and you will find it both safe and pleasant.

§ 10. Once more, to give you comfort in a dying hour, and to support your feeble steps while you are travelling through this dark and painful way, take the word of God as a staff in your hand. Let books, and mortal friends, now do their last office for you. Call, if you can, some experienced Christian, who has felt the power of the word of God upon his own heart; and let him bring the Scripture, and turn you to some of those precious promises, which have been the food and rejoicing of his own soul. It is with this view, that I may carry the good office I am now engaged in as far as possible, I shall here give you a collection of a few such admirable scriptures, each of them infinitely more valuable than thousands of gold and silver. And to convince you of the degree in which I esteem them, I will take the freedom to add, that I desire they may (if God give an opportunity) be read over to me, as I lie on my dying bed, with short intervals between them, that I may pause upon each, and renew something of that delightful relish, which, I bless God, I have often found in them. May your soul and mine be then composed to a sacred silence, whatever be the commotion of animal nature, while the voice of God speaks to us, in language which he spake to his servants of old, or in which he instructed them how they should speak to him, in circumstances of the greatest extremity.

§ 11. Can any more encouragement be wanting, when he says, Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. And he is not a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death. Therefore, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. O continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart: for with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. For I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, those also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. I give unto my sheep eternal life, saith Jesus, the good shepherd,) and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that believeth on me should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. He that testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

§ 12. Thus may that God, who knows the souls of his children in all their adversities, and in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, cheer and support you and me in those last extremities of nature! May he add us to the happy number of those who have been more than conquerors in

death! And may he give us those supplies of his Spirit, which may enable us to pour out our departing souls in such sentiments as those I would now suggest; though we should be no longer able to utter words, or to understand them if they were to be read to us! Let us at least review them with all proper affections now, and lay up one prayer more for that awful moment! Oh that this, and all we have ever offered with regard to it, may then come in remembrance before God!

A Meditation and Prayer suited to the case of a dying Christian.

"O THOU Supreme Ruler of the visible and invisible worlds! thou Sovereign of life and of death, of earth and of heaven! blessed be thy name, I have often been taught to seek thee. And now once more do I pour out my soul, my departing soul, unto thee. Bow down thy gracious ear, O God, and let my cry come before thee with acceptance!

"The hour is come, when thou wilt separate me from this world, with which I have been so long and so familiarly acquainted, and lead me to another, as yet unknown. Enable me, I beseech thee, to make the exchange as becomes a child of Abraham, who, being called of thee to receive an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, though he knew not particularly whither he went; as becomes a child of God, who knows, that through sovereign grace, it is his Father's good pleasure to give him the kingdom!

"I acknowledge, O Lord, the justice of that sentence by which I am expiring; and own thy wisdom and goodness, in appointing my journey through this gloomy vale which is now before me. Help me to turn it into the happy occasion of honouring thee, and adorning my profession! and I will bless the pangs, by which thou art glorified, and this mortal and sinful part of my nature is dissolved.

"Gracious Father, I would not quit this earth of thine, and this house of clay in which I have sojourned during my abode upon the face of it, without my grateful acknowledgments to thee, for all that abundant goodness which thou hast caused to pass before me here. With my dying breath I bear witness to thy faithful care, I have wanted no good thing. I thank thee, O my God, that this guilty, forfeited, unprofitable life was so long spared: that it hath still been maintained by such a rich variety of thy bounty. I thank thee, that thou hast made this beginning of my existence so pleasant to me. I thank thee, for the mercies of my days and nights, of my months and years, which are now come to their period; I thank thee for the mercies of my infancy, and for those of my riper age; for all the agreeable friends whom thou hast given me in this house of my pilgrimage, the living and the dead, for all the help I have received from others, and for all the opportunities which thou hast given me of being helpful to the bodies and souls of my brethren of mankind.—Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I have reason to rise a thankful guest from the various and pleasant entertainments with which my table has been furnished by thee. Nor shall I have reason to repine or to grieve at quitting them: for, O my God, are thy bounties exhausted? I know that they are not. I will not wrong thy goodness and thy faithfulness so much as to imagine, that because I am going from this earth, I am going from happiness. I adore thy mercy, that thou hast taught me to entertain nobler views through Jesus thy Son.—I bless thee with all the powers of my nature, that I ever heard of his name, and heard of his death: and would fain exert a more vigorous act of thankful adoration than in this broken state I am capable of, while I am extolling thee for the riches of thy grace manifested in him; for his instructions and his example, for his blood and his righteousness, and for that blessed Spirit of thine which thou hast given me, to turn my sinful heart unto thyself, and to bring me into the bonds of thy covenant; of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure, and which this death, though now separating my soul from my body, shall never be able to dissolve.

"I bless thee, O Lord, that I am not dying in an unregenerate and impenitent state; but that thou didst graciously awaken and convince me; that thou didst renew and sanctify my heart, and didst, by thy good Spirit, work in it an unfeigned faith, a real repentance, and the beginning of a divine life. I thank thee for ministers and ordinances: I thank thee for my sabbaths and my sacrament days; for the weekly and monthly refreshments which they gave me; I thank thee for the fruits of Canaan which were sent me in the wilderness, and are now sent me on the brink of Jordan. I thank thee for thy blessed word, and for those exceeding rich and precious promises of it which now lie as a cordial warm at my heart in this chilling hour; promises of support in death, and of glory beyond it, and of the resurrection of my body to everlasting life. O my God, I firmly believe them all, great and wonderful as they are, and am waiting for the accomplishment of them through Jesus Christ, in whom they are all yea and amen. Remember thy word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope! I covenanted with thee not for worldly enjoyments, which thy love taught me comparatively to despise but for eternal life, as the gift of thy free grace through Jesus Christ my Lord: and now permit me in his name to enter my humble claim to it! Permit me to consign this departing spirit to thine hand; for thou hast redeemed it, O Lord

God of truth! I am thine: save me and make me happy.

"But may I indeed presume to say, I am thine? O God, now I am standing on the borders of both worlds, now I view things as in the light of thy presence and of eternity, how unworthy do I appear, that I should be taken to dwell with thy angels and saints in glory! Alas, I have reason to look back with deep humiliation on a poor, unprofitable, sinful life, in which I have daily been deserving to be cast into hell. But I have this one comfortable reflection, that I have fled to the cross of Christ; and I now renew my application to it. To think of appearing before God in such an imperfect righteousness as my own, were ten thousand times worse than death. No, Lord! I come unto thee as a sinner, but as a sinner who has believed in thy Son for pardon and life: I fall down before thee as a guilty polluted wretch; but thou hast made him to be unto thy people for wisdom and righteousness, for sanctification and redemption. Let me have my lot among the followers of Jesus! Treat me as thou treatest those who are his friends and his brethren; for thou knowest my soul has loved him, and trusted him, and solemnly ventured itself on the security of his gospel. And I know in whom I have believed. The infernal lion may attempt to dismay me in the awful passage: but I rejoice that I am in the hands of the good Shepherd; and I defy all my spiritual enemies, in a cheerful dependence on his faithful care. I lift up my eyes and my heart to him, who was dead and is alive again; and behold, he lives for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of the unseen world. Blessed Jesus, I die by thine hand, and I fear no harm from the hand of a Saviour! I fear not that death which is allotted to me by the hand of my dearest Lord, who himself died to make it safe and happy. I come, Lord, I come not only with a willing, but with a joyful, consent. I thank thee, that thou remembrest me for good; that thou art breaking my chains, and calling me to the glorious liberty of the children of God. I thank thee, that thou wilt no longer permit me to live at a distance from thine arms; but, after this long absence, wilt have me at home, at home for ever.

"My feeble nature faints in the view of that glory, which is now dawning upon me: but thou knowest how, gracious Lord, to let it in upon my soul by just degrees, and to make thy strength perfect in my weakness. Once more, for the last time, would I look down on this poor world which I am going to quit, and breathe out my dying vows for its prosperity, and that of thy church in it. I have loved it, O Lord, as a living member of the body; and I love it to the last. I humbly beseech thee, therefore, that thou wilt guard it, and purify it, and unite it more and more! Send down more of thy blessed Spirit upon it, even the Spirit of wisdom, of holiness, and of love; till in due time the wilderness be turned into a garden of the Lord, and all flesh shall see thy salvation!

"And as for me, bear me, O my heavenly Father, on the wings of everlasting love, to that peaceful, that holy, that joyous abode, which thy mercy has prepared for me, and which the blood of my Redeemer hath purchased! Bear me to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect! And whatever this flesh may suffer, let my steady soul be delightfully fixed on that glory to which it is rising! Let faith perform its last office in an honourable manner! Let my few remaining moments on earth be spent for thy glory; and so let me ascend, with love in my heart and praise on my faltering tongue, to the world where love and praise shall be complete! Be this my last song on earth, which I am going to tune in heaven—Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever! Amen."

A

PLAIN AND SERIOUS ADDRESS

TO THE

MASTER OF A FAMILY,

ON THE

IMPORTANT SUBJECT OF FAMILY RELIGION.

A

PLAIN AND SERIOUS ADDRESS.

SIR,

You may easily apprehend, that the many interruptions to which personal visits are liable, make it difficult for ministers to find a convenient time, in which they may apply themselves suitably and largely to those committed to their care; or at least, if they resolve to do it, will necessarily make their progress through large congregations very slow. I therefore take this method of visiting you while alone, and of addressing you on the very important subject of Family Religion. For your own sake, and the sake of those dearest to you, I entreat you to give me a calm attentive hearing. And I would particularly desire, that if it be by any means practicable, (as with a little contrivance and resolution I hope it may,) you would secure one hour on the morning of the Lord's day after you receive it, not merely to run over this letter in a cursory manner, but deliberately to weigh and consider it, and to come to some determination, as in the sight of God, that you will, or that you will not, comply with the petition which it brings; if I may not rather say, with the demand which in his name it makes upon you.

As I purpose to deliver it to every master of a family under my stated care, or to every mistress where there is no master, (that no offence of any kind may be taken, which it is in my power to prevent,) I know it will come to many, who have long been exemplary for their diligence and zeal in the duties I am recommending; to many, whom their own experience hath instructed in the pleasures and advantages which flow from them; an experience, which will enforce them more effectually than any thing which it is possible for me to say. Such will, I hope, by what they read, be confirmed in pursuing the good resolutions they have taken, and the good customs they have formed; and will also be excited more earnestly to endeavour to contribute towards introducing the like into other families over which they have any influence, and especially into those which may branch out from their own, by the settlement of children or servants. In this view, as well as to awaken their thankfulness to divine grace, which hath inclined them to the discharge of their duty in so great, yet so frequently neglected, an article of it, I hope the heads of praying families will not peruse this letter in vain. But it is intended as an address to those, who have hitherto lived in the omission of it: and if there were but one such master of a family under my care, I would gladly submit to the labour in which I am now engaging for his sake alone. To such therefore I now turn myself; and oh that divine grace might engage every one of such a character to hear me with attention, and might enforce upon his conscience the weight of reasons, the evidence of which the lowest may receive, and to which it is impossible that the highest should find any thing solid to object!

Oh my dear friend, whoever you are, (for I know no one under my care to whom I may not address that appellation,) give me leave to tell you plainly, that while I write this I have that awakening scripture in my view: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." I appeal to you as a man of ordinary sense and understanding, (as it needs no more,) to judge whether this do not strongly imply, that it may be taken for granted every family, which is not a heathen family, which is not quite ignorant of the living and true God, will call upon his name. Well may it then pain my heart, to think that there should be a professedly Christian family, whom this dreadful character suits. Well may it pain my heart, to think of the divine fury, which may be poured out on the heads and on the members of it: and well may it make me desirous to do my utmost, to secure you and yours from every appearance, from every possibility, of such danger. Excuse the earnestness with which I may address you. I really fear, lest while you delay, the fire of the divine displeasure should fall upon you: and as I adore the patience of God

in having thus long suspended the storm, I am anxious about every hour's delay, lest it should fall the heavier.

I will therefore, as plainly and seriously as I can, endeavour to convince you of your duty, if peradventure you are not already secretly convinced of it; as truly I believe most who neglect it, under the regular administration of gospel ordinances, are.—I will then touch on a few of those objections, which have been pleaded to excuse in some degree so shameful an omission.—And this will naturally lead me to conclude with a few hints, which may serve by way of direction, for the proper introduction and discharge of the services to which I am endeavouring to engage you.

I mean not to handle the subject at large, which would afford abundant matter for a considerable volume; as indeed several volumes have been written upon it, by divines of different denominations, who, however various in other opinions, agree here; as what intelligent Christian can disagree? But I mean to suggest a few plain things, which it is evident you have not sufficiently considered, and which if duly weighed, may, by the blessing of God, answer my present purpose. Now the arguments I shall propose will be such, that if you will not regard them, little is to be hoped from any other: for surely the mind of man can discover none of greater and more universal importance; though I readily acknowledge, that many others might enforce them with greater energy and address. Yet if the desire, the most earnest desire, of succeeding can add any of the proper arts of persuasion, they will not be wanting here. And I would fain speak, as one who considers, how much of the glory of God, how much of your own happiness, and that of your dear children, for time and eternity, depends on the success of what I am now to lay before you.

What I desire and entreat of you is, that you would honour and acknowledge God in your families, by calling them together every day, to hear some part of his word read to them, and to offer, for a few minutes at least, your united confessions, prayers, and praises to him. And is this a cause that should need to be pleaded at large by a great variety of united motives? Truly the petition seems so reasonable, and a compliance with it from one who has not quite renounced religion might seem so natural, that one would think the bare proposing it might suffice. Yet experience tells us, it is much otherwise. This letter will come into the hands of some, who, though they maintain a public profession of religion, have been again and again exhorted to it in vain, and that perhaps for succeeding years. I might say a great deal to upbraid such, especially, on account of this neglect; but I rather choose to entreat to the future performance of the duty: humbly hoping, that, criminal as former negligence has been, a gracious God will mercifully forgive it, to those who repent and desire to reform.

And oh that I could engage you to this, by representing in the plainest, kindest, and most affectionate manner, the reasonableness and advantage of this duty! For if it be reasonable, if it be evidently advantageous, there are numberless general precepts of Scripture, which must comprehend and enforce it, if it were less immediately supported than it is by particular passages; which yet, as I shall presently show, do many of them strongly recommend it to us.

Consider, Sir, for I address myself to every particular person, seriously consider the apparent reasonableness of family religion. Must not your consciences presently tell you, it is fit that persons who receive so many mercies together, should acknowledge them together? Can you in your own mind be satisfied, that you and your nearest relatives should pay no joint homage to that God, who hath set you in your family, and who hath given to you, and to the several members of it, so many domestic enjoyments? your Creator and theirs, your Preserver and theirs, your daily Benefactor and theirs? Can it be right, if you have any sense of these things each of you in your own hearts, that the sense of them should be concealed and smothered there, and that you should never join in your grateful acknowledgments to him? Can you imagine it reasonable, that when you have a constant dependence upon him for so many mercies, without the concurrence of which your family would be a scene of misery, you should never present yourselves together in his presence, to ask them at his hand? Upon what principles is public worship to be recommended and urged, if not by such as have their proportionable weight here?

Indeed the force of these considerations hath not only been known and acknowledged by the people of God in all ages; we have not only Noah and Abraham, Joshua and David, Job and Daniel, each under a much darker dispensation than ours, as examples of it; but we may venture to say, that wherever there has been a profession of any kind of religion, it has been brought into private houses as well as public temples. The poor heathens, as we certainly know, from the remaining monuments of them, had their lares and their penates, which were household images, some of them in private chapels, and others about the common hearth, where the family used to worship them by frequent prayers and sacrifices. And the brass, and wood, and stone, of which they consisted, shall, as it were, cry out against you, shall rise up against you and condemn you, if while you call yourselves the worshippers of the one living and eternal God, and boast in the revelation you have received by his prophets and by

his Son, you presume to omit an homage, which the stupid worshippers of such vanities as these failed not to present to them, while they called them their gods. Be persuaded then, I beseech you, to be consistent in your conduct. Either give up all pretences to religion, or maintain a steady and uniform regard to it, at home as well as abroad, in the family, as well as in the closet, or at church. But the reasonableness of this duty, and the obligations which bind you in conscience to the practice of it, will further appear, if you consider,

The many advantages which will, by the divine blessing, attend a proper discharge of it. And here, I would more particularly represent the good influence, which family devotions are likely to have, —upon the young persons committed to your care,— upon your own hearts,—and upon the advancement of a general reformation, and the propagation of religion to those that are yet unborn.

Consider, in the first place, what is most obvious, the happy influence which the duty I am recommending might have upon the young members of your family, the children and servants committed to your care. For I now consider you as a parent and a master. The father of a family is a phrase, that comprehends both these relations; and with great propriety, as humanity obliges us to endeavour to take a parental care of all under our roof. And, indeed,

You ought to consider your servants, in this view, with a tender regard. They are probably in the flower of life, for that is the age which is commonly spent in service: and you should recollect how possible it is, that this may be, if rightly improved, the best opportunity their whole life may afford them for learning religion, and being brought under the power of it. If your servants are already instructed in it, by being brought up in families where these duties have been maintained; let them not, if they should finally miscarry, have cause to impute it to you, and to testify before God, in the day of their condemnation, "that it was under your roof that they learnt the neglect and forgetfulness of God, and of all that their pious parents, perhaps in a much inferior station of life to you, had in earlier days been attempting to teach them; to teach them, in moments taken from labour, or from repose almost necessary for their subsistence." On the other hand, if they come to you quite ignorant of religion, (as, if they come from prayerless families, it is very probable that they do,) have compassion upon them, I entreat you, and endeavour to give them those advantages which they never yet had; and which it is too probable, as things are generally managed, they never will have, if you will not afford them.

But I would especially, if I might be allowed to borrow the pathetic words of Job, entreat you by the children of your own body. I would now, as it were, present them all before you, and beseech you by all the bowels of paternal affection, (which I have myself so strongly felt,) that to all the other tokens of tenderness and love, you would not refuse to add this, without which many of the rest may be worse than in vain.

Give me leave to plead with you as the instruments of introducing them into being. Oh remember, it is indeed a debased and corrupted nature you have conveyed to them. Consider, that the world, into which you have been the means of bringing them, is a place in which they are surrounded with many temptations, and in which, as they advance in life, they must expect many more; so that, in plain terms, it is on the whole much to be feared, that they will perish in the ignorance and forgetfulness of God, if they do not learn from you to love and serve him. For how can it be expected they should learn this at all, if you give them no advantages for receiving and practising the lesson at home?

And let me further urge and entreat you to remember, that these dear children, whose tender age, and perhaps amiable forms and dispositions, might attract the affection and solicitude of strangers, are committed to your especial and immediate care by God their Creator. And he has made them thus dependent upon you, and others that have, in their infancy and childhood, the care of them, that there might be hereafter a better opportunity of forming their minds, and of influencing them to a right temper and conduct. And can this by any means be effectually done, if you do not at proper times call them together, to attend to the instructions of the word of God, and to join in solemn prayers and supplications to him? At least, is it possible it should be done any other way with equal advantage, if this be not added to the rest?

Family worship is a most proper way of teaching children religion, as you teach them language, by insensible degrees; a little one day and a little another; for to them line must be upon line, and precept upon precept. They may learn to conceive aright of the divine perfections, when they hear you daily acknowledging and adoring them: their hearts may be early touched with pious remorse for sin, when they hear your confessions poured out before God: they will know what mercies they are to ask for themselves, by observing what turn your petitions take: your intercessions may diffuse into their minds a spirit of love to mankind, a concern for the interest of the church, and of their country; and, what is not I think by any means to be neglected, sentiments of loyalty towards our sovereign and his family, when they hear you daily invoking the divine blessing upon them: and your solemn thanksgivings for the bounties of Providence, and for benefits of a spiritual nature, may affect their hearts with those gracious impressions towards the

gracious Author of all, which may excite in their little breasts love to him, the most noble and genuine principle of all true and acceptable religion. Thus they may become Christians by insensible degrees, and grow in the knowledge and love of the truth, as they do in stature.

By observing your reverent and solemn deportment, (as reverent and solemn I hope it will at such seasons be,) they may get some notion of an invisible being, before they are of age to understand the definition of the term God; and may feel their minds secretly impressed with a humble awe and veneration, before they can explain to you their sense of it. And whatever instructions you give them concerning his nature and his will, and the way of obtaining his favour by Jesus Christ, all your admonitions relating to the importance of that invisible world we are going to, and the necessary preparation for it, will be greatly illustrated by the tenor of your daily devotions, as well as by those excellent lessons which the word of God, when solemnly read to them morning and evening, will afford. Nor is it by any means to be forgotten, that while they hear themselves, and their own concerns, mentioned before God in prayer, while they hear you earnestly pleading for the divine blessing upon them, (especially if it be in expressions wisely varied, as some particular occurrences in their lives and in yours may require,) it may very probably be a means of moving their impressible hearts; as it may powerfully convince them of your deep and tender concern for their good, and may add great weight to the instructions you may address to them: so that it may appear, even while you are praying for them, that God hears. And indeed I have known some instances of excellent persons, who have dated their conversion to God, even after they had begun visibly to degenerate, from the prayers, from the serious and pathetic prayers, which they have heard their pious fathers, perhaps I might add their pious mothers, presenting before God on their account.

Indeed, were this duty properly attended to, it might be expected that all Christian families would, according to their respective sizes and circumstances, become nurseries of piety; and you would see in the most convincing view, the wisdom of Providence, in making human infants so much more dependent on their parents, and so much more incapable to shift for themselves, than the offspring of inferior creatures are.

Let me then entreat you, my dear friend, to look on your children the very next time you see them, and ask your own heart, how you can answer it to God and to them, that you deprive them of such advantages as these: advantages, without which, it is to be feared, your care of them in other respects will turn to but little account, should they be ever so prosperous in life. For what is prosperity in life without the knowledge, and fear, and love of God? what, but the poison of the soul, which swells and kills it? what, but the means of making it more certainly, more deeply, more intolerably miserable, when all its transient and empty amusements are passed away like a dream when one awaketh? In short, not to mention the happy influence it may have on their temporal affairs, by drawing down the divine blessing, and by forming their minds to those virtues which pave the way to wealth and reputation, health and contentment, which make no enemies, and attract many friends; it is, with respect to the eternal world, the greatest cruelty to your children, thus to neglect giving them those advantages, which no other cares in education itself, exclusive of these, can afford; and it is impossible you should ever be able to give them any other equivalent. If you do your duty in this respect, they will have reason to bless you living and dying; and if you neglect it, take care that you and they come not, in consequence of that neglect, into a world, where (horrid as the thought may now seem) you will for ever be cursing each other. And thus I am fallen insensibly, because so naturally, from what I was saying of the concern and interest of those under your care, to your own, so far as it may be distinguished from theirs.

Let me therefore press you to consider, how much your own interest is concerned in the matter; the whole of your interest, both spiritual and temporal.

Your spiritual interest is infinitely the greatest, and therefore I will begin with that. And here let me seriously ask you, Do you not need those advantages for religion which the performance of family duty will give you, added to those of a more secret and a more public nature, if peradventure they are regarded by you? These instructions, these adorations, these confessions, these supplications, these intercessions, these thanksgivings, which may be so useful to your children and servants, may they not be useful to yourselves? May not your own hearts have some peculiar advantage for being impressed, when you are the mouth of others in these domestic devotions, beyond what in a private station of life it is otherwise possible you should have? Oh, these lessons of religion to your own souls, every morning and evening, might be (if I may be allowed the expression) either the seed or foretaste of salvation to you. Nay, the remoter influence they may have on your conduct in other respects, and at other times, when considered merely in the general as religious exercises performed by you in your family, is to be recollected as an argument of vast importance.

A sense of common decency would engage you, if you pray with your family, to avoid a great many evils, which would appear doubly evil in a father or a master, who kept up such religious exercises in

his house. I will not now, Sir, speak of yourself, for I would not offend by supposing any thing grossly bad of you. But do you imagine, that if reading the Scripture and family prayer were introduced into the houses of some of your neighbours, drunkenness and lewdness, and cursing and swearing, and profaning the Lord's day, would not, like so many evil demons, be quickly driven out? The master of the family would not for shame indulge them, if he had nothing more than the form of duty kept up; and his reformation, though only external, and at first on a kind of constraint, would carry with it the reformation of many more, who have such a dependence on his favour as they would not sacrifice, though, by a madness very prevalent among the children of men, they can venture to sacrifice their souls to every trifle.

And may it not perhaps be your more immediate concern, to recollect, that if you prayed with your family, you would yourself be more careful to abstain from all appearance of evil? You would find out a way to suppress that turbulency of passion, which may now be ready to break out before you are aware, and other imprudences, in which your own heart would check you by saying, "Does this become one, that is by and by to kneel down with his domestics, his children and servants, and adore God with them, and pray against every thing which displeases God, and makes us unfit for the heavenly world?" I will not say this will cure every thing that is wrong; but I believe you are already persuaded, it would often have a very good influence. And I fear, it is the secret desire of indulging some irregularities without such a restraint, that, infamous as such a victory is, hath driven out family prayer from several houses where it was once maintained, and hath excluded it from others. But if you have any secret disinclination of heart rising against it in this view, it becomes you seriously to take the alarm; for, to speak plainly, I have hardly known a blacker symptom of damnation, than a fear of being restrained in the commission of sin.

After this it may seem a matter of smaller importance, to urge the good influence which a proper discharge of family duty may have upon your own temporal affairs; both by restraining you from many evils, and engaging you to a proper conduct yourself, and also by impressing your children and servants with a sense of religion. And it is certain, the more careful they are of their duty to God, the more likely they will be to perform their duty to you. Nor can any thing strengthen your natural authority among them more, than your presiding in such solemnities, if supported by a suitable conduct. But I would hope, nobler motives will have a superior weight. And therefore, waving this topic, I entreat you, as the last argument, to consider,

The influence it may have on a general reformation, and on the propagation of religion to those who are yet unborn. You ought to consider every child and servant in your family, as one who may be a source, not only of life, but (in some degree) of character and happiness, to those who are hereafter to arise into being; yea, whose conduct may in part affect those that are to descend from them in the following generation. If they grow up, while under your eye, ignorant of religion, they will certainly be much less capable of teaching it to others; for these are the years of discipline, and if they be neglected now, there is little probability of their receiving after-instruction. Nor is this all the evil consequence; for it is highly probable, that they will think themselves authorized by your example to a like negligence, and so you may entail heathenism under disregarded Christian forms, on your descendants and theirs in ages to come. Whereas your diligence and zeal might be remembered, and imitated by them, perhaps when you are in your grave; and the stock which they first received from you, might with rich improvements be communicated to great numbers, so that one generation after another might learn to fear and serve the Lord. On the whole, God only knows what a church may arise from one godly family, what a harvest may spring up from a single seed; and on the other hand, it is impossible to say, how many souls may at length perish by the treacherous neglect of a single person, and to speak plainly, by your own.

These, Sir, are the arguments I had to plead with you, and which I have selected out of many more; and now give me leave seriously to ask you, as in the presence of God, whether there be not, on the whole, an unanswerable force in them? And if there be, what follows, but that you immediately yield to that force, and set up family worship this very day. For, methinks, I would hardly thank you for a resolution to do it to-morrow, so little do I expect from that resolution. How can you excuse yourself in the continued omission? Bring the matter before God; he will be the final judge of it; and if you cannot debate the question as in his presence, it is a sign of a bad cause, and of a bad heart too; which is conscious of the badness of the cause, and yet will not give it up, nor comply with a duty, of your obligations to which you are secretly convinced, and yet in effect say, "I will go on in this sin, and venture the consequence." Oh it is a dreadful venture! and will be found in effect provoking the Lord to jealousy, as if you were stronger than he.

But perhaps there may arise in your mind some objections, which may in some degree break the force of this conviction, and which in that view it may be expedient for me to discuss a little before I dismiss the subject, and close my address to you. You may perhaps be ready to object,

1. "That family prayer is not in so many words commanded in Scripture; and, therefore, however expedient in some cases, it cannot be so universal and so important a duty, as we represent it."

I answer plainly, that it is strongly recommended in Scripture, and consequently commanded; as there are precepts which plainly include, though they do not particularly express, it. And I appeal to yourself in this matter. When God is represented as giving this reason to his angels for a particular favour to be bestowed on Abraham, because he knew that he would command his children and household to keep the way of the Lord, that he might obtain the promised blessing; did he not intend to declare his approbation of the care he took to support religion in his family? And can it be supported in a total neglect of prayer?—Again, do you not in your conscience think, that the Spirit of God meant that we should take Joshua for an example, when he tells us, that he resolved, and publicly declared the resolution, that he and his house would serve the Lord; which must express a religious care of his family too?—Do you not believe, that the blessed Spirit meant it as a commendation of Job, that he offered sacrifices for all his children, sacrifices undoubtedly attended with prayers, when he feared lest the gaiety of their hearts in their successive feastings might have betrayed them into some moral evil?—And was it not to do an honour to David, that the Scripture informs us, that he went home to bless his household; that is, to perform some solemn act of domestic worship, when he had been spending the whole day in public devotions?—What think you of the example of Daniel, who prayed in his house, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, and would rather run the risk of being cast into the den of lions, and being torn in pieces by those cruel beasts, than he would either omit or conceal it?—And do you think, that when our blessed Lord, whose whole life was employed in religious services, so frequently took his disciples apart to pray with them, that he did not intend this as an example to us, of praying with those under our special care, or in other words, with the members of our own family, who are most immediately so?—Or can you, by any imaginable artifice, delude yourself so far as to think, that when we are solemnly charged and commanded to pray with all prayer and supplication, this kind of prayer is not included in that apostolical injunction?

On the whole, the question lies in a very little room. Have I proved by what I have said before, that family prayer is a reasonable thing? that it has a tendency to promote the honour of God, and the interest of religion, and your own salvation, with that of those who are committed to your care? If you are really convinced of this, then all the general precepts which require the love of God and your neighbour, all that recommend a regard to the interest of Christ, and a concern for our own everlasting happiness, bind it in this connexion as certainly upon us, as if it had been commanded in words as express as those in which we are required to enter into our closets, and there to pray to our Father which is in secret.*

And I will further add, that if the care of family religion be (as I suppose every man's conscience will secretly testify that it is) a proper part of a religious education, then all those many passages of Scripture which recommend this, must in all reason be understood as including that. But perhaps you may be ready to plead,

2. "That it is generally neglected."

Yet scarce can you have made or thought of this objection, but you will see at the first glance, that this must turn upon yourself, rather than on the whole appear favourable to your cause. It is the reproach of our age, if it be indeed generally neglected. And if it be generally excluded from the families of the rich and the great, (who too frequently set the fashion, where they are most apt to set it wrong,) let it rather awaken a generous indignation in our breast, to think that it is so excluded. At least, let it awaken a holy zeal to exert ourselves so much the more, as it is certain that no association in vice can secure those that join in it: for it is expressly said, though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished. So will your obedience be the more acceptable, in proportion to the degree in which it is singular. Were there not one praying family in the whole nation, in the whole world, methinks it should instigate you to the practice, rather than tempt you to the neglect, and you should press on as ambitious of the glory of leading the way: for what could be a nobler object of ambition, than to be pointed out by the blessed God himself, as Job was; of whom he said, with a kind of triumph, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the land, or even on the earth? But, blessed be God, this supposed universal neglect is far from being the case. Let it however rejoice us, if God may say, "There are such and such families, distinguishable from those in the neighbourhood on this account, as prevalent as the neglect of family prayer is, they have the resolution to practise it, and, like my servant Daniel, fear not the reproach and contempt which profane and ungodly men may cast upon them, if they may but honour me and engage my favour: I know them, I hearken and hear, and a book of remembrance is written before me for them that fear me, and think on my name." Nor should you urge,

* This part of the argument is enforced with peculiar strength by that great and excellent writer Mr. Howe, in his Posthumous Sermons on the subject, which I am happy to recommend to every reader that can get an opportunity of perusing them.

3. "That you have so much business of another kind, as not to be able to attend to this."

I might cut this objection short at once, by applying to your conscience, whether you have not time for many other things, which you know to be of much less importance. How many hours in a week do you find for amusement, while you have none for devotion in your family? And do you indeed hold the blessing of God so very cheap, and think it a matter of so little importance, that you conclude your business must succeed the worse, if a few minutes were daily taken solemnly to seek it together? Let me rather admonish you, that the greater your business is, the more need you have to pray earnestly, that your hearts may not be engrossed by it. And I would beg leave further to remind you, that if your hurry of business were indeed so great as the objection supposes, (which I believe is seldom the case,) prudence alone might suggest, that you should endeavour to contract it. For there are certain boundaries, beyond which a wise and faithful care cannot extend; and as an attempt to go beyond these boundaries has generally its foundation in avarice, it often has its end in poverty and ruin. But if you were ever so secure of succeeding for this world, how dear might you and your children pay for that success, if all the blessed consequences of family religion, for time, and for eternity, were to be given up as the price of that very small part of your gains, which is owing to the minutes you take from these exercises, that you may give them to the world! For you plainly perceive the question is only about them, and by no means about a strenuous application to the proper duties of your secular calling through the day. And if you will be rich upon such profane terms as are here supposed, (for truly I can call them no better than profane,) you will probably plunge yourself into final perdition, and may in the mean time pierce yourself through with many sorrows: while religious families learn by blessed experience, that the blessing of the Lord, which they are so often imploring together, maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it; or that a little, with the fear of the Lord, is better than great treasure, with that intermingled trouble, which in the neglect of God must necessarily be expected. But I conclude that yet more will be objecting,

4. "That they want ability for a work of this kind."

To this I must in the first place reply, that where the heart is rightly disposed, it does not require any uncommon abilities to discharge family worship in a decent and edifying manner. The heart of a wise and good man in this respect teacheth his mouth, and addeth knowledge to his lips; and out of the fulness of it, when it is indeed full of pious affections, the mouth will naturally speak. And if it speak naturally, and in the main properly, it is enough. There is no need at all of speaking elegantly. The plainest and simplest language, in addresses to the Majesty of Heaven, appears to me far preferable to laboured, pompous, and artificial expressions. Plain short sentences, uttered just as they rise in the mind, will be best understood by them that join with you. And it should on such occasions be our endeavour, to let ourselves down, as much as possible, to the understanding of the least and meanest of them: and this will in itself be more pleasing to God, than any thing which should proceed from ostentation and parade.

I must also desire you to consider how many helps you may easily procure. The Scripture is a large and noble magazine of the most proper sentiments, and most expressive language; which, if you will attend to with becoming regard, will soon furnish you for every good word and work, and most apparently for this. And besides this, we have in our language a great variety of excellent forms of prayer, for families as well as for private persons;* which you may use, at least at first, with great profit. And if it be too laborious to you to learn them by heart, or if having learnt them you dare not trust your memory, what should forbid your reading them reverently and devoutly? I hope I shall give no offence to any good Christian by saying, but on this occasion I should offend my conscience by not saying, that I have long thought an irreconcilable aversion to forms of prayer, even of human composition, as vain a superstition as a passionate attachment to them. And if any had rather that a family should be prayerless, than that a well chosen form should be gravely and solemnly read in it, I think he judges as absurdly, as if he would rather see them starving to death, than fed out of a dish whose materials or shape are disagreeable to him. The main thing is, that God be reverently and sincerely adored, that suitable blessings, temporal and spiritual, be sought from him for ourselves and others, and cordial thanksgivings returned to him for the various gifts of his continual bounty: and if this be done, the circumstances of doing it, though I cannot think them quite indifferent, are comparatively of small importance. I know by sure experience, in a great variety of instances, that it is very possible for Christians of no extraordinary genius, and with a very low education, to acquit themselves honourably in prayer without the assistance of forms: and they who at first need them may, and probably, if they seriously set about it, would, soon outgrow that

* I must beg leave to [illegible] Dodd [illegible] Prayer Book, [illegible] Mr. Wesley's [illegible] Manual [illegible] Family Religion [illegible] Prayers [illegible] Amen.

need. But if they did not, God might be glorified, and families edified, by the continued use of such helps. And on the whole, if it be indeed come to this, that you will rather sacrifice all the benefits of family prayer, than submit to the trouble of reading, or appointing another to read, a well composed address, which perhaps, with a small portion of Scripture before it, might not take up one quarter of an hour's time, indeed, indeed, you must be condemned by God, and your own conscience. In such a view both must testify, that it is neither want of leisure, nor want of ability, that prevents your discharging your duty, but a stupid indifference about it, or rather a wretched aversion to it; the natural consequence of which might, if a little reflected upon, be sufficient to throw the most careless and arrogant sinner into an awful alarm, if not a trembling consternation.

I apprehend, that the most plausible objections have now been canvassed; for I suppose, few will be so weak and cowardly as to plead,

5. "That their domestics will not submit to the introduction of such orders as these."

But as this may be secretly thought of, where it would not be pleaded, especially where these duties have unhappily been omitted when families were first formed, and in their most flexible and pliant state, I will bestow a few words on this head.

And here I must desire, that you would not rashly conclude this to be the case with respect to your own. Do not think so unkindly of your domestics, if they be not extremely wicked indeed, as to imagine they would be secretly discontented with spending a little time daily in hearing the word of God, and being present at your domestic devotion; much less should you allow yourself to think, till it appears in fact, that they will have the arrogance openly to dispute so reasonable a determination as this. Perhaps, on the contrary, they are even now secretly wishing that God would put it into your heart to make the attempt; and thinking, with a kind of tender regret, "Why are we denied such a blessing, when the members of this and that family in the neighbourhood are favoured with it?"

But if it be indeed as you suppose, that they would think of it with a secret aversion, and come into it with apparent reluctance, if they can be induced to come into it at all; you would do well to reflect, whether this profaneness and perverseness may not, in a great measure at least, be owing to that very neglect which I am now pressing you to reform! Which if it be, it ought certainly to convince you in the most powerful and effectual manner, of the necessity of endeavouring to repair as soon as possible the mischief already done. And if there be really an opposition, you ought to let any in whom you discover it know, that your measures are fixed, and that you cannot and will not resign that just authority, which the laws of God and man give you in your own house, to the petulancy of their humour, or the impiety of their unhappy temper. Make the trial, whether they will dare to break with you, rather than submit to so easy a condition, as that of being present at your hours of family worship. If it be a servant that disputes it, you will no doubt think it a great blessing to your family to rid it of so detestable a member, in that relation. And if it be a child, grown up to years that should be years of discretion, that sets himself against this reformation, (and it is not possible that any others should oppose you,) though it is certain, that, wherever such a son of Belial be, he must be a great grief to your heart, you will be delivered from a great deal of distress, which the sight of his wickedness must daily give you, by refusing him a place in your own family, which he would only disgrace and corrupt, and leaving him to practise those irregularities and scandals which always go along with such a presumptuous contempt of religion, any where else rather than under your own roof.

I can think of but one objection more, and that is,

6. "That you may not know how to introduce a practice which you have so long neglected."

But this is an objection so very soon removed, that I hope, if nothing else lie in the way, your family will not continue another week in the unhappy circumstances in which your negligence has hitherto kept it. I were unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel, if, whatever my other engagements are, I were not willing to give you my utmost assistance, as soon as possible, in so good a work as the reformation of this great and lamentable evil. Far from thinking it a trouble to visit you, and spend an hour with you upon such an occasion; who would not esteem it a refreshment, and a blessing, to come and inform your domestics, when gathered together for this purpose, how wise and happy a resolution you had taken, to represent the reason they have to rejoice in it, and to bless God who had inspired you with it? And how sweet a work would it be to perform it, as for the first time, imploring the blessings of Providence and grace on you and yours, and entreating those assistances of his Holy Spirit, which may qualify you more abundantly for discharging your peculiar part in it, and may render it the successful means of planting, or of supporting and animating, a principle of true religion in every soul under your care! Nor would the joy and delight be confined to the minutes spent with you at such a season; it would be carried home to the study, and to the house of God, and the very remembrance of it would, for years to come, encourage to other attempts of usefulness, and strengthen our hands in the work of the Lord.

And oh, my dear friend, whoever you are, be not ashamed that a minister should on this occasion tell your children and servants, that you are sensible of your former neglect, and are determined, in the strength of God, to practise a duty, which it has indeed been criminal hitherto to omit. This is a mean and unworthy shame, and would prevent our reforming evils which are indeed shameful. It will be a glory to you, to be willing and solicitous to revive languishing religion; a glory, to give to other families an example, which, if they have the wisdom and courage to follow it, will undoubtedly bring down a rich variety of blessings on themselves, and, if followed by considerable numbers, on the public. At least, it will be an honour to you in the sight of men, and what is infinitely more, in the sight of God, to have made the generous effort; and not to make the guilty neglect of former years an excuse for continuing to neglect, what it should rather be a powerful argument immediately to practise.

But I would by no means insist upon it, that divine worship should be introduced into your family in the particular manner I have recommended. Use your own judgment, and pursue your own inclination; so that it be but effectually and immediately done. You may perhaps think it convenient to call them together, and read over this letter to them; telling them at the conclusion, that you are in your conscience convinced there is reason in it which cannot be answered, and that therefore you are resolved to act agreeably to it. You may then proceed to read a portion of Scripture, and to pray with them in such a manner as you may think most expedient. But in whatever manner it be done, you will remember, that it must be with reverence and solemnity, and with unfeigned fervour of devotion, as in the sight of the heart-searching God. And you will further remember, that when once introduced, it must be resolutely and constantly carried on; for to cast out this heavenly guest, will in some degree be more shameful, than not to admit it. But I hope, sweet experience of the pleasure of these duties will be instead of a thousand arguments, to engage your adherence to them. May God give you resolution immediately to make the attempt, and may he assist and accept you, and scatter down every desirable blessing of providence and of grace on you and yours! So that this day (for I hope it will be introduced this very day) may become memorable in your lives, as a season from whence you may date a prosperity and a joy hitherto unknown, how happy soever you may have been in former years: for very imperfect, I am sure, must that domestic happiness be, in which domestic religion has no part.

How shall I congratulate myself, if in consequence of the representation and address I have now been making to you, I may be the blessed instrument in the divine hand of inspiring you with such a resolution! What an additional bond will then be added to our friendship, while God continues us together in life! Yea, what an everlasting bond of a nobler friendship, in a future state; where it will be, before the throne of God, my joy to have given such admonitions as these, and yours, faithfully and obediently to have received them!

But if after all you will not be persuaded, but will hearken to the voice of cowardice, and sloth, and irreligion, in defiance of so many awakening and affecting reasons, you must answer it at large. If your children and servants grow up in the neglect of God, and pierce your heart with those sorrows, which such servants, and especially such children, are like to occasion; if they raise profane and profligate families; if they prove the curse of their country, as well as the torment and ruin of those most intimately related to them; the guilt is in part yours, and (I repeat it again) you must answer it to God at the great day, that you have omitted the proper and appointed method of preventing such fatal evils. In the mean time, you must answer the omission to your own conscience; which probably has not been easy in former days, and in future days may be yet more unquiet. Yes, Sir, the memory of this address may continue to torment you, if it cannot reform you: and if you do not forsake the house of God, as well as exclude God and his worship from your own house, you will meet with new wounds; for new exhortations and admonitions will arm reflection with new reproaches. And in this uncomfortable manner you will probably go on, till what has been the grief and shame of your life, become the affliction of your dying bed; nor dare I presume to assure you, that God will answer your last cries for pardon. The best you can expect under the consciousness of this guilt is, to pass trembling to your final doom:—but whatever that doom be, you must acquit your minister who has given you this faithful warning;* and this letter, transcribed as it were in the records of the Divine Omniscience, shall testify, that a matter of so great importance hath not been wholly neglected, hath not been coldly and slightly urged, by,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,
and faithful servant,
in our common Lord,

Northampton, P. DODDRIDGE.
December 20, 1749.

* If this letter should be presented by any of my brethren as the ministers to any of their hearers, they may easily see, that this expression is applicable to them, as well as to those who may receive it from my hands.

POSTSCRIPT.

To prevent, as far as possible, any objection which might arise from not having any proper form just at hand, I shall here subjoin two which I will recommend to those who may happen not to be better provided. The first is, indeed, so far as I know, pretty peculiar; being intended for a family into which prayer is just going to be introduced, after having been long neglected. The other is for morning or evening, with such proper variations to suit either as common sense will direct. And I desire it may be observed, that it may well be used as a directory to those, who do not choose to use it as a form. And I appehend it may be most serviceable in this view; as my desire to reduce it within narrow limits, and yet to suggest as many thoughts as possible, hath obliged me to such conciseness of expression, that the ideas are carried faster than many capacities may conveniently admit. But I pray God to enlarge your heart, that you may expatiate upon these hints to your own edification, and that of all those that join with you.

A PRAYER,

Which may be used as an introduction to a stated course of Family Prayer, where it hath been formerly neglected.

O most great and glorious God! When we consider thee as the gracious Author of all those mercies which we enjoy, in our persons and in our family, we have great reason to humble ourselves before thee, that we have not more solemnly acknowledged that goodness on which we have so long and so comfortably subsisted. Justly mightest thou, O thou Almighty Jehovah, have poured out thy fury upon those, that herein have acted as if they knew thee not, even upon this family which hath not called on thy name. But confessing and lamenting this our sinful and inexcusable neglect, we earnestly entreat thee, through Jesus Christ, to pardon it, and to accept and strengthen the resolution which, in dependence on thy grace, we would now form, to be for the future diligent in it, and to do all we can in our respective stations to encourage and support it.

And we entreat thee to bless those religious opportunities, which as a family we may enjoy. Enable us to hear thy word with due attention: open our minds to all the instructions we receive from it, and bow our hearts to humble obedience.

Be favourably present with us, when we are offering our addresses to thy throne! While we are adoring thine infinite perfections, may we feel a reverent and joyful sense of them upon our hearts! While we confess our sins before thee, may we inwardly abhor them, and mourn over them, and be inspired with firm resolutions that we will never return to them any more, but will guard against every appearance of evil! Excite in our souls earnest desires after those spiritual blessings which we ask at thine hands! May we intercede for others with fervent charity! May we acknowledge thy mercies with the most lively gratitude, and devote ourselves to thee with full purpose of heart!

And on the whole, may every one of us find the divine life growing and advancing in our souls by every opportunity of this nature, that we may rejoice in each other and in thee; and that true religion being firmly established in our own hearts, may by our means be communicated to others, so far as our influence over them may extend; till at length, having worshipped thee together in such institutions as these in an holy and acceptable manner, we may join that large and blessed family above, which is for ever rejoicing in thy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thine Holy Spirit, be everlasting praises. Amen!

A PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

To be used either morning or evening, with such variations as may easily be understood by any who are able to read it.

Most Great, Eternal, and Ever-blessed God! We, thine unworthy creatures, Adoration desire at this time with all humility to bow ourselves down in thine awful and majestic presence, acknowledging thine infinite perfections and glories. —[We adore thee as the first and the last, the greatest and the best, of beings; who art originally and necessarily possessed of knowledge and power, wisdom and righteousness, holiness and truth, mercy and goodness, in degrees which no other being can conceive.]—We pay thee our homage, as the author and support of universal nature, the Lord and life of the creation. We acknowledge ourselves thy creatures, whose bodies and souls have been formed by thine hand, and continually maintained and defended by thy care and favour.

Most justly mightest thou therefore, Confession O our heavenly Father, have expected from us the most constant gratitude, duty, and obedience: but we humbly confess before thee, (and we desire to do it with the deepest humiliation and shame, remorse and sorrow,) that we have been very much wanting in those returns; yea, that we have all most grievously offended thee.—[We confess, O thou Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, that we are polluted and guilty creatures, and so most unworthy and unfit to appear in thy presence.]—We acknowledge, O Lord, that we were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us; and that we have, from our very childhood, been renewing our provocations and transgressions in our thoughts, our words, and actions; and all these attended with circumstances of high aggravation. [We own and lament, O thou most gracious Sovereign, that we have in numberless

instances, negligently, yea, and presumptuously, broken those wise and holy laws which thou gavest us for our good; and that by the breach of them we have deserved thy righteous displeasure.]—So that we might have been made examples of justice, and spectacles of misery, to all thy rational creation. —[We might long since have been cut off from this pleasant abode which thy goodness has assigned us, and been sent down to everlasting darkness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.]

Petition for pardon and grace in Christ.

But we humbly implore thy pardon and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord, thine only-begotten and well-beloved Son; who hath, by thine appointment, O compassionate Father, visited this world of ours, not only to give it the most excellent instructions, confirmed by the most astonishing miracles, and recommended by the most amiable example; but also to redeem us to God by his blood, and to offer up his own life a sacrifice for us.—He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification: and as he is now ascended into heaven, there to make a prevailing intercession for all that come unto God through him, we presume to approach thy sacred presence with all becoming regards to him, humbly pleading that atoning blood which he shed on the cross, and that all-perfect merit and righteousness of his, by which alone sinners may draw near unto thee with acceptance. And we entreat thee for his sake, and in regard to our relation to him, fully and freely to forgive us all our numberless transgressions, and to be graciously reconciled to us; yea, to take us, unworthy as we are, into the number of thy dear children. For his sake we also humbly entreat thee to free us from the power of sin, as well as from its guilt. Shed down, O thou God of all grace, thy Holy Spirit upon our hearts in a rich abundance, to inspire us with a hatred of every thing that is displeasing to thee, and to form us to a love of universal goodness, and a desire of making continual improvements in it!

[Fill us, O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, with a fervent love to thy blessed self. In all things may we be obedient to thy holy precepts, and submissive to thy wise and gracious disposal! May we be united to Christ by a sincere faith, which shall work by love, and show itself in keeping his commandments, as well as trusting his atonement, intercession, and grace! May we be always led by the Holy Spirit of God, and cherish his influence on our hearts as the Spirit of holiness and of love! To our brethren of mankind may we be strictly just, and affectionately kind, doing to others as we could reasonably desire they should do to us, and rejoicing in every opportunity of advancing their temporal or spiritual happiness!]

While we continue here in this uncertain world, give us, if it be thy blessed will, food to eat and raiment to put on, health of body and cheerfulness of mind, and whatever other enjoyments thou seest necessary to make our journey through life comfortable! But let us not have our portion on earth! May our hearts be more and more indifferent to it, and our views continually raised above it!—[May we learn to govern with strict authority our appetites and passions, and to deny ourselves wherever the precepts of thy gospel require it! On the whole, may every part of our conduct, in every relation and circumstance of life, adorn religion; and may the lustre of our good works engage many around us to glorify our Father in heaven!]—May we continually remember the shortness of time, and the importance of eternity; and behave in such a manner, that should we be summoned away ever so suddenly, death may not be a terrible, but a joyful, surprise! Support us, O Lord, in our dying behaviour! Receive our departing spirits to the embraces of thy mercy, and give us a triumphant part in the resurrection of the just!

Intercession

We pray for the advancement of thy gospel in the world, and for the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to the faith as it is in Jesus. We pray, O Lord, for the progress and improvement of the reformation, abroad and at home. We affectionately recommend to thee our rightful sovereign king George, and all the branches of his family; entreating thee to continue to us, by their means, the invaluable blessing of the protestant succession. We entreat thee by thy grace to animate all, who are distinguished by power, riches, or other advantages, that they may improve all their talents for the public good: and we earnestly pray, that the ministers of thy gospel of every denomination, may with united affection, ardent zeal, and eminent success, be carrying on the work of the Lord!

May it please thee, O thou God of mercy, to spread among Christians of every profession, a spirit of forbearance, candour, and love; and to visit all that are in any kind of affliction, whether personal or relative, of mind, body, or estate! Graciously support them under their sorrows, and in thine own time send them deliverance!

We beseech thee to bless us as a family; whether we preside over it, or belong to it, as children, sojourners, or servants, may we all be found in a faithful discharge of our duty to thee, and to each other! May our united and retired devotions be so performed, as to have the happiest influence on our temper and our conduct!

Thanksgiving

And now, O most gracious and merciful Father, we desire with all our hearts to bless and adore thine holy name, for all thy great and unmerited goodness to us, and to the whole human race. We praise thee for our creation and preserv-

ation, for health and ease, for food and raiment, for liberty and safety, for friends and success; and above all, for our redemption, for the inestimable privilege of approaching to thee through a Mediator, and for the rich and full provision thou hast made in him for the forgiveness of our daily sins, for our receiving all the supplies of grace we stand in need of here, and our enjoying everlasting happiness hereafter. And under a sense of thy mercies, we desire to devote ourselves to thee as the Lord our God, and renew our covenant with thee through our Lord Jesus Christ; humbly resolving, by the assistance of thy Spirit and grace, to serve thee with all good fidelity unto the end of our lives.

We particularly bless thee for the mercies of the day [or night] past, and would humbly commit ourselves to thy gracious protection and favour this night, [or day,] entreating thee to guard us from all evil, and to grant, that at our next assembling together we may have reason to unite our praises for the continuance of thy goodness. And may we be perpetually advancing in our preparation for that heavenly world, where we hope to worship thee without any of those imperfections which now attend us: which we ask and hope, through the merits of thy Son Christ Jesus, in whom we have righteousness and strength, and in whose name and words we conclude our addresses, calling on thee as Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen!

N. B. As this prayer may be [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

SOME REMARKABLE PASSAGES

IN

THE LIFE

OF

THE HON. COLONEL JAMES GARDINER,

WHO WAS SLAIN AT THE BATTLE OF PRESTONPANS, SEPTEMBER, 21, 1745

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

RELATING TO THE

ANCIENT FAMILY OF THE MUNROS OF FOWLIS.

TO

DAVID GARDINER, ESQ.

CORNET IN SIR JOHN COPE'S REGIMENT OF DRAGOONS.

DEAR SIR,

WHILE my heart is following you, with a truly paternal solicitude, through all the dangers of military life, in which you are thus early engaged, anxious for your safety amidst the instruments of death, and the far more dangerous allurements of vice; I feel a peculiar pleasure in being able at length, though after such long delays, to put into your hands the Memoirs with which I now present you. They contain many particulars, which would have been worthy of your attentive notice, had they related to a person of the most distant nation or age; but they will, I doubt not, command your peculiar regard, as they are sacred to the memory of that excellent man from whom you had the honour to derive your birth, and by whose generous and affectionate care you have been laid under all the obligations which the best of fathers could confer on a most beloved son.

Here, Sir, you see a gentleman, who with all the advantages of a liberal and religious education, added to every natural accomplishment that could render him most agreeable, entered, before he had attained the stature of a man, on those arduous and generous services to which you are devoted, and behaved in them with a gallantry and courage which will always give a splendour to his name among the British soldiery, and render him an example to all officers of his rank. But, alas! amidst all the intrepidity of the martial hero, you see him vanquished by the blandishments of pleasure, and in chace of it plunging himself into follies and vices, for which no want of education or genius could have been a sufficient excuse. You behold him urging the ignoble and fatal pursuit, unmoved by the terrors which death was continually darting around him, and the most signal deliverances by which Providence again and again rescued him from those terrors; till at length he was reclaimed by an ever-memorable interposition of divine grace. Then you have the pleasure of seeing him become in good earnest a convert to Christianity, and by speedy advances growing up into one of its brightest ornaments: his mind continually filled with the great ideas which the gospel of our Redeemer suggests, and bringing the blessed influence of its sublime principles into every relation of military and civil, of public and domestic, life. You trace him persevering in a steady and uniform course of goodness, through a long series of honourable and prosperous years, the delight of all that were so happy as to know him, and, in his sphere, the most faithful guardian of his country; till at last, worn out with honourable labours, and broken with infirmities which they had hastened upon him before the time, you see him forgetting them at once at the call of duty and Providence; with all the generous ardour of his most vigorous days rushing on the enemies of religion and liberty, sustaining their shock with the most deliberate fortitude, when deserted by those that should have supported him, and cheerfully sacrificing the little remains of a mortal life in the triumphant views of a glorious immortality.

This, Sir, is the noble object I present to your view; and you will, I hope, fix your eye continually upon it, and will never allow yourself for one day to forget, that this illustrious man is Colonel Gardiner, your ever-honoured father; who having approved his fidelity to the death, and received a crown of life, seems, as it were, by what you here read, to be calling out to you from amidst the cloud of witnesses with which you are surrounded, and urging you by every generous, tender, filial sentiment, to mark the footsteps of his Christian race, and strenuously to maintain that combat where the victory is through divine grace certain, and the prize an eternal kingdom in the heavens.

The last number of the Appendix introduces a most worthy triumvirate of your father's friends, following him through the same heroic path, to an end like his, and with pleasure pouring forth their lives in

blood, for the rescue and preservation of their dearer country. And I trust, the eloquence of their examples will be prevalent with many, to emulate the many virtues for which they were conspicuous.

My hopes, Sir, that all these powerful motives will especially have their full efficacy on you, are greatly encouraged by the certainty which I have of your being well acquainted with the evidence of Christianity in its full extent; a criminal ignorance of which, in the midst of great advantages for learning them, leaves so many of our young people a prey to deism, and so to vice and ruin, which generally bring up its rear. My life would be a continued burthen to me, if I had not a conscientiousness in the sight of God, that during the years in which the important trust of your education was committed to my care, I had laid before you the proofs both of natural and revealed religion, in what I assuredly esteem to be, with regard to the judgment, if they are carefully examined, an irresistible light: and that I had endeavoured to attend them with those addresses which might be most likely to impress your heart. You have not, dear Sir, forgotten, and I am confident you can never entirely forget, the assiduity with which I have laboured to form your mind, not only to what might be ornamental to you in human life, but above all, to a true taste of what is really excellent, and an early contempt of those vanities by which the generality of our youth, especially in your station, are debased, enervated, and undone. My private as well as public addresses for this purpose will, I know, be remembered by you, and the tears of tenderness with which they have so often been accompanied; and may they be so remembered, that they who are most tenderly concerned, may be comforted under the loss of such an inestimable friend as Colonel Gardiner, by seeing that his character, in all its most amiable and resplendent parts, lives in you; and that how difficult soever it may be to act up to that height of expectation with which the eyes of the world will be fixed on the son of such a father, you are, in the strength of divine grace, attempting it; at least are following him with generous emulation and with daily solicitude, that the steps may be less unequal!

May the Lord God of your father, and I will add, of both your pious and honourable parents, animate your heart more and more with such views and sentiments as these! May he guard your life amidst every scene of danger, and be a protection and blessing to those that are yet unborn; and may he give you, in some far distant period of time, to resign it by a gentler dissolution than the hero from whom you sprung, or, if unerring wisdom appoint otherwise, to end it with equal glory!

I am, dear Sir,
Your ever faithful, affectionate friend,
and obliged humble servant,

Northampton, July 1, 1747. P. DODDRIDGE.

SOME REMARKABLE PASSAGES

IN

THE LIFE

OF THE

HON. COLONEL JAMES GARDINER.

§ 1. When I promised the public some larger account of the life and character of this illustrious person, than I could conveniently insert in my sermon on the sad event of his death, I was secure that if Providence continued my capacity of writing, I should not wholly disappoint the expectation. For I was furnished with a variety of particulars which appeared to me worthy of general notice, in consequence of that intimate friendship with which he had honoured me during the six last years of his life; a friendship, which led him to open his heart to me in repeated conversations with an unbounded confidence, (as he then assured me, beyond what he had used with any other man living,) so far as religious experiences were concerned; and I had also received several very valuable letters from him, during the time of our absence from each other, which contained most genuine and edifying traces of his Christian character. But I hoped further to learn many valuable particulars from the papers of his own closet, and from his letters to other friends, as well as from what they more circumstantially knew concerning him; I therefore determined to delay the execution of my promise till I could enjoy these advantages for performing it in the most satisfactory manner; nor have I, on the whole, reason to regret that determination.

§ 2. I shall not trouble the reader with all the causes which concurred to retard these expected assistances for almost a whole year; the chief of them were, the tedious languishing illness of his afflicted lady, through whose hands it was proper the papers should pass; together with the confusion into which the rebels had thrown them when they ransacked his seat at Bankton, where most of them were deposited. But having now received such of them as have escaped their voracious hands, and could conveniently be collected and transmitted, I set myself with the greatest pleasure to perform what I esteem, not merely a tribute of gratitude to the memory of my invaluable friend, (though never was the memory of any mortal man more precious and sacred to me,) but of duty to God and to my fellow-creatures; for I have a most cheerful hope that the narrative I am now to write will, under the divine blessing, be the means of spreading, what of all things in the world every benevolent heart will most desire to spread, a warm and lively sense of religion.

§ 3. My own heart has been so much edified and animated by what I have read in the memoirs of persons who have been eminent for wisdom and piety, that I cannot but wish the treasure may be more and more increased; and I would hope the world may gather the like valuable fruits from the Life I am now attempting; not only as it will contain very singular circumstances, which may excite a general curiosity, but as it comes attended with some other particular advantages.

§ 4. The reader is here to survey a character of such eminent and various goodness, as might demand veneration, and inspire him with a desire to imitate it too, had it appeared in the obscurest rank: but it will surely command some peculiar regard when viewed in so elevated and important a station; especially as it shone not in ecclesiastical, but

military, life, where the temptations are so many, and the prevalency of the contrary character so great, that it may seem no inconsiderable praise and felicity to be free from dissolute vice, and to retain what in most other professions might be esteemed only a mediocrity of virtue. It may surely, with the highest justice, be expected that the title and bravery of Colonel Gardiner will invite many of our officers and soldiers, to whom his name has been long honourable and dear, to peruse this account of him with some peculiar attention; in consequence of which it may be a means of increasing the number, and brightening the character, of those who are already adorning their office, their country, and their religion; and of reclaiming those who will see rather what they ought to be than what they are. On the whole, to the gentlemen of the sword I would particularly offer these memoirs, as theirs by so distinguished a title; yet I am firmly persuaded there are none whose office is so sacred, or whose proficiency in the religious life is so advanced, but they may find something to demand their thankfulness, and to awaken their emulation.

§ 5. Colonel James Gardiner, of whom we write, was the son of Captain Patrick Gardiner, of the family of Torwoodhead, by Mrs. Mary Hodge, of the family of Gladsmuir. The captain, who was master of a handsome estate, served many years in the army of King William and Queen Anne, and died abroad with the British forces in Germany, quickly after the battle of Hochstet, through the fatigues he underwent in the duties of that celebrated campaign. He had a company in the regiment of foot, once commanded by Colonel Hodge, his valiant brother-in-law, who was slain at the head of that regiment (my memorial from Scotland says) at the battle of Steenkirk, which was fought in the year 1692.

§ 6. Mrs. Gardiner, our Colonel's mother, was a lady of a very valuable character; but it pleased God to exercise her with very uncommon trials: for she not only lost her husband and her brother in the service of their country, as before related, but also her eldest son, Mr. Robert Gardiner, on the day which completed the 16th year of his age, at the siege of Namur, in 1695. But there is great reason to believe God blessed these various and heavy afflictions, as the means of forming her to that eminent degree of piety which will render her memory honourable as long as it continues.

§ 7. Her second son, the worthy person of whom I am now to give a more particular account, was born at Carriden, in Linlithgowshire, on the 10th of January, A. D. 1687-8; the memorable year of that glorious revolution which he justly esteemed among the happiest of all events. So that when he was slain in the defence of those liberties which God then by so gracious a providence rescued from utter destruction, i. e. on the 21st of September, 1745, he was aged 57 years, 8 months, and 11 days.

§ 8. The annual return of his birth-day was observed by him, in the latter and better years of his life, in a manner very different from what is commonly practised: for, instead of making it a day of festivity, I am told, he rather distinguished it as a season of more than ordinary humiliation before God; both in commemoration of those mercies which he received in the first opening of life, and under an affectionate sense, as well of his long alienation from the great Author and support of his being, as of the many imperfections which he lamented, in the best of his days and services.

§ 9. I have not met with many things remarkable concerning the early years of his life, only that his mother took care to instruct him with great tenderness and affection in the principles of true Christianity. He was also trained up in humane literature at the school at Linlithgow, where he made a very considerable progress in the languages. I remember to have heard him quote some passages of the Latin classics very pertinently; though his employment in life, and the various turns which his mind took under different impulses in succeeding years, prevented him from cultivating such studies.

§ 10. The good effects of his mother's prudent and exemplary care were not so conspicuous as she wished and hoped, in the younger part of her son's life; yet there is great reason to believe they were not entirely lost. As they were probably the occasion of many convictions, which in his younger years were overborne; so I doubt not, that when religious impressions took that strong hold of his heart, which they afterwards did, that stock of knowledge which had been so early laid up in his mind was found of considerable service. And I have heard him make the observation, as an encouragement to parents and other pious friends, to do their duty, and to hope for those good consequences of it, which may not immediately appear.

§ 11. Could his mother, or a very religious aunt, (of whose good instructions and exhortations I have often heard him speak with pleasure,) have prevailed, he would not have thought of a military life; from which, it is no wonder, these ladies endeavoured to dissuade him, considering the mournful experience they had of the dangers attending it, and the dear relatives they had lost already by it. But it suited his taste; and the ardour of his spirit, animated by the persuasions of a friend who greatly urged it,* was not to be restrained. Nor will the reader wonder that, thus excited and supported, it easily overbore their tender remonstrances, when he knows that this lively youth fought three duels before he attained to the stature of a man, in one

* I suppose this to have been Brigadier-General Rur, who had from his childhood a peculiar affection for him.

of which, when he was but eight years old, he received from a boy much older than himself, a wound in his right cheek, the scar of which was always very apparent. The false sense of honour which instigated him to it, might seem indeed something excusable in those unripened years, and considering the profession of his father, brother, and uncle; but I have often heard him mention this rashness with that regret, which the reflection would naturally give to so wise and good a man in the maturity of life. And I have been informed that, after his remarkable conversion, he declined accepting a challenge, with this calm and truly great reply, which, in a man of his experienced bravery, was exceeding graceful: "I fear sinning, though you know I do not fear fighting."

§ 12. He served first as a cadet, which must have been very early; and then, at fourteen years old, he bore an ensign's commission in a Scotch regiment in the Dutch service; in which he continued till the year 1702, when (if my information be right) he received an ensign's commission from Queen Anne, which he bore in the battle of Ramilies, being then in the 19th year of his age. In this ever-memorable action he received a wound in his mouth by a musket ball, which hath often been reported to be the occasion of his conversion. That report was a mistaken one: but as some very remarkable circumstances attended this affair, which I have had the pleasure of hearing more than once from his own mouth, I hope my reader will excuse me if I give him so uncommon a story at large.

§ 13. Our young officer was of a party in the forlorn hope, and was commanded on what seemed almost a desperate service, to dispossess the French of the church-yard at Ramilies, where a considerable number of them were posted to remarkable advantage. They succeeded much better than was expected: and it may well be supposed that Mr. Gardiner, who had before been in several encounters, and had the view of making his fortune to animate the natural intrepidity of his spirit, was glad of such an opportunity of signalizing himself. Accordingly, he had planted his colours on an advanced ground; and while he was calling to his men (probably in that horrid language, which is so peculiar a disgrace to our soldiery, and so absurdly common in such articles of extreme danger) he received a shot into his mouth; which, without beating out any of his teeth, or touching the fore part of his tongue, went through his neck, and came out about an inch and a half on the left side of the vertebræ. Not feeling at first the pain of the stroke, he wondered what was become of the ball, and in the wildness of his surprise began to suspect he had swallowed it; but dropping soon after, he traced the passage of it by his finger, when he could discover it no other way: which I mention as one circumstance, among many which occur, to make it probable that the greater part of those who fall in battle by these instruments of death, feel very little anguish from the most mortal wounds.

§ 14. This accident happened about five or six in the evening, on the 23d day of May, in the year 1706; and the army pursuing its advantages against the French, without ever regarding the wounded, (which was, it seems, the duke of Marlborough's constant method,) our young officer lay all night in the field, agitated, as may well be supposed, with a great variety of thoughts. He assured me, that when he reflected upon the circumstances of his wound, that a ball should, as he then conceived it, go through his head without killing him, he thought God had preserved him by miracle; and therefore assuredly concluded that he should live, abandoned and desperate as his state then seemed to be. Yet (which to me appeared very astonishing) he had little thoughts of humbling himself before God, and returning to him after the wanderings of a life so licentiously begun. But expecting to recover, his mind was taken up with contrivances to secure his gold, of which he had a pretty deal about him; and he had recourse to a very odd expedient, which proved successful. Expecting to be stripped, he first took a handful of that clotted gore, of which he was frequently obliged to clear his mouth, or he would have been choked, and putting it into his left hand, he took out his money, (which I think was about nineteen pistoles,) and shutting his hand, and besmearing the back part of it with blood, he kept it in this position till the blood dried in such a manner, that his hand could not easily fall open, though any sudden surprise should happen, in which he might lose the presence of mind which that concealment otherwise would have required.

§ 15. In the morning the French, who were masters of that spot, though their forces were defeated at some distance, came to plunder the slain; and seeing him to appearance almost expiring, one of them was just applying a sword to his breast, to destroy the little remainder of life; when in the critical moment, upon which all the extraordinary events of such a life as his afterwards proved were suspended, a cordelier, who attended the plunderers, interposed, taking him by his dress for a Frenchman; and said, "Do not kill that poor child." Our young soldier heard all that passed, though he was not able to speak one word; and opening his eyes, made a sign for something to drink. They gave him a sup of some spirituous liquor, which happened to be at hand; by which, he said, he found a more sensible refreshment than he could remember from any thing he had tasted either before or since. Then signifying to the friar to lean down his ear to his mouth, he employed the

first efforts of his feeble breath in telling him (what, alas! was a contrived falsehood) that he was nephew to the governor of Huy, a neutral town in the neighbourhood, and that, if he could take any method of conveying him thither, he did not doubt but his uncle would liberally reward him. He had indeed a friend at Huy, (who, I think, was governor, and, if I mistake not, had been acquainted with the captain, his father,) from whom he expected a kind reception: but the relation was only pretended. On hearing this, they laid him on a sort of hand-barrow, and sent him by a file of musqueteers towards the place; but the men lost their way, and got into a wood towards the evening, in which they were obliged to continue all night. The poor patient's wound being still undressed, it is not to be wondered that by this time it raged violently. The anguish of it engaged him earnestly to beg, that they would either kill him outright, or leave him there to die, without the torture of any further motion; and indeed they were obliged to rest for a considerable time, on account of their own weariness. Thus he spent the second night in the open air, without any thing more than a common bandage to stanch the blood. He hath often mentioned it as a most astonishing providence, that he did not bleed to death; which, under God, he ascribed to the remarkable coldness of these two nights.

§ 16. Judging it quite unsafe to attempt carrying him to Huy, from whence they were now several miles distant, his convoy took him, early in the morning, to a convent in the neighbourhood; where he was hospitably received, and treated with great kindness and tenderness. But the cure of his wound was committed to an ignorant barber-surgeon, who lived near the house; the best shift that could then be made, at a time when it may easily be supposed persons of ability in their profession had their hands full of employment. The tent which this artist applied, was almost like a peg driven into the wound: and gentlemen of skill and experience, when they came to hear of the manner in which he was treated, wondered how he could possibly survive such management. But by the blessing of God on these applications, rough as they were, he recovered in a few months. The lady abbess, who called him her son, treated him with the affection and care of a mother; and he always declared, that every thing which he saw within these walls was conducted with the strictest decency and decorum. He received a great many devout admonitions from the ladies there; and they would fain have persuaded him to acknowledge what they thought so miraculous a deliverance, by embracing the catholic faith, as they were pleased to call it. But they could not succeed: for though no religion lay near his heart, yet he had too much of the spirit of a gentleman lightly to change that form of religion, which he wore (as it were) loose about him; as well as too much good sense, to swallow those monstrous absurdities of popery, which immediately presented themselves to him, unacquainted as he was with the niceties of the controversy.

§ 17. When his liberty was regained by an exchange of prisoners, and his health thoroughly established, he was far from rendering unto the Lord according to that wonderful display of divine mercy which he had experienced. I know very little of the particulars of those wild, thoughtless, and wretched years, which lay between the 19th and the 30th of his life; except it be, that he frequently experienced the divine goodness in renewed instances, particularly in preserving him in several hot military actions, in all which he never received so much as a wound after this, forward as he was in tempting danger; and yet, that all these years were spent in an entire alienation from God, and an eager pursuit of animal pleasure, as his supreme good. The series of criminal amours, in which he was almost incessantly engaged during this time, must probably have afforded some remarkable adventures and occurrences; but the memory of them is perished. Nor do I think it unworthy notice here, that amidst all the intimacy of our friendship, and the many hours of cheerful as well as serious converse which we spent together, I never remember to have heard him speak of any of these intrigues, otherwise than, in the general, with deep and solemn abhorrence. This I the rather mention, as it seemed a most genuine proof of his unfeigned repentance; which, I think, there is great reason to suspect, when people seem to take a pleasure in relating and describing scenes of vicious indulgence, which yet they profess to have disapproved and forsaken.

§ 18. Amidst all these pernicious wanderings from the paths of religion, virtue, and happiness, he approved himself so well in his military character, that he was made a lieutenant in that year, viz. 1706: and, I am told, he was very quickly after promoted to a cornet's commission in Lord Stair's regiment of the Scotch Greys; and on the 31st of January, in the year 1714-15, was made captain-lieutenant in Colonel Ker's regiment of dragoons. He had the honour of being known to the Earl of Stair some time before, and was made his aid-de-camp: and when, upon his lordship's being appointed ambassador from his late majesty to the court of France, he made so splendid an entrance into Paris, Captain Gardiner was his master of the horse: and I have been told, that a great deal of the care of that admirably well-adjusted ceremony fell upon him; so that he gained great credit by the manner in which he conducted it. Under the benign influences of his lordship's favour (which to the last day of his life he retained) a captain's com-

mission was procured for him, dated July 22, in the year 1715, in the regiment of dragoons commanded by Colonel Stanhope; (then Earl of Harrington;) and, in the year 1717, he was advanced to the majority of that regiment; in which office he continued till it was reduced, on November the 10th, 1718; when he was put out of commission. But then his majesty, King George I. was so thoroughly apprized of his faithful and important services, that he gave him his sign-manual, entitling him to the first majority that should become vacant, in any regiment of horse or dragoons; which happened, about five years after, to be in Croft's regiment of dragoons, in which he received a commission, dated June the 1st, 1724; and on the 20th of July, the same year, he was made major of an older regiment, commanded by the Earl of Stair.

§ 19. As I am now speaking of so many of his military preferments, I will despatch the account of them by observing, that on the 24th of January, 1729-30, he was advanced to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the same regiment, long under the command of Lord Cadogan; with whose friendship this brave and vigilant officer was also honoured for many years. And he continued in this rank, and regiment, till the 19th of April, 1743, when he received a colonel's commission over a regiment of dragoons, lately commanded by Brigadier Bland; at the head of which he valiantly fell, in the defence of his sovereign and his country, about two years and a half after he received it.

§ 20. We will now return to that period of his life which passed at Paris, the scene of such remarkable and important events. He continued, if I remember right, several years under the roof of the brave and generous Earl of Stair; to whom he endeavoured to approve himself by every instance of diligent and faithful service. And his lordship gave no inconsiderable proof of the dependence which he had upon him, when, in the beginning of the year 1715, he intrusted him with the important despatches, relating to a discovery, which, by a series of admirable policy he had made, of a design which the French king was then forming, for invading Great Britain in favour of the Pretender; in which the French apprehended they were so sure of success, that it seemed a point of friendship in one of the chief counsellors of that court, to dissuade a dependant of his from accepting some employment under his Britannic majesty, when proposed by his envoy there; because it was said, that in less than six weeks there would be a revolution, in favour of what they called the family of the Stuarts. The captain despatched his journey with the utmost speed; a variety of circumstances happily concurred to accelerate it; and they, who remember how soon the regiments which that emergency required were raised and armed, will, I doubt not, esteem it a memorable instance, both of the most cordial zeal in the friends of the government, and of the gracious care of divine Providence, over the House of Hanover, and the British liberties, so incomparably connected with its interest.

§ 21. While Captain Gardiner was at London, in one of the journeys he made upon this occasion, he, with that frankness which was natural to him, and which in those days was not always under the most prudent restraint, ventured to predict, from what he knew of the bad state of the French king's health, that he would not live six weeks. This was made known by some spies who were at St. James's, and came to be reported at the court of Versailles; for he received letters from some friends at Paris, advising him not to return thither, unless he could reconcile himself to a lodging in the Bastile. But he was soon free from that apprehension; for, if I mistake not, before half that time was accomplished Lewis XIV. died;* and, it is generally thought, his death was hastened by a very accidental circumstance, which had some reference to the Captain's prophecy. For the last time he ever dined in public, which was a very little while after the report of it had been made there, he happened to discover our British envoy among the spectators. The penetration of this illustrious person was too great, and his attachment to the interest of his royal master too well known, not to render him very disagreeable to that crafty and tyrannical prince, whom God had so long suffered to be the disgrace of monarchy, and the scourge of Europe. He at first appeared very languid, as indeed he was; but on casting his eye upon the Earl of Stair, he affected to appear before him in a much better state of health than he really was; and therefore, as if he had been awakened on a sudden from some deep reverie, he immediately put himself into an erect posture, called up a laboured vivacity into his countenance, and ate much more heartily than was by any means advisable, repeating it two or three times to a nobleman (I think the Duke of Bourbon) then in waiting, "Methinks I eat very well for a man who is to die so soon."† But this inroad upon that regularity of living, which he had for some time observed, agreed so ill with him, that he never recovered this meal, but died in less than a fortnight. This gave occasion for some humorous people to say, that old Lewis, after all, was killed by a Briton. But if this story be true, which I think there can be no room to doubt, as the colonel, from whom I have often heard it, though absent, could scarce be misinformed, it might more properly be said, that he fell by his own vanity; in which view I thought it so remarkable, as not to be unworthy a place in these memoirs.

* [illegible]

† [illegible]

§ 22. The Captain quickly returned, and continued with small interruptions at Paris at least till the year 1720, and how much longer I do not certainly know. The Earl's favour and generosity made him easy in his affairs, though he was, as has been observed before, part of the time out of commission, by breaking the regiment to which he belonged, of which before he was Major. This was, in all probability, the gayest part of his life, and the most criminal. Whatever wise and good examples he might find in the family where he had the honour to reside, it is certain that the French court, during the regency of the Duke of Orleans, was one of the most dissolute under heaven. What, by a wretched abuse of language, have been called intrigues of love and gallantry, were so entirely to the Major's then degenerate taste, that, if not the whole business, at least the whole happiness, of his life consisted in them; and he had now too much leisure, for one who was so prone to abuse it. His fine constitution, than which perhaps there was hardly ever a better, gave him great opportunities of indulging himself in these excesses; and his good spirits enabled him to pursue his pleasures, of every kind, in so alert and sprightly a manner, that multitudes envied him, and called him, by a dreadful kind of compliment, "The happy rake."

§ 23. Yet still the checks of conscience, and some remaining principles of so good an education, would break in upon his most licentious hours; and I particularly remember he told me, that when some of his dissolute companions were once congratulating him on his most distinguished felicity, a dog happening at that time to come into the room, he could not forbear groaning inwardly, and saying to himself, "Oh that I were that dog!" Such then was his happiness; and such perhaps is that of hundreds more who bear themselves highest in the contempt of religion, and glory in that infamous servitude which they affect to call liberty. But these remonstrances of reason and conscience were in vain; and, in short, he carried things so far, in this wretched part of his life, that I am well assured, some sober English gentlemen, who made no great pretences to religion, how agreeable soever he might have been to them on other accounts, rather declined than sought his company, as fearing they might have been insnared and corrupted by it.

§ 24. Yet I cannot find that, in these most abandoned days, he was fond of drinking. Indeed he never had any natural relish for that kind of intemperance, from which he used to think a manly pride might be sufficient to preserve persons of sense and spirit; as by it they give up every thing that distinguishes them from the meanest of their species, or indeed from animals the most below it. So that, if he ever fell into any excesses of this kind, it was merely out of complaisance to his company, and that he might not appear stiff and singular. His frank, obliging, and generous temper, procured him many friends; and these principles, which rendered him amiable to others, not being under the direction of true wisdom and piety, sometimes made him, in the ways of living he pursued, more uneasy to himself, than he might perhaps have been if he could entirely have overgrown them; especially as he was never a sceptic in his principles, but still retained a secret apprehension, that natural and revealed religion, though he did not much care to think of either, were founded in truth. And with this conviction, his notorious violations of the most essential precepts of both, could not but occasion some secret misgivings of heart. His continual neglect of the great Author of his being, of whose perfections he could not doubt, and to whom he knew himself to be under daily and perpetual obligations, gave him, in some moments of involuntary reflection, inexpressible remorse; and this, at times, wrought upon him to such a degree, that he resolved he would attempt to pay him some acknowledgments. Accordingly for a few mornings he did it; repeating in retirement some passages out of the Psalms, and perhaps other scriptures, which he still retained in his memory; and owning, in a few strong words, the many mercies and deliverances he had received, and the ill returns he had made for them.

§ 25. I find, among the other papers transmitted to me, the following verses, which I have heard him repeat, as what had impressed him a good deal in his unconverted state; and as I suppose they did something towards setting him on this effort towards devotion, and might probably furnish out a part of these orisons, I hope I need make no apology to my reader for inserting them, especially as I do not recollect that I have seen them any where else.

> Attend, my soul! the early birds inspire
> My grov'ling thought with pure celestial fire:
> They from their temp'rate sleep awake, and pay
> Their thankful anthems for the new born day.
> See, how the tuneful lark is mounted high,
> And just like saints the eastern sky!
> He warbles through the fragrant air his lays,
> And seems the heav'nly joys to praise:
> But man, more void of gratitude awakes,
> And gives no thanks for the sweet rest he takes,
> Looks on the glorious rising new kindled flame
> Without one thought of him from whom it came.
> The wretch unhallow'd does the day begin,
> Shakes off his sleep, but shakes not off his sin.

§ 26. But these strains were too devout to continue long in a heart as yet quite unsanctified; for how readily soever he could repeat such acknowledgments of the divine power, presence, and goodness, and own his own follies and faults, he was stopt short by the remonstrances of his conscience, as to the flagrant absurdity of confessing sins he did not desire to forsake, and of pretending to praise God for his mercies, when he did not endeavour to live

to his service, and to behave in such a manner as gratitude, if sincere, would plainly dictate. A model of devotion, where such sentiments made no part, his good sense could not digest; and the use of such language before a heart-searching God, merely as a hypocritical form, while the sentiments of his soul were contrary to it, justly appeared to him such daring profaneness, that, irregular as the state of his mind was, the thought of it struck him with horror. He therefore determined to make no more attempts of this sort; and was perhaps one of the first that deliberately laid aside prayer, from some sense of God's omniscience, and some natural principle of honour and conscience.

§ 27. These secret debates with himself, and ineffectual efforts, would sometimes return: but they were overborne, again and again, by the force of temptation; and it is no wonder that, in consequence of them, his heart grew yet harder. Nor was it softened, or awakened, by some very memorable deliverances, which at this time he received. —He was in extreme danger by a fall from his horse, as he was riding post, I think in the streets of Calais, when going down a hill, the horse threw him over his head, and pitched over him; so that, when he rose, the beast lay beyond him, and almost dead. Yet, though he received not the least harm, it made no serious impression on his mind. In his return from England in the packet-boat, (if I remember right, but a few weeks after the former accident,) a violent storm, that drove them up to Harwich, tossed them from thence for several hours in a dark night on the coast of Holland, and brought them into such extremity, that the captain of the vessel urged him to go to prayers immediately, if he ever intended to do it at all; for he concluded, they would in a few minutes be at the bottom of the sea. In this circumstance he did pray, and that very fervently too: and it was very remarkable, that while he was crying to God for deliverance, the wind fell, and quickly after they arrived at Calais. But the Major was so little affected with what had befallen him, that, when some of his gay friends, on hearing the story, rallied him upon the efficacy of his prayers, he excused himself from the scandal of being thought much in earnest, by saying, "that it was at midnight, an hour when his good mother and aunt were asleep; or else he should have left that part of the business to them." A speech which I should not have mentioned, but as it shows in so lively a view the wretched situation of his mind at that time, though his great deliverance from the power of darkness was then nearly approaching. He recounted these things to me with the greatest humility, as showing how utterly unworthy he was of that miracle of divine grace, by which he was quickly after brought to so true, and so prevalent, a sense of religion.

§ 28. And now I am come to that astonishing part of his story, the account of his conversion; which I cannot enter upon, without assuring the reader that I have sometimes been tempted to suppress many circumstances of it; not only as they may seem incredible to some, and enthusiastical to others, but as I am very sensible they are liable to great abuses, which was the reason that he gave me for concealing the most extraordinary from many persons to whom he mentioned some of the rest. And I believe it was this, together with the desire of avoiding every thing that might look like ostentation on this head, that prevented his leaving a written account of it; though I have often entreated him to do it; as I particularly remember I did in the very last letter I ever wrote him; and pleaded the possibility of his falling amidst those dangers, to which I knew his valour might in such circumstances naturally expose him. I was not so happy as to receive any answer to this letter, which reached him but a few days before his death; nor can I certainly say, whether he had or had not complied with my request; as it is very possible a paper of that kind, if it were written, might be lost amidst the ravages which the rebels made when they plundered Bankton.

§ 29. The story however was so remarkable, that I had little reason to apprehend I should ever forget it; and yet, to guard against all contingencies of that kind, I wrote it down that very evening, as I had heard it from his own mouth. And I have now before me the memoirs of that conversation, dated August 14, 1739, which conclude with these words: (which I added, that if we should both have died that night, the world might not have lost this edifying and affecting history, or have wanted any attestation of it I was capable of giving:) "N. B. I have written down this account with all the exactness I am capable of, and could safely take an oath of it as to the truth of every circumstance, to the best of my remembrance, as the Colonel related it to me a few hours ago." I do not know that I had reviewed this paper since I wrote it, till I set myself thus publicly to record this extraordinary fact; but I find it punctually to agree with what I have often related from my memory, which I charged carefully with so wonderful and important a fact. It is with all solemnity that I now deliver it down to posterity, as in the sight and presence of God. And I choose deliberately to expose myself to those severe censures, which the haughty but empty scorn of infidelity, or principles nearly approaching it, and effectually doing its pernicious work, may very probably dictate upon the occasion; rather than to smother a relation, which may, in the judgment of my conscience, be like to conduce so much to the glory of God, the honour of the gospel, and the good of mankind. One thing more I will only premise, that I hope none who have heard the Colonel him-

self speak something of this wonderful scene, will be surprised if they find some new circumstances here; because he assured me at the time he first gave me the whole narration, which was in the very room in which I now write, that he had never imparted it so fully to any man living before. Yet at the same time he gave me full liberty to communicate it to whomsoever I should in my conscience judge it might be useful to do it, whether before or after his death. Accordingly I did, while he was alive, recount almost every circumstance I am now going to write, to several pious friends; referring them at the same time to the Colonel himself, whenever they might have an opportunity of seeing or writing to him, for a further confirmation of what I told them, if they judged it requisite. They glorified God in him; and I humbly hope many of my readers will also do it. They will soon perceive the reason of so much caution in my introduction to this story, for which therefore I shall make no further apology.*

§ 30. This memorable event happened towards the middle of July, 1719, but I cannot be exact as to the day. The Major had spent the evening, and, if I mistake not, it was the sabbath, in some gay company, and had an unhappy assignation with a married woman, of what rank or quality I did not particularly inquire, whom he was to attend exactly at twelve. The company broke up about eleven; and not judging it convenient to anticipate the time appointed, he went into his chamber to kill the tedious hour, perhaps with some amusing book, or some other way. But it very accidentally happened that he took up a religious book, which his good mother or aunt had, without his knowledge, slipped into his portmanteau. It was called, if I remember the title exactly, The Christian Soldier, or Heaven taken by Storm, and was written by Mr. Thomas Watson. Guessing by the title of it that he should find some phrases of his own profession spiritualized, in a manner which he thought might afford him some diversion, he resolved to dip into it; but he took no serious notice of any thing he read in it; and yet, while this book was in his hand, an impression was made upon his mind, perhaps God only knows how, which drew after it a train of the most important and happy consequences.

§ 31. There is indeed a possibility, that while he was sitting in this attitude, and reading in this careless and profane manner, he might suddenly fall asleep, and only dream of what he apprehended he saw. But nothing can be more certain than that, when he gave me this relation, he judged himself to have been as broad awake, during the whole time, as he ever was in any part of his life; and he mentioned it to me several times afterwards, as what undoubtedly passed, not only in his imagination, but before his eyes.†

§ 32. He thought he saw an unusual blaze of light fall on the book while he was reading, which he at first imagined might happen by some accident in the candle. But lifting up his eyes, he apprehended, to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory; and was impressed as if a voice, or something equivalent to a voice, had come to him to this effect, for he was not confident as to the very words; "O sinner, did I suffer this for thee, and are these the returns?" But whether this were an audible voice, or only a strong impression on his mind equally striking, he did not seem very confident; though, to the best of my remembrance, he rather judged it to be the former. Struck with so amazing a phenomenon as this, there remained hardly any life in him, so that he sunk down in the arm-chair in which he sat, and continued, he knew not exactly how long, insensible; which was one circumstance that made me several times take the liberty to suggest that he might possibly be all this while asleep: but however that were, he quickly after opened his eyes, and saw nothing more than usual.

§ 33. It may easily be supposed, he was in no condition to make any observation upon the time in which he had remained in an insensible state. Nor did he, throughout all the remainder of the night, once recollect that criminal and detestable assignation, which had before engrossed all his thoughts. He rose in a tumult of passions not to be conceived; and walked to and fro in his chamber, till he was ready to drop down, in unutterable astonishment and agony of heart; appearing to himself the vilest monster in the creation of God, who had all his life time been crucifying Christ afresh by his sins, and now saw, as he assuredly believed, by a miraculous vision, the horror of what he had done. With this was connected such a view, both of the majesty and goodness of God, as caused him to loathe and abhor himself, and to repent as in

* It is remarkable that from the time I wrote this before-mentioned Letter from the Rev. Mr. Spears, minister of the parish of Bonhill, dated June 14, 1748, which he returned to me this whole story as read by him, the Colonel never mentioned one word of it to me, though I was frequently with him, and he gave me the most free and unreserved access to him. I have indeed a single word or two in either of my conversations with him, and every one of the particulars in these several accounts, and afterwards in the same manner almost in the same words, and very circumstantial as well. I shall add a short remark after I come to it. A few days after I was with him after Lady Frances Gardiner, at her desire, and afterwards with a gentleman from our own house, in order to collect a circumstantial attestation how he recorded it was to those persons to whom he first communicated it, before he heard the Colonel gave it a further.

† Mr. Spears, in the letter mentioned above, where he endeavours the Colonel to bring his story into three words: "All of a sudden there was represented to my view, or he was moved to a representation of him [Christ] Redeemer." So—And then, thereupon such an impression thereon." It was so lively and striking, that he could not tell whether it was by the bodily eyes, or by some such like method." I was indeed very much struck when I first read this account of various gentlemen, &c. "as being what must have suggested to me the unfavourable notion that I entertained of his extraordinary. I had some reason to repent him. Yet still I am persuaded, in general upon the whole, whether it were before the eyes or in the mind, and not any doubt.

dust and ashes. He immediately gave judgment against himself, that he was most justly worthy of eternal damnation: he was astonished that he had not been immediately struck dead in the midst of his wickedness: and, which I think deserves particular remark, though he assuredly believed that he should ere long be in hell, and settled it as a point with himself for several months, that the wisdom and justice of God did almost necessarily require, that such an enormous sinner should be made an example of everlasting vengeance, and a spectacle as such both to angels and men, so that he hardly durst presume to pray for pardon; yet what he then suffered, was not so much from the fear of hell, though he concluded it would soon be his portion, as from a sense of that horrible ingratitude he had shown to the God of his life, and to that blessed Redeemer, who had been in so affecting a manner set forth as crucified before him.

§ 34. To this he refers in a letter, dated from Douglas, April 1, 1725, communicated to me by his lady,* but I know not to whom it was addressed. His words are these: "One thing relating to my conversion, and a remarkable instance of the goodness of God to me, the chief of sinners, I do not remember that I ever told to any other person. It was this; that after the *astonishing sight I had of my blessed Lord*, the terrible condition in which I was, proceeded not so much from the terrors of the law, as from a sense of having been so ungrateful a monster to him whom *I thought I saw pierced* for my transgressions." I the rather insert these words, as they evidently attest the circumstance which may seem most amazing in this affair, and contain so express a declaration of his own apprehension concerning it.

§ 35. In this view it may naturally be supposed, that he passed the remainder of the night waking; and he could get but little rest in several that followed. His mind was continually taken up in reflecting on the divine purity and goodness; the grace which had been proposed to him in the gospel, and which he had rejected; the singular advantages he had enjoyed and abused; and the many favours of Providence which he had received, particularly in rescuing him from so many imminent dangers of death, which he now saw must have been attended with such dreadful and hopeless destruction. The privileges of his education, which he had so much despised, now lay with an almost insupportable weight on his mind; and the folly of that career of sinful pleasure, which he had so many years been running with desperate eagerness and unworthy delight, now filled him with indignation against himself, and against the great deceiver, by whom, to use his own phrase, he had been "so wretchedly and scandalously befooled." This he used often to express in the strongest terms; which I shall not repeat so particularly as I can recollect some of them. But, on the whole, it is certain, that by what passed before he left his chamber the next day, the whole frame and disposition of his soul was new-modelled and changed; so that he became, and continued to the last day of his exemplary and truly Christian life, the very reverse of what he had been before. A variety of particulars, which I am afterwards to mention, will illustrate this in the most convincing manner. But I cannot proceed to them, without pausing awhile to adore so illustrious an instance of the power and freedom of divine grace, and entreating my reader seriously to reflect upon it, that his own heart may be suitably affected: for surely, if the truth of the fact be admitted, in the lowest views in which it can be placed, that is, supposing the first impression to have passed in a dream, it must be allowed to have been little, if any thing, less than miraculous. It cannot in the course of nature be imagined, how such a dream should arise in a mind full of the most impure ideas and affections, and, as he himself often pleaded, more alienated from the thoughts of a crucified Saviour, than from any other object that can be conceived; nor can we surely suppose it should, without a mighty energy of the divine power, be effectual to produce not only some transient flow of passion, but so entire and so permanent a change in character and conduct.

§ 36. On the whole, therefore, I must beg leave to express my own sentiments of the matter, by repeating on this occasion what I wrote several years ago, in my eighth Sermon on Regeneration, in a passage dictated chiefly by the circumstantial knowledge which I had of this amazing story, and methinks sufficiently vindicated by it, if it stood entirely alone; which yet, I must take the liberty to say, it does not; for I hope the world will be particularly informed, that there is at least a second, that very nearly approaches it, whenever the established church of England shall lose one of its brightest living ornaments, and one of the most useful members which that, or perhaps any other Christian communion, can boast: in the mean time, may his exemplary life be long continued, and his zealous ministry abundantly prospered! I beg my reader's pardon for this digression. The passage I referred to above is remarkably, though not equally,

* N. B. Where I make any extracts as from Colonel Gardiner's letters, they are either from originals, which I have in my own hands, or from copies, which were transcribed for me from persons of undoubted credit, chiefly by the Right Honourable the Lady Frances Gardiner, through the hand of the Rev. Mr Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. Thus I rather mention, because some others have been brought to me as Colonel Gardiner's, concerning which I have not only been very dubious, but morally certain, that they could not have been written by him. I have also heard of many, who have been fond of assuring the world, that they were well acquainted with him, and were near him when he fell, whose reports have been most inconsistent with each other, as well as contrary to that testimony relating to the circumstances of his death, which, on the whole, appeared to be beyond controversy the most natural and authentic: from whence therefore I shall take my account of that affecting scene.

applicable to both the cases, as it stands in page 265, of the first edition, and page 160, of the second; under that head, where I am showing, that God sometimes accomplishes the great work of which we speak, by secret and immediate impressions on the mind. After preceding illustrations, there are the following words, on which the Colonel's conversion will throw the justest light: "Yea, I have known those of distinguished genius, polite manners, and great experience in human affairs, who, after having outgrown all the impressions of a religious education, after having been hardened, rather than subdued, by the most singular mercies, even various, repeated, and astonishing deliverances, which have appeared to themselves no less than miraculous; after having lived for years without God in the world, notoriously corrupt themselves, and labouring to the utmost to corrupt others; have been stopt on a sudden in the full career of their sin, and have felt such rays of the divine presence, and of redeeming love, darting in upon their minds, almost like lightning from heaven, as have at once roused, overpowered, and transformed them; so that they have come out of their secret chambers with an irreconcilable enmity to those vices, to which, when they entered them, they were the tamest and most abandoned slaves; and have appeared from that very hour the votaries, the patrons, the champions of religion; and after a course of the most resolute attachment to it, in spite of all the reasonings or the railleries, the importunities or the reproaches, of its enemies, they have continued to this day some of its brightest ornaments: a change, which I behold with equal wonder and delight, and which, if a nation should join in deriding it, I would adore as the finger of God."

§ 37. The mind of Major Gardiner continued from this remarkable time till towards the end of October, that is, rather more than three months, but especially the two first of them, in an extraordinary a situation as one can well imagine. He knew nothing of the joys arising from a sense of pardon; but, on the contrary, for the greater part of that time, and with very short intervals of hope toward the end of it, took it for granted, that he must, in all probability, quickly perish. Nevertheless, he had such a sense of the evil of sin, of the goodness of the divine Being, and of the admirable tendency of the Christian revelation, that he resolved to spend the remainder of his life, while God continued him out of hell, in as rational and as useful a manner as he could, and to continue casting himself at the feet of divine Mercy, every day, and often in a day, if peradventure there might be hope of pardon, of which all that he could say was, that he did not absolutely despair. He had at that time such a sense of the degeneracy of his own heart, that he hardly durst form any determinate resolution against sin, or pretend to engage himself by any vow in the presence of God; but he was continually crying to him, that he would deliver him from the bondage of corruption. He perceived in himself a most surprising alteration with regard to the dispositions of his heart; so that, though he felt little of the delight of religious duties, he extremely desired opportunities of being engaged in them; and those licentious pleasures, which had before been his heaven, were now absolutely his aversion. And indeed, when I consider how habitual all those criminal indulgences were grown to him, and that he was now in the prime of life, and all this while in high health too, I cannot but be astonished to reflect upon it, that he should be so wonderfully sanctified in body, as well as in soul and spirit, as that, for all the future years of his life, he, from that hour, should find so constant a disinclination to, and abhorrence of, those criminal sensualities, to which he fancied he was before so invincibly impelled by his very constitution, that he was used strangely to think, and to say, that omnipotence itself could not reform him, without destroying that body, and giving him another.*

§ 38. Nor was he only delivered from that bondage of corruption, which had been habitual to him for so many years, but felt in his breast so contrary a disposition, that he was grieved to see human nature, in those to whom he was most [illegible] a stranger, prostituted to such low and contemptible pursuits. He therefore exerted his natural courage in a very new kind of conflict, and became an open advocate for religion, in all its principles, so far as he was acquainted with them, and all its precepts, relating to sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. Yet he was very desirous and cautious that he might not run into an extreme, and made it one of his first petitions to God, the very day after these amazing impressions had been wrought in his mind, that he might not be suffered to behave with such an affected strictness and preciseness, as would lead others about him into mistaken notions of religion,

* Mr. Spears expresses [illegible] remarkable words: "I was sure that Colonel [illegible] and I immediately [illegible] that [illegible] Colonel [illegible] Gardiner [illegible] Colonel [illegible] Gardiner [illegible] Colonel [illegible] Gardiner

and expose it to reproach or suspicion, as if it were an unlovely or uncomfortable thing. For this reason he endeavoured to appear as cheerful in conversation as he conscientiously could; though, in spite of all his precautions, some traces of that deep inward sense which he had of his guilt and misery would at times appear. He made no secret of it, however, that his views were entirely changed, though he concealed the particular circumstances attending that change. He told his most intimate companions freely, that he had reflected on the course of life in which he had so long joined them, and found it to be folly and madness, unworthy a rational creature, and much more unworthy persons calling themselves Christians. And he set up his standard, upon all occasions, against principles of infidelity, and practices of vice, as determinately, and as boldly, as ever he displayed or planted his colours, when he bore them with so much honour in the field.

§ 39. I cannot forbear mentioning one struggle of this kind, which he described to me, with a large detail of circumstances, the first day of our acquaintance. There was at that time in Paris a certain lady, whose name, then well known in the grand and the gay world, I must beg leave to conceal, who had imbibed the principles of deism, and valued herself much upon being an avowed advocate for them. The Major, with his usual frankness, though I doubt not with that politeness of manners which was so habitual to him, and which he retained throughout his whole life, answered her like a man who perfectly saw through the fallacy of her arguments, and was grieved to the heart for her delusion. On this she briskly challenged him to debate the matter at large, and to fix upon a day for that purpose, when he should dine with her, attended with any clergyman he might choose, whether of the protestant or catholic communion. A sense of duty would not allow him to decline this challenge; and yet he had no sooner accepted it, but he was thrown into great perplexity and distress, lest being, as I remember he expressed it when he told me the story, only a Christian of six weeks old, he should prejudice so good a cause, by his unskilful manner of defending it. However, he sought his refuge in earnest and repeated prayers to God, that he who can ordain strength, and perfect praise, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, would graciously enable him, on this occasion, to vindicate his truths in a manner which might carry conviction along with it. He then endeavoured to marshal the arguments in his own mind, as well as he could; and apprehending that he could not speak with so much freedom before a number of persons, especially before such, whose province he might in that case seem to invade, if he had not devolved the principal part of the discourse upon them, he easily admitted the apology of a clergyman or two, to whom he mentioned the affair, and waited on the lady alone upon the day appointed. But his heart was so set upon the business, that he came earlier than he was expected, and time enough to have two hours' discourse before dinner; nor did he at all decline having two young persons, nearly related to the lady, present during the conference.

§ 40. The Major opened it, with a view of such arguments for the Christian religion as he had digested in his own mind, to prove that the apostles were not mistaken themselves, and that they could not have intended to impose upon us, in the accounts they give of the grand facts they attest; with the truth of which facts, that of the Christian religion is most apparently connected. And it was a great encouragement to him to find that, unaccustomed as he was to discourses of this nature, he had an unusual command, both of thought and expression; so that he recollected and uttered every thing as he could have wished. The lady heard with attention; and though he paused between every branch of the argument, she did not interrupt the course of it, till he told her he had finished his design, and waited for her reply. She then produced some of her objections, which he took up and canvassed in such a manner, that at length she burst out into tears, allowed the force of his arguments and replies, and appeared, for some time after, so deeply impressed with the conversation, that it was observed by several of her friends; and there is reason to believe that the impression continued, at least so far as to prevent her from ever appearing under the character of an unbeliever or a sceptic.

§ 41. This is only one specimen, among many, of the battles he was almost daily called out to fight in the cause of religion and virtue: with relation to which I find him expressing himself thus, in a letter to Mrs. Gardiner, his good mother, dated from Paris, the 25th of January following, that is, 1719-20, in answer to one, in which she had warned him to expect such trials. "I have," says he, "already met with them, and am obliged to fight, and to dispute every inch of ground: but all thanks and praise to the great Captain of my salvation, he fights for me; and then it is no wonder that I come off more than conqueror," by which last expression I suppose he meant to insinuate, that he was strengthened and established, rather than overborne, by this opposition. Yet it was not immediately that he gained such fortitude. He has often told me, how much he felt in those days of the emphasis of those well-chosen words of the apostle, in which he ranks the trial of cruel mockings, with scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonments. The continual railleries with which he was received, in almost all companies where he had been most familiar before,

did often distress him beyond measure; so that he has several times declared, he would much rather have marched up to a battery of the enemy's cannon, than have been obliged, so continually as he was, to face such artillery as this. But, like a brave soldier in the first action wherein he is engaged, he continued resolute, though shuddering at the terror of the assault; and quickly overcame those impressions, which it is not perhaps in nature wholly to avoid: and therefore I find him in the letter referred to above, which was written about half a year after his conversion, "quite ashamed to think of the uneasiness which these things once gave him." In a word, he went on, as every resolute Christian by divine grace may do, till he turned ridicule and opposition into respect and veneration.

§ 42. But this sensible triumph over these difficulties was not till his Christian experience had been abundantly advanced, by the blessing of God on the sermons he heard, particularly in the Swiss chapel, and on the many hours which he spent in devout retirement, pouring out his whole soul before God in prayer. He began, within about two months after his first memorable change, to perceive some secret dawnings of more cheerful hope, that vile as he saw himself to be, and I believe no words can express how vile that was, he might nevertheless obtain mercy through a Redeemer. And at length, if I remember right, about the end of October, 1719, he found all the burthen of his mind taken off at once by the powerful impression of that memorable scripture upon his mind; Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth for a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He had used to imagine, that the justice of God required the damnation of so enormous a sinner as he saw himself to be: but now he was made deeply sensible, that the divine justice might be, not only vindicated, but glorified, in saving him by the blood of Jesus, even that blood which cleanseth us from all sin. Then did he see and feel the riches of redeeming love and grace in such a manner as not only engaged him, with the utmost pleasure and confidence, to venture his soul upon it; but even swallowed up, as it were, his whole heart in the returns of love, which from that blessed time became the genuine and delightful principle of his obedience, and animated him with an enlarged heart to run the way of God's commandments. Thus God was pleased, as he himself used to speak, in an hour to turn his captivity. All the terrors of his former state were changed into unutterable joy, which kept him almost continually waking for three nights together, and yet refreshed him as the noblest of cordials. His expressions, though naturally very strong, always seemed to be swallowed up, when he would describe the series of thought through which he now passed, under the rapturous experience of that joy unspeakable and full of glory, which then seemed to overflow his very soul: as indeed there was nothing he seemed to speak of with greater relish. And though the first ecstasies of it afterwards subsided into a more calm and composed delight; yet were the impressions so deep and so permanent, that he assured me on the word of a Christian and a friend, wonderful as it might seem, that for about seven years after this he enjoyed almost a heaven upon earth. His soul was so continually filled with a sense of the love of God in Christ, that it knew little interruption, but when necessary converse, and the duties of his station, called off his thoughts for a little time; and when they did so, as soon as he was alone, the torrent returned into its natural channel again; so that, from the minute of his awakening in the morning, his heart was rising to God, and triumphing in him; and these thoughts attended him through all the scenes of life, till he lay down on his bed again, and a short parenthesis of sleep (for it was but a very short one that he allowed himself) invigorated his animal powers, for renewing them with greater intenseness and sensibility.

§ 43. I shall have an opportunity of illustrating this in the most convincing manner below, by extracts from several letters which he wrote to intimate friends during this happy period of time; letters which breathe a spirit of such sublime and fervent piety, as I have seldom met with any where else. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that he was greatly delighted with Dr. Watts's imitation of the 126th Psalm; since it may be questioned whether there ever was a person to whom the following stanzas of it were more suitable.

I.

When God revealed his gracious name
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
Thy grace appear'd so great.

II.

The world beheld the glorious change,
And did thine hand confess;
My tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace.

III.

"Great is the work," my neighbours cried,
And owned the power divine:
"Great is the work," my heart replied,
"And be the glory thine."

IV.

The Lord can change the darkest skies,
Can give us day for night,
Make floods of sacred sorrow rise
To rivers of delight.

V.

Let those that sow in sadness wait
Till the fair harvest come:
They shall confess their sheaves are great,
And shout the blessings home.

§ 44. I have been so happy as to get the sight of five original letters, which he wrote to his mother about this time; which do, in a very lively manner, illustrate the surprising change made in the whole current of his thoughts and temper of his mind. Many of them were written in the most hasty manner, just as the courier who brought them was, perhaps unexpectedly, setting out; and they relate chiefly to affairs in which the public is not at all concerned; yet there is not one of them in which he has not inserted some warm and genuine sentiment of religion. And indeed it is very remarkable that, though he was pleased to honour me with a great many letters, and I have seen several more which he wrote to others, some of them on journeys, where he could have but a few minutes at command, yet I cannot recollect that I ever saw any one in which there was not some trace of piety. And the Reverend Mr. Webster, who was employed to review great numbers of them, that he might select such extracts as he should think proper to communicate to me, has made the same observation.*

§ 45. The Major, with great justice, tells the good lady, his mother, "that, when she saw him again, she would find the person indeed the same, but every thing else entirely changed." And she might easily have perceived it of herself, by the whole tenor of those letters, which every where breathe the unaffected spirit of a true Christian. They are taken up, sometimes with giving advice and directions concerning some pious and charitable contributions, one of which, I remember, amounted to ten guineas, though, as he was then out of commission, and had not formerly been very frugal, it cannot be supposed he had much to spare; sometimes in speaking of the pleasure with which he attended sermons, and expected sacramental opportunities; and at other times in exhorting her, established as she was in religion, to labour after a yet more exemplary character and conduct, or in recommending her to the divine presence and blessing, as well as himself to her prayers. What satisfaction such letters as these must give to a lady of her distinguished piety, who had so long wept over this dear and amiable son, as quite lost to God, and on the verge of final destruction, it is not for me to describe, or indeed to conceive. But hastily as these letters were written, only for private view, I will give a few specimens from them in his own words; which will serve to illustrate, as well as confirm, what I have hinted above.

§ 46. "I must take the liberty," says he, in a letter dated on the first day of the new year, or according to the old style, Dec. 21, 1719, "to entreat you, that you would receive no company on the Lord's day. I know you have a great many good acquaintance, with whose discourses one might be very well edified: but as you cannot keep out, and let in, whom you please, the best way, in my humble opinion, will be to see none." In another, of Jan. 25, "I am happier than any one can imagine, except I could put him exactly in the same situation with myself; which is what the world cannot give, and no man ever attained it, unless it were from above." In another, dated March 30, which was just before sacrament day, "To-morrow, if it please God, I shall be happy; my soul being to be fed with the bread of life, which came down from heaven. I shall be mindful of you all there." In another, of Jan. 29, he thus expresses that indifference for worldly possessions, which he so remarkably carried through all the remainder of his life: "I know the rich are only stewards for the poor, and must give an account of every penny; therefore the less I have, the more easy will it be to render a faithful account of it." And to add no more from these letters at present, in the conclusion of one of them he has these comprehensive and solemn words: "Now that He, who is the ease of the afflicted, the support of the weak, the wealth of the poor, the teacher of the ignorant, the anchor of the fearful, and the infinite reward of all faithful souls, may pour out upon you all his richest blessings, shall always be the prayer of him who is entirely yours," &c.

§ 47. To this account of his correspondence with his excellent mother, I should be glad to add a large view of another, to which she introduced him, with that reverend and valuable person, under whose pastoral care she was placed, I mean, the justly celebrated Dr. Edmund Calamy, to whom she could not but early communicate the joyful news of her son's conversion. I am not so happy as to be possessed of the letters which passed between them, which I have reason to believe would make a curious and valuable collection; but I have had the pleasure of receiving, from my worthy and amiable friend, the Reverend Mr. Edmund Calamy, one of the letters which the Doctor, his father, wrote to the Major on this wonderful occasion. I perceive by the contents of it that it was the first; and indeed it is dated as early as the third of August, 1719, which must be but a few days after his own account, dated August 1, N. S. could reach England. There is so

* His words are these: "I have read over a vast number of the Colonel's letters, and have not found any one of them, however short and wrot in the most passing manner, even when posting, but what is expressive of the most passionate breathings towards his God and Saviour. If the letter consists but of two sentences, religion is not forgot, which, doubtless deserves to be carefully remarked as the most uncontested evidence of a pious mind, even under the strongest impressions of divine things."

much true religion and good sense in this paper, and the counsel it suggests may be so seasonable to other persons in circumstances which bear any resemblance to his, that I make no apology to my reader for inserting a large extract from it.

"Sir, "Dear Sir, — I conceive it will not much surprise you to understand that your good mother communicated to me your letter to her, dated Aug. 4, N. S. which brought her the news you conceive would be so acceptable to her. I, who have often been a witness to her concern for you on a spiritual account, can attest with what joy this news was received by her, and imparted to me as a special friend, who she knew would bear a part with her on such an occasion. And indeed, if (as our Saviour intimates, Luke xv. 7, 10.) there is in such cases joy in heaven, and among the angels of God, it may well be supposed that of a pious mother, who has spent so many prayers and tears upon you, and has, as it were, travailed in birth with you again, till Christ was formed in you, could not be small. You may believe me if I add, that I also, as a common friend of hers and yours, and which is much more, of the Prince of Light, whom you now declare you heartily fall in with, in opposition to that of the dark kingdom, could not but be tenderly affected with an account of it under your own hand. My joy on this account was the greater, considering the importance of your capacity, interests, and prospects; which in such an age as this may promise most happy consequences, on your heartily appearing on God's side, and embarking in the interest of our dear Redeemer. If I have hitherto at all remembered you at the throne of grace, at your good mother's desire, which you are pleased to take notice of with so much respect, I can assure you I shall henceforward be led to do it with more concern and particularity, both by duty and inclination. And if I were capable of giving you any little assistance in the noble design you are engaging in, by corresponding with you by letter, while you are at such a distance, I should do it most cheerfully. And perhaps such a motion may not be altogether unacceptable; for I am inclinable to believe, that when some, whom you are obliged to converse with, observe your behaviour so different from what it formerly was, and banter you upon it as mad and fanciful, it may be some little relief to correspond with one who will take a pleasure in heartening and encouraging you. And when a great many things frequently offer, in which conscience may be concerned, where duty may not always be plain, nor suitable persons to advise with at hand, it may be some satisfaction to you to correspond with one with whom you may use a friendly freedom in all such matters, and on whose fidelity you may depend. You may therefore command me in any of these respects, and I shall take a pleasure in serving you. One piece of advice I shall venture to give you, though your own good sense will make my enlarging upon it less needful; I mean, that you would, from your first setting out, carefully distinguish between the essentials of real religion, and those things which are commonly reckoned by its professors to belong to it. The want of this distinction has had very unhappy consequences from one age to another, and perhaps in none more than the present. But your daily converse with your Bible, which you mention, may herein give you great assistance. I move also, that since infidelity so much abounds, you would not only, by close and serious consideration, endeavour to settle yourself well in the fundamental principles of religion; but also that, as opportunity offers, you would converse with those books which treat most judiciously on the divine original of Christianity, such as Grotius, Abadie, Baxter, Bates, Du Plessis, &c. which may establish you against the cavils that occur in almost all conversations, and furnish you with arguments, which, when properly offered, may be of use to make some impressions on others. But being too much straitened to enlarge at present, I can only add, that if your hearty falling in with serious religion should prove any hinderance to your advancement in the world, which I pray God it may not, unless such advancement would be a real snare to you, I hope you will trust our Saviour's word, that it shall be no disadvantage to you in the final issue. He has given you his word for it, Matt. xix. 29. upon which you may safely depend; and I am satisfied, none that ever did so at last repented of it. May you go on and prosper, and the God of all grace and peace be with you!"

§ 49. I think it very evident, from the contents of this letter, that the Major had not imparted to his mother the most singular circumstances attending his conversion; and, indeed, there was something so peculiar in them, that I do not wonder he was always cautious in speaking of them, and, especially, that he was at first much on the reserve. We may also naturally reflect, that there seems to have been something very providential in this letter, considering the debate in which our illustrious convert was so soon engaged; for it was written but about three weeks before his conference with the lady above mentioned, in the defence of Christianity; or, at least, before the appointment of it. And as some of the books recommended by Dr. Calamy, particularly Abadie and Du Plessis, were undoubtedly within his reach, if our English advocates were not, this might, by the divine blessing, contribute considerably towards arming him for that combat, in which he came off with such happy success. And as in this instance, so in many others, they who will observe the coincidence and

concurrence of things, may be engaged to adore the wise conduct of Providence in events, which, when taken singly and by themselves, have nothing very remarkable in them.

§ 50. I think it was about this time that this resolute and exemplary Christian entered upon that methodical manner of living, which he pursued through so many succeeding years of his life, and I believe, generally, so far as the broken state of his health would allow it in his latter days, to the very end of it. He used constantly to rise at four in the morning, and to spend his time till six in the secret exercises of devotion, reading, meditation, and prayer; in which last he contracted such a fervency of spirit, as I believe few men living ever obtained. This certainly tended very much to strengthen that firm faith in God, and reverent animating sense of his presence, for which he was so eminently remarkable, and which carried him through the trials and services of life with such steadiness, and with such activity; for he indeed endured, and acted as always seeing him who is invisible. If at any time he was obliged to go out before six in the morning, he rose proportionably sooner: so that when a journey, or a march, has required him to be on horseback by four, he would be at his devotions at furthest by two. He likewise secured time for retirement in an evening; and that he might have it the more at command, and be the more fit to use it properly, as well as the better able to rise early the next morning, he generally went to bed about ten: and, during the time I was acquainted with him, he seldom ate any supper, but a mouthful of bread with one glass of wine. In consequence of this, as well as of his admirably good constitution, and the long habit he had formed, he required less sleep than most persons I have known: and I doubt not but his uncommon progress in piety was in a great measure owing to these resolute habits of self-denial.

§ 51. A life any thing like this, could not, to be sure, be entered upon, in the midst of such company as he had been accustomed to keep, without great opposition; especially, as he did not entirely withdraw himself from all the circle of cheerful conversation; but, on the contrary, gave several hours every day to it, lest religion should be reproached as having made him morose. He, however, early began a practice, which to the last day of his life he retained, of reproving vice and profaneness; and was never afraid to debate the matter with any, under the consciousness of such superiority in the goodness of his cause.

§ 52. A remarkable instance of this happened, if I mistake not, about the middle of the year 1720, though I cannot be very exact as to the date of the story. It was however on his first return to make any considerable abode in England, after this remarkable change. He had heard, on the other side of the water, that it was currently reported among his companions at home, that he was stark mad: a report, at which no reader who knows the wisdom of the world in these matters, will be much surprised, any more than himself. He concluded therefore that he should have many battles to fight, and was willing to despatch the business as fast as he could. And therefore, being to spend a few days at the country house of a person of distinguished rank, with whom he had been very intimate, whose name I do not remember that he told me, nor did I think it proper to inquire after it, he begged the favour of him that he would contrive matters so, that a day or two after he came down several of their former gay companions might meet at his lordship's table; that he might have an opportunity of making his apology to them, and acquainting them with the nature and reasons of his change. It was accordingly agreed to, and a pretty large company met on the day appointed, with previous notice that Major Gardiner would be there. A good deal of raillery passed at dinner, to which the Major made very little answer. But when the cloth was taken away and the servants retired, he begged their patience for a few minutes, and then plainly and seriously told them what notions he entertained of virtue and religion, and on what considerations he had absolutely determined, that by the grace of God he would make it the care and business of life, whatever he might lose by it, and whatever censure and contempt he might incur. He well knew how improper it was in such company to relate the extraordinary manner in which he was awakened; which they would probably have interpreted to a demonstration of lunacy, against all the gravity and solidity of his discourse: but he contented himself with such a rational defence of a righteous, sober, and godly life, as he knew none of them could with any shadow of reason contest. He then challenged them to propose any thing they could urge, to prove that a life of irreligion and debauchery was preferable to the fear, love, and worship, of the eternal God, and a conduct agreeable to the precepts of his gospel. And he failed not to bear his testimony from his own experience, (to one part of which many of them had been witnesses,) that after having run the widest round of sensual pleasure, with all the advantages the best constitution and spirits could give him, he had never tasted any thing that deserved to be called happiness, till he had made religion his refuge and his delight. He testified, calmly and boldly, the habitual serenity and peace that he now felt in his own breast, (for the most elevated delights he did not think fit to plead, lest they should be esteemed enthusiasm,) and the composure and pleasure with which he looked forward to objects, which the gayest sinner

must acknowledge to be equally unavoidable and dreadful.

§ 53. I know not what might be attempted by some of the company to answer to this: but I well remember he told me, the master of the table, a person of a very frank and candid disposition, cut short the debate, and said, "Come, let us call another cause: we thought this man mad, and he is in good earnest proving that we are so." On the whole, this well judged circumstance saved him a great deal of future trouble. When his former acquaintance observed, that he was still conversable and innocently cheerful, and that he was unmovable in his resolutions, they desisted from further importunity. And he has assured me, that, instead of losing any one valuable friend by this change in his character, he found himself much more esteemed and regarded, by many who could not persuade themselves to imitate his example.

§ 54. I have not any memoirs of Colonel Gardiner's life, or any other remarkable event befalling him in it, from the time of his return to England, till his marriage, in the year 1726, except the extracts which have been sent me from some letters, which he wrote to his religious friends during this interval, and which I cannot pass by without a more particular notice. It may be recollected, that in consequence of the reduction of that regiment of which he was major, he was out of commission from November the 10th, 1718, till June the 1st, 1724, and after he returned from Paris, I find all his letters, during this period, dated from London, where he continued, in communion with the Christian society under the pastoral care of Doctor Calamy. As his good mother also belonged to the same, it is easy to imagine, it must be an unspeakable pleasure to her, to have such frequent opportunities of conversing with such a son, of observing in his daily conduct and discourses the blessed effects of that change which divine grace had made in his heart, and of sitting down with him monthly at that sacred feast, where Christians so frequently enjoy the divinest entertainments which they expect on this side of heaven. I the rather mention this ordinance, because as this excellent lady had a very high esteem for it, so she had an opportunity of attending it, but the very Lord's day immediately preceding her death, which happened on Thursday, Oct. 7, 1725, after her son had been removed from her almost a year. He had manifested her handsomely out of that very moderate income, on which he subsisted since his regiment had been disbanded; and when she expressed her gratitude to him for it, he assured her, I think in one of the last letters she ever received from him, "that he esteemed it a great honour, that God put it into his power to make," what he called, "a very small acknowledgment of all her care for him, and especially of the many prayers she had offered on his account, which had already been remarkably answered, and the benefit of which he hoped ever to enjoy."

§ 55. I apprehend that the Earl of Stair's regiment, to the majority of which he was promoted on the 20th of July, 1724, was then quartered in Scotland: for all the letters in my hand, from that time to the 6th of February, 1726, are dated from thence, and particularly from Douglas, Stranrawen, Hamilton, and Ayr: but I have the pleasure to find, from comparing these with others of an earlier date from London and the neighbouring parts, that neither the detriment which he must suffer by being so long out of commission, nor the hurry of affairs while charged with it, could prevent or interrupt that intercourse with heaven, which was his daily feast, and his daily strength.

§ 56. These were most eminently the happy years of his life: for he had learned to estimate his happiness, not by the increase of honour, or the possession of wealth, or by what was much dearer to his generous heart than either, the converse of the dearest and worthiest human friends; but by nearness to God, and by opportunities of humble converse with him, in the lively exercise of contemplation, praise, and prayer. Now there was no period of his life in which he was more eminently favoured with these: nor do I find any of his letters so overflowing with transports of holy joy, as those which were dated during this time. There are indeed in some of them such very sublime passages, that I have been dubious whether I should communicate them to the public or not; lest I should administer matters of profane ridicule to some, who look upon all the elevations of devotion as a contemptible enthusiasm. And it has also given me some apprehensions, lest it should discourage some pious Christians, who, after having spent several years in the service of God, and in humble obedience to the precepts of his gospel, may not have attained to any such heights as these. But, on the whole, I cannot satisfy myself to suppress them; not only as I number some of them, considered in a devotional view, among the most extraordinary pieces of the kind I have ever met with; but as some of the most excellent and judicious persons I any where know, to whom I have read them, have assured me, that they felt their hearts in an unusual manner impressed, quickened, and edified by them.

§ 57. I will therefore draw back the veil and show my much honoured friend in his most secret recesses: that the world may see what those springs were, from whence issued that clear, permanent, and living stream of wisdom, piety, and virtue, which so apparently ran through all that part of his life which was open to public observation. It is not to be imagined, that letters written in the intimacy of Christian friendship, some of them with

the most apparent marks of haste, and amidst a variety of important public cares, should be adorned with any studied elegance of expression, about which the greatness of his soul would not allow him to be at any time very solicitous; for he generally, so far as I could observe, wrote as fast as his pen could move, which happily, both for him, and his many friends, was very freely. Yet here the grandeur of his subject has sometimes clothed his ideas with a language more elevated than is ordinarily to be expected in an epistolary correspondence. The proud scorners, who may deride sentiments and enjoyments like those which this truly great man so experimentally and pathetically describes, I pity from my heart; and grieve to think how unfit they must be for the hallelujahs of heaven, who pour contempt upon the nearest approaches to them: nor shall I think it any misfortune, to share with so excellent a person in their profane derision. It will be infinitely more than an equivalent for all that such ignorance and petulancy can think and say, if I may convince some, who are as yet strangers to religion, how real, and how noble, its delights are; if I may engage my pious readers to glorify God for so illustrious an instance of his grace; and finally, if I may quicken them, and above all may rouse my own too indulgent spirit, to follow with less unequal steps an example, to the sublimity of which, I fear, few of us shall after all be able fully to attain. And that we may not be too much discouraged under the deficiency, let it be recollected, that few have the advantage of a temper naturally so warm; few have an equal command of retirement; and perhaps hardly any one, who thinks himself most indebted to the riches and freedom of divine grace, can trace interpositions of it in all respects equally astonishing.

§ 58. The first of these extraordinary letters which have fallen into my hand, is dated near three years after his conversion, and addressed to a lady of quality. I believe it is the first the Major ever wrote so immediately on the subject of his religious consolations and converse with God in devout retirement. For I well remember, that he once told me, he was so much afraid that something of spiritual pride should mingle itself with the relation of such kind of experiences, that he concealed them a long time: but observing with how much freedom the sacred writers open all the most secret recesses of their hearts, especially in the Psalms, his conscience began to be burthened, under an apprehension that, for the honour of God, and in order to engage the concurrent praises of some of his people, he ought to disclose them. On this he set himself to reflect, who, among all his numerous acquaintance, seemed at once the most experienced Christian he ever knew, (to whom therefore such things as he had to communicate might appear solid and credible,) and who the humblest. He quickly thought of the Lady Marchioness of Douglas in this view: and the reader may well imagine, that it struck my mind very strongly, to think that now, more than twenty-four years after it was written, Providence should bring to my hands, as it has done within these few days, what I assuredly believe to be a genuine copy of that very letter; which I had not the least reason to expect I should ever have seen, when I learnt from his own mouth, amidst the freedom of an accidental conversation, the occasion and circumstances of it.

§ 59. It is dated from London, July 21, 1722, and the very first lines of it relate to a remarkable circumstance, which from others of his letters I find to have happened several times. I mean, that when he had received from any of his Christian friends a few lines which particularly affected his heart, he could not stay till the stated return of his devotional hour, but immediately retired to pray for them, and to give vent to those religious emotions of mind which such a correspondence raised. How invaluable was such a friend! And how great reason have those of us who once possessed a large share in his heart, and in those retired and sacred moments, to bless God for so singular a liberty, and to comfort ourselves in a pleasing hope that we may yet reap future blessings, as the harvest of those petitions which he can no more repeat!

§ 60. His words are these: "I was so happy as to receive yours just as I arrived; and I had no sooner read it, but I shut my door and sought him whom my soul loveth. I sought him, and found him; and would not let him go till he had blessed us all. It is impossible to find words to express what I obtained; but I suppose it was something like that which the disciples got as they were going to Emmaus, when they said, Did not our hearts burn within us, &c. or rather like what Paul felt, when he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it." He then mentions his dread of spiritual pride, from which he earnestly prays that God may deliver and preserve him. "This," says he, "would have hindered me from communicating these things if I had not such an example before me as the man after God's own heart, saying, I will declare what God hath done for my soul; and, elsewhere, The humble shall hear thereof and be glad: now I am well satisfied that your ladyship is of that number." He then adds, "I had no sooner finished this exercise," that is, of prayer above mentioned, "but I sat down to admire the goodness of my God, that he would vouchsafe to influence by his free Spirit so undeserving a wretch as I, and to make me thus to mount up with eagle's wings. And here I was lost again, and got into an ocean where I could find neither bound nor bottom: but was obliged to cry out with the apostle, Oh the

breadth, the length, the depth, the height, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' But if I give way to this strain I shall never have done. That the God of hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, shall always be the prayer of him, who is, with the greatest sincerity and respect, your ladyship's," &c.

§ 61. Another passage to the same purpose I find in a memorandum which he seems to have written for his own use, dated Monday, March 11, which I perceive, from many concurrent circumstances, must have been in the year 1722-3. "This day," says he, "having been to visit Mrs. G. at Hampstead, I came home about two, and read a sermon on these words, Psalm cxxx. 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; about the latter end of which there is a description of the miserable condition of those that are slighters of pardoning grace. From a sense of the great obligations I lay under to the Almighty God, who hath made me to differ from such, from what I was, and from the rest of my companions, I knelt down to praise his holy name; and I know not that in my lifetime I ever lay lower in the dust, never having had a fuller view of my unworthiness. I never pleaded more strongly the merits and intercession of him who I know is worthy, never vowed more sincerely to be the Lord's, and to accept of Christ as he is offered in the gospel, as my King, Priest, and Prophet; never had so strong a desire to depart, that I might sin no more; but—my grace is sufficient—curbed that desire. I never pleaded with greater fervency for the Comforter, which our blessed Lord hath promised shall abide with us for ever. For all which I desire to ascribe glory, &c. to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb."

§ 62. There are several others of his papers which speak much the same language; which, had he kept a diary, would, I doubt not, have filled many sheets. I believe my devout readers would not soon be weary of reading extracts of this kind: but that I may not exceed in this part of my narrative, I shall mention only two more, each of them dated some years after; that is, one from Douglas, April 1st, 1725, and the other from Stranrawen, the 25th of May following.

§ 63. The former of these relates to the frame of his spirit on a journey. On the mention of which I cannot but recollect how often I have heard him say, that some of the most delightful days of his life were days in which he travelled alone, that is, with only a servant at a distance; when he could, especially in roads not much frequented, indulge himself in the pleasures of prayer and praise. In the exercise of which last he was greatly assisted by several psalms and hymns, which he had treasured up in his memory, and which he used not only to repeat aloud, but sometimes to sing. In reference to this I remember the following passage, in a letter which he wrote to me many years after, when, on mentioning my ever dear and honoured friend, the Rev. Dr. Watts, he says, "How often in singing some of his psalms, hymns, or lyrics, on horseback, and elsewhere, has the evil spirit been made to flee!

"Whene'er my heart to tune was found
Like David's harp of solemn sound."

§ 64. Such was the first of April above mentioned, in the evening of which he writes thus to an intimate friend: "What would I have given this day, upon the road, for paper, pen, and ink, when the Spirit of the Most High rested upon me! Oh for the pen of a ready writer, and the tongue of an angel, to declare what God hath done this day for my soul! But in short, it is in vain to attempt it: all that I am able to say, is only this, that my soul has been for some hours joining with the blessed spirits above, in giving glory, and honour, and praise, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. My praises began from a renewed view of him, whom I saw pierced for my transgressions. I summoned the whole hierarchy of heaven to join with me; and I am persuaded, they all echoed back praise to the Most High. Yea, one would have thought the very larks joined me with emulation. Sure then I need not make use of many words to persuade you that are his saints, to join me in blessing and praising his holy name." He concludes, "May the blessing of the God of Jacob rest upon you all! Adieu. Written in great haste, late, and weary."

§ 65. Scarce can I here refrain from breaking out into more copious reflections on the exquisite pleasures of true religion, when risen to such eminent degrees; which can thus feast the soul in its solitude, and refresh it on journeys; and bring down so much of heaven to earth, as this delightful letter expresses. But the remark is so obvious, that I will not enlarge upon it; but proceed to the other letter above mentioned, which was written the next month, on the Tuesday after a sacrament day.

§ 66. He mentions the pleasure with which he had attended a preparation sermon the Saturday before, and then he adds, "I took a walk upon the mountains that are over against Ireland, and I persuade myself, that were I capable of giving you a description of what passed there, you would agree, that I had much better reason to remember my God from the hills of Port Patrick, than David from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." I suppose he means in reference to the clearer discoveries of the gospel with which we are favoured. "In short," says he immediately afterwards, in that Scripture phrase which was become so familiar to him, "I wrestled some hours with the

angel of the covenant, and made supplication to him with floods of tears and cries—until I had almost expired: but he strengthened me so, that, like Jacob, I had power with God, and prevailed. This," adds he, "is but a very faint description, you will be more able to judge of it by what you have felt yourself upon the like occasions. After such preparatory work, I need not tell you how blessed the solemn ordinance of the Lord's supper proved to me; I hope it was so to many. You may believe, I should have been exceeding glad if my gracious Lord had ordered it so that I might have made you a visit, as I proposed: but I am now glad it was ordered otherwise, since he hath caused so much of his goodness to pass before me. Were I to give you an account of the many favours my God hath loaded me with since I parted from you, I must have taken up many days in nothing but writing. I hope you will join with me in praises for all the goodness he has shown to your unworthy brother in the Lord."

§ 67. Such were the ardours and elevations of his soul: but while I record these memorials of them, I am very sensible there are many who will be inclined to censure them as the flights of enthusiasm; for which reason I must beg leave to add a remark or two on the occasion, which will be illustrated by several other extracts, which I shall introduce into the sequel of these memoirs. The one is, that he never pretends, in any of the passages cited above, or elsewhere, to have received any immediate revelations from God, which should raise him above the ordinary methods of instruction, or discover any thing to him, whether of doctrines or facts. No man was further from pretending to predict future events, except it were from the moral prognostications of causes naturally tending to produce them; in tracing of which he had indeed an admirable sagacity, as I have seen in some very remarkable instances. Neither was he at all inclinable to govern himself by secret impulses upon the mind, leading him to things for which he could assign no reason but the impulse itself. Had he ventured, in a presumption on such secret agitations of mind, to teach or to do any thing not warranted by the dictates of sound sense and the word of God, I should readily have acknowledged him an enthusiast, unless he could have produced some other evidence than his own persuasion to have supported the authority of them. But these ardent expressions, which some may call enthusiasm, seem only to evidence a heart deeply affected with a sense of the divine presence and perfections, and of that love which passeth knowledge; especially as manifested in our redemption by the Son of God, which did inflame his whole soul. And he thought he might reasonably ascribe the strong impressions to which men are generally such strangers, and of which he had long been entirely destitute, to the agency or influence of the Spirit of God upon his heart; and that, in proportion to the degree in which he felt them, he might properly say, God was present with him, and he conversed with God.* Now, when we consider the scriptural phrases of walking with God, of having communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, of Christ's coming to them that open the door of their hearts to him, and supping with them, of God's shedding abroad his love in the heart by his Spirit, of his coming with Jesus Christ, and making his abode with any man that loves him, of his meeting him that worketh righteousness, of his making us glad by the light of his countenance, and a variety of other equivalent expressions, I believe we shall see reason to judge much more favourably of such expressions as those now in question, than persons who are themselves strangers to elevated devotion, and perhaps converse but little with their Bible, are inclined to do; especially if they have, as many such persons have, a temper that inclines them to cavil and find fault. And I must further observe, that, amidst all those freedoms with which this eminent Christian opens his devout heart to the most intimate of his friends, he still speaks with profound awe and reverence of his heavenly Father, and his Saviour, and maintains, after the example of the sacred writers themselves, a kind of dignity in his expressions suitable to such a subject, without any of that fond familiarity of language, and degrading meanness of phrase, by which it is, especially of late, grown fashionable among some (who, nevertheless, I believe, mean well) to express their love and their humility.

§ 68. On the whole, if habitual love to God, firm faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a steady dependence on the divine promises, a full persuasion of the wisdom and goodness of all the dispensations of Providence, a high esteem for the blessings of the heavenly world, and a sincere contempt for the vanities of this, can properly be called enthusiasm: then was Colonel Gardiner, indeed, one of the greatest enthusiasts our age has produced; and in proportion to the degree in which he was so, I must esteem him one of the wisest and happiest of mankind. Nor do I fear to tell the world, that it is the

* The expression used by Mr. Gardiner, I know, is [illegible]

design of my writing these memoirs, and of every thing else that I undertake in life, to spread this glorious and blessed enthusiasm; which I know to be the anticipation of heaven, as well as the most certain way to it.

§ 69. But lest any should possibly imagine, that allowing the experiences which have been described above to have been ever so solid and important, yet there may be some appearance of boasting in so free a communication of them; I must add to what I have hinted in reference to this above, that I find in many of the papers before me very genuine expressions of the deepest humility and self-abasement; which indeed such holy converse with God in prayer and praise, does above all things in the world tend to inspire and promote. Thus in one of his letters he says, "I am but as a beast before him." In another he calls himself a miserable hell-deserving sinner: and in another he cries out, "O, how good a Master do I serve! but alas, how ungrateful am I! What can be so astonishing as the love of Christ to us, unless it be the coldness of our sinful hearts towards such a Saviour?" With many other clauses of the like nature, which I shall not set myself more particularly to trace, through the variety of letters in which they occur.

§ 70. It is a further instance of this unfeigned humility, that when (as his lady with her usual propriety of language expresses it, in one of her letters to me concerning him) "these divine joys and consolations were not his daily allowance," he with equal freedom, in the confidence of Christian friendship, acknowledges and laments it. Thus, in the first letter I had the honour of receiving from him, dated from Leicester, July 9, 1739, when he had been mentioning the blessing with which it had pleased God to attend my last address to him, and the influence it had upon his mind, he adds, "Much do I stand in need of every help, to awaken me out of that spiritual deadness which seizes me so often. Once indeed it was quite otherwise with me, and that for many years,

> 'Then was my health, my day was bright,
> And I presumed it still so or by night
> Fondly I said within my heart,
> Pleasure and peace shall never depart:
> But I forgot thine arm was strong,
> Which made my mountain stand so long;
> Soon as thy face began to hide,
> My health was gone, my comforts died.'

And here," adds he, "lies my sin and my folly."

§ 71. I mention this, that the whole matter may seem just as it was, and that other Christians may not be discouraged if they feel some abatement of that fervour, and of those holy joys, which they may have experienced during some of the first months or years of their spiritual life. But with relation to the Colonel, I have great reason to believe, that these which he laments as his days of spiritual deadness were not unanimated; and that quickly after the date of this letter, and especially nearer the close of his life, he had further revivings, as the joyful anticipation of those better things in reserve, which were then nearly approaching. And thus Mr. Spears, in the letter I mentioned above, tells us he related the matter to him: (for he studies as much as possible to retain the Colonel's own words:) "However," says he, "after that happy period of sensible communion, though my joys and enlargements were not so overflowing and sensible, yet I have had habitual real communion with God from that day to this;" the latter end of the year 1743; "and I know myself, and all that know me see, that through the grace of God, to which I ascribe all, my conversation has been becoming the gospel; and let me die whenever it shall please God, or wherever it shall be, I am sure I shall go to the mansions of eternal glory," &c. And this is perfectly agreeable to the manner in which he used to speak to me on this head, which we have talked over frequently and largely.

§ 72. In this connexion I hope my reader will forgive my inserting a little story, which I received from a very worthy minister in Scotland, and which I shall give in his own words. "In this period," meaning that which followed the first seven years after his conversion, "when his complaint of comparative deadness and languor in religion began, he had a dream; which, though he had no turn at all for taking notice of dreams, yet made a very strong impression upon his mind. He imagined that he saw his blessed Redeemer on earth, and that he was following him through a large field, following him whom his soul loved, but much troubled, because he thought his blessed Lord did not speak to him; till he came up to the gate of a burying-place, when turning about he smiled upon him, in such a manner as filled his soul with the most ravishing joy; and on after-reflection animated his faith, in believing that whatever storms and darkness he might meet with in the way, at the hour of death his glorious Redeemer would lift up upon him the light of his life-giving countenance." My correspondent adds a circumstance, for which he makes some apology, as what may seem whimsical, and yet made some impression on himself; "that there was a remarkable resemblance in the field in which this brave man met death, and that he had represented to him in the dream." I did not fully understand this at first; but a passage in that letter from Mr. Spears which I have mentioned more than once, has cleared it. "Now observe, Sir, this seems to be a literal description of the place where this Christian hero ended his sorrows and conflicts, and from which he entered triumphantly into the joy of his Lord." For after he fell in the battle, fighting gloriously for his king, and the cause

of his God, his wounded body, while life was yet remaining, was carried from the field of battle, by the east side of his own enclosure, till he came to the church-yard of Tranent, and was brought to the minister's house; where he soon after breathed his soul into the hands of his Lord, and was conducted to his presence, where there is fulness of joy, without any cloud or interruption for ever."

§ 73. I well know that in dreams there are *diverse vanities*, and readily acknowledge that nothing certain could be inferred from this; yet it seems at least to show which way the imagination was working, even in sleep; and I cannot think it unworthy of a wise and good man, sometimes to reflect with complacency on any images, which, passing through his mind even in that state, may tend either to express, or to quicken, his love to the great Saviour. Those eminently pious divines of the church of England, Bishop Bull and Bishop Kenn, do both intimate it as their opinion, that it may be a part of the service of ministering angels to suggest devout dreams:* and I know that the worthy person of whom I speak was well acquainted with that midnight hymn of the latter of those excellent writers, which has these lines:

> "Lord, lest the tempter me surprise,
> Watch over thine own sacrifice!
> All loose, all idle thoughts cast out,
> And make my very dreams devout!"

Nor would it be difficult to produce other passages much to the same purpose,† if it would not be deemed too great a digression from our subject, and too laboured a vindication of a little incident of very small importance, when compared with most of those which make up this narrative.

§ 74. I meet not with any other remarkable event relating to Major Gardiner, which can properly be introduced here, till the year 1726; when, on the 11th day of July, he was married to the Right Honourable the Lady Frances Erskine, daughter to the late Earl of Buchan, by whom he had thirteen children, five only of whom survived their father, two sons and three daughters: whom I cannot mention without the most fervent prayers to God for them, that they may always behave worthy the honour of being descended from such parents; and that the God of their father, and of their mother, may make them perpetually the care of his providence, and yet more eminently happy in the constant and abundant influences of his grace!

§ 75. As her ladyship is still living, (and for the sake of her dear offspring, and numerous friends, may she long be spared,) I shall not here indulge myself in saying any thing of her; except it be, that the Colonel assured me, when he had been happy in this intimate relation to her more than fourteen years, that the greatest imperfection he knew in her character was, "that she valued and loved him much more than he deserved." And little did he think, in the simplicity of heart with which he spoke this, how high an encomium he was making upon her, and how lasting an honour such a testimony must leave upon her name, long as the memory of it shall continue.

§ 76. As I do not intend in these memoirs a laboured essay on the character of Colonel Gardiner, digested under the various virtues and graces which Christianity requires; which would, I think, be a little too formal for a work of this kind, and would give it such an air of panegyric as would neither suit my design, nor be at all likely to render it more useful; I shall now mention what I have either observed in him, or heard concerning him, with regard to those domestic relations, which commenced about this time, or quickly after. And here my reader will easily conclude, that the resolution of Joshua was from the first adopted and declared, As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord. It will naturally be supposed, that as soon as he had a house, he erected an altar in it; that the word of God was read there, and prayers and praises were constantly offered. These were not to be omitted on account of any guest; for he esteemed it a part of due respect to those that remained under his roof, to take it for granted they would look upon it as a very bad compliment, to imagine they would have been obliged by neglecting the duties of religion on their account. As his family increased, he had a minister statedly resident in his house, who both discharged the office of a tutor to his children, and of a chaplain; and who was always treated with a becoming kindness and respect. But in his absence, the Colonel himself led the devotions of the family; and they were happy who had an opportunity of knowing with how much solemnity, fervour, and propriety, he did it.

§ 77. He was constant in attendance upon public worship, in which an exemplary care was taken that the children and servants might accompany the heads of the family. And how he would have re-

* Bishop Bull has these remarkable words: "Although I am no doter on dreams, yet I verily believe that some dreams are monitory, above the power of fancy, and impressed upon us by some superior influence. For of such dreams we have plain and undeniable instances in history, both sacred and profane, and in our own age and observation. Nor shall I so value the laughter of sceptics and the scoffs of the Epicureans as to be ashamed to profess that I myself have had some convincing experiments of such impressions." — Bishop Bull's Serm. and Dis. Vol. II. p. 189, 190.

† If I mistake not, the same Bishop Kenn is the author of a midnight hymn, concluding with the words,

> "May my æthereal guardian kindly spread
> His wings, and from the tempter screen my head;
> Grant of celestial light some piercing beams,
> To bless my sleep, and sanctify my dreams."

As he certainly was of those exactly parallel lines

> "Oh may my guardian, while I sleep,
> Close to my bed his vigils keep,
> His love-angelic watch maintain,
> Shut all the avenues of ill!
> May he celestial joys recharge,
> And thought to thought with me converse.

sented the non-attendance of any member of it very easily be conjectured, from a free but lively passage in a letter to one of his intimate friends, on an occasion which it is not material to mention. "Oh, Sir, had a child of yours under my roof but once neglected the public worship of God, when he was able to attend it, I should have been ready to conclude he had been distracted, and should have thought of shaving his head, and confining him in a dark room."

§ 78. He always treated his lady with a manly tenderness, giving her the most natural evidences of a cordial habitual esteem, and expressing a most affectionate sympathy with her, under the infirmities of a very delicate constitution, much broken, at least towards the latter years of their marriage, in consequence of so frequent pregnancy. He had at all times a most faithful care of all her interests, and especially those relating to the state of religion in her mind. His conversation and his letters concurred to cherish those sublime ideas which Christianity suggests, to promote our submission to the will of God, to teach us to centre our happiness in the great Author of our being, and to live by faith in the invisible world. These, no doubt, were frequently the subjects of mutual discourse: and many letters, which her ladyship has had the goodness to communicate to me, are most convincing evidences of the degree in which this noble and most friendly care filled his mind in the days of their separation; days, which so entire a mutual affection must have rendered exceeding painful, had they not been supported by such exalted sentiments of piety, and sweetened by daily communion with an ever present and ever gracious God.

§ 79. The necessity of being so many months together distant from his family, hindered him from many of those condescending labours in cultivating the minds of his children in early life, which to a soul so benevolent, so wise, and so zealous, would undoubtedly have afforded a very exquisite pleasure. The care of his worthy consort, who well knew that it is one of the brightest parts of a mother's character, and one of the most important views in which the sex can be considered, made him the easier under such a circumstance: but when he was with them he failed not to instruct and admonish them: and the constant deep sense with which he spoke of divine things, and the real unaffected indifference which he always showed for what this vain world is most ready to admire, were excellent lessons of daily wisdom, which I hope they will recollect with advantage in every future scene of life. And I have seen such hints in his letters relating to them, as plainly show with how great a weight they lay on his mind, and how highly he desired, above all things, that they might be the faithful disciples of Christ, and acquainted betimes with the unequalled pleasures and blessings of religion. He thought an excess of delicacy and of indulgence one of the most dangerous faults in education, by which he every where saw great numbers of young people undone: yet he was solicitous to guard against a severity which might terrify or discourage: and, though he endeavoured to take all prudent precautions to prevent the commission of faults, yet, when they had been committed, and there seemed to be a sense of them, he was always ready to make the most candid allowances for the thoughtlessness of unripened years, and tenderly to cherish every purpose of a more proper conduct for the time to come.

§ 80. It was easy to perceive, that the openings of genius in the young branches of his family gave him great delight, and that he had a secret ambition to see them excel in what they undertook. Yet he was greatly cautious over his heart, lest it should be too fondly attached to them; and, as he was one of the most eminent proficients I ever knew in the blessed science of resignation to the divine will, so there was no effect of that resignation which appeared to me more admirable than what related to the life of his children. An experience, which no length of time will ever efface out of my memory, has so sensibly taught me how difficult it is fully to support the Christian character here, that I hope my reader will pardon me (I am sure at least the heart of wounded parents will) if I dwell a little longer upon so interesting a subject.

§ 81. When he was in Herefordshire, in the month of July, in the year 1734, it pleased God to visit his little family with the small-pox. Five days before the date of the letter I am just going to mention, he had received the agreeable news, that there was a prospect of the recovery of his son, then under that awful visitation; and he had been expressing his thankfulness for it in a letter which he had sent away but a few hours before he was informed of his death; the surprise of which, in this connexion, must naturally be very great. But behold (says the reverend and worthy person from whom I received the copy) his truly filial submission to the will of his heavenly Father in the following lines, addressed to the dear partner of his affliction: "Your resignation to the will of God under this dispensation gives me more joy than the death of the child has given me sorrow. He, to be sure, is happy; and we shall go to him, though he shall not return to us. Oh that we had our latter end always in view!—We shall soon follow: and oh what reason have we to long for that glorious day, when we shall get quit of this body of sin and death, under which we now groan, and which renders this life so wretched! I desire to bless God, that —— [another of his children] is in so good a way: but I have resigned her. We must not choose for our

selves; and it is well we must *not*, for we should often make a very bad choice. And therefore it is our wisdom, as well as our duty, to leave all with a gracious God; who hath promised that all things shall work together for good to those that love him: and he is faithful that hath promised, who will infallibly perform it if our unbelief does not stand in the way."

§ 82. The greatest trial of this kind that he ever bore, was in the removal of his second son, who was one of the most amiable and promising children that has been known. The dear little creature was the darling of all that knew him; and promised very fair, so far as a child could be known by its doings, to have been a great ornament to the family, and blessing to the public. The suddenness of the stroke must, no doubt, render it the more painful; for this beloved child was snatched away by an illness which seized him but about fifteen hours before it carried him off. He died in the month of October, 1733, at near six years old. Their friends were ready to fear that his affectionate parents would be almost overwhelmed with such a loss: but the happy father had so firm a persuasion, that God had received the dear little one to the felicities of the celestial world; and at the same time had so strong a sense of the divine goodness, in taking one of his children, and that too one who lay so near his heart, so early to himself; that the sorrows of nature were quite swallowed up in the sublime joy which these considerations administered. When he reflected what human life is, how many its snares and temptations are, and how frequently children, who once promised well, are insensibly corrupted, and at length undone; with Solomon, he blessed the dead already dead, more than the living who were yet alive; and felt an unspeakable pleasure in looking after the lovely infant, as safely and delightfully lodged in the house of its heavenly Father. Yea, he assured me, that his heart was at this time so entirely taken up with these views, that he was afraid they who did not thoroughly know him, might suspect that he was deficient in the natural affections of a parent; while thus borne above the anguish of them, by the views which faith administered to him, and which divine grace supported in his soul.

§ 83. So much did he, on one of the most trying occasions of life, manifest of the temper of a glorified saint; and to such happy purposes did he retain those lessons of submission to God, and acquiescence in him, which I remember he once inculcated in a letter he wrote to a lady of quality, under the apprehension of a breach in her family with which Providence seemed to threaten her, which I am willing to insert here, though a little out of what might seem its most proper place, rather than entirely to omit it. It is dated from London, June 16, 1722, when speaking of the dangerous illness of a dear relative, he has these words: "When my mind runs hither," that is, to God, as its refuge and strong defence, as the connexion plainly determines it, "I think I can bear any thing, the loss of all, the loss of health, of relations on whom I depend, and whom I love, all that is dear to me, without repining or murmuring. When I think, that God orders, disposes, and manages all things, according to the counsel of his own will; when I think of the extent of his providence, that it reaches to the minutest things; then, though a useful friend or dear relative be snatched away by death, I recall myself, and check my thoughts with these considerations. Is he not God, from everlasting, and to everlasting? And has he not promised to be a God to me? a God in all his attributes, a God in all his persons, a God in all his creatures, and providences? And shall I dare to say, What shall I do? Was not he the infinite cause of all I met with in the creatures? And were not they the finite effects of his infinite love and kindness? I have daily experienced, that the instrument was, and is, what God makes it to be; and I know, that this God hath the hearts of all men in his hands; and the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If this earth be good for me, I shall have it; for my Father hath it all in possession. If favour in the eyes of men be good for me, I shall have it; for the spring of every motion in the heart of man is in God's hand. My dear —— seems now to be dying; but God is all-wise, and every thing is done by him for the best. Shall I hold back any thing that is his own, when he requires it? No, God forbid! When I consider the excellency of his glorious attributes, I am satisfied with all his dealings." I perceive by the introduction, and by what follows, that most, if not all, of this, is a quotation from something written by a lady; but whether from some manuscript, or a printed book, whether exactly transcribed, or quoted from memory, I cannot determine: and therefore I thought proper to insert it, as the Major, (for that was the office he bore then,) by thus interweaving it with his letter, makes it his own; and as it seems to express in a very lively manner the principles which bore him on to a conduct so truly great and heroic, in circumstances that have overwhelmed many a heart that could have faced danger and death with the greatest intrepidity.

§ 84. I return now to consider his character in the domestic relation of a master, on which I shall not enlarge. It is however proper to remark, that as his habitual meekness, and command of his passions, prevented indecent sallies of ungovernable anger towards those in the lowest state of subjection to him, (by which some in high life do strangely debase themselves, and lose much of their

authority,) so the natural greatness of his mind made him solicitous to render their inferior stations as easy as he could; and so much the rather, because he considered all the children of Adam as standing upon a level before their great Creator, and had also a deeper sense of the dignity and worth of every immortal soul, how meanly soever it might chance to be lodged, than most persons I have known. This engaged him to give his servants frequent religious exhortations and instructions, as I have been assured by several who were so happy as to live with him under that character. One of the first letters after he entered on his Christian course, expresses the same disposition; in which with great tenderness he recommends a servant, who was in a bad state of health, to his mother's care, as he was well acquainted with her condescending temper; mentioning at the same time the endeavours he had used to promote his preparation for a better world, under an apprehension that he would not continue long in this. And we shall have an affecting instance of the prevalency of the same disposition, in the closing scene of his life, and indeed in the last words he ever spoke, which expressed his generous solicitude for the safety of a faithful servant, who was then near him.

§ 85. As it was a few years after his marriage that he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, in which he continued till he had a regiment of his own, I shall for the future speak of him by that title; and may not perhaps find any more proper place, in which to mention what it is proper for me to say of his behaviour and conduct as an officer. I shall not here enlarge on his bravery in the field, though that was very remarkable, as I have heard from others; I say from others, for I never heard any thing of that kind from himself, nor knew, till after his death, that he was present at almost every battle that was fought in Flanders while the illustrious Duke of Marlborough commanded the allied army there. I have also been assured from several very credible persons, some of whom were eye-witnesses, that at the skirmish with the rebels at Preston in Lancashire (thirty years before that engagement at the other Preston, which deprived us of this gallant guardian of his country) he signalized himself very particularly: for he headed a little body of men, I think about twelve, and set fire to the barricado of the rebels in the face of their whole army, while they were pouring in their shot, by which eight of the twelve that attended him fell. This was the last action of the kind in which he was engaged before the long peace which ensued; and who can express how happy it was for him, and indeed for his country, of which he was ever so generous, and in his latter years so important, a friend, that he did not fall then, when the profaneness which mingled itself with his martial rage seemed to rend the heavens, and shocked some other military gentlemen, who were not themselves remarkable for their caution in this respect!

§ 86. But I insist not on things of this nature, which the true greatness of his soul would hardly ever permit him to mention, unless when it tended to illustrate the divine care over him in these extremities of danger, and the grace of God in calling him from so abandoned a state. It is well known that the character of an officer is not only to be approved in the day of combat. Colonel Gardiner was truly sensible that every day brought its duties along with it; and he was constantly careful, that no pretence of amusement, friendship, or even devotion itself, might prevent their being discharged in their season.

§ 87. I doubt not but the noble persons in whose regiment he was lieutenant-colonel, will always be ready to bear an honourable and grateful testimony to his exemplary diligence and fidelity, in all that related to the care of the troops over which he was set; whether with regard to the men, or the horses. He knew that it is incumbent on those who have the honour of presiding over others, whether in civil, ecclesiastical, or military offices, not to content themselves with doing only so much as may preserve them from the reproach of gross and visible neglect; but seriously to consider, how much they can possibly do, without going out of the proper sphere, to serve the public, by the due inspection of those committed to their care. The duties of the closet, and of the sanctuary, were so adjusted as not to interfere with those of the parade, or any other place where the welfare of the regiment called him. On the other hand, he was solicitous not to suffer these things to interfere with religion; a due attendance to which he apprehended to be the surest method of attaining all desirable success in every other interest and concern in life. He therefore abhorred every thing that should look like a contrivance to keep his soldiers employed about their horses and their arms at the season of public worship: (an indecency which I wish there were no room to mention): far from that, he used to have them drawn up just before it began, and from the parade they went off to the house of God. He understood the rights of conscience too well to impose his own particular profession in religion on others, or to use those who differed from him in the choice of its modes, the less kindly or respectfully on that account. But, as most of his own company, and many of the rest, chose, when in England, to attend him to the dissenting chapel, he used to march them thither in due time, so as to be there before the worship began. And I must do them the justice to say, that so far as I could ever discern, when I have seen them in large numbers before me, they behaved with as

much reverence, gravity, and decorum, during the time of divine service, as any of their fellow-worshippers.

§ 88. That his remarkable care to maintain good discipline among them (of which we shall afterwards speak) might be the more effectual, he made himself on all proper occasions accessible to them, and expressed a great concern for their interest; which being so genuine and sincere, naturally discovered itself in a variety of instances. I remember, I had once occasion to visit one of his dragoons, in his last illness, at Harborough, and I found the man upon the borders of eternity; a circumstance which, as he apprehended it himself, must add some peculiar weight and credibility to his discourse. And he then told me, in his colonel's absence, that he questioned not but he should have everlasting reason to bless God on Colonel Gardiner's account, for he had been a father to him in all his interests, both temporal and spiritual. He added, that he had visited him almost every day during his illness, with religious advice and instruction, as well as taken care that he should want nothing that might conduce to the recovery of his health. And he did not speak of this as the result of any particular attachment to him, but as the manner in which he was accustomed to treat those under his command. It is no wonder that this engaged their affection to a very great degree. And I doubt not, that if he had fought the fatal battle of Prestonpans at the head of that gallant regiment, of which he had the care for so many years, and which is allowed by most unexceptionable judges to be one of the finest in the British service, and consequently in the world, he had been supported in a much different manner; and had found a much greater number, who would have rejoiced in an opportunity of making their own breasts a barrier in the defence of his.

§ 89. It could not but greatly endear him to his soldiers, that so far as preferments lay in his power, or were under his influence, they were distributed according to merit; which he knew to be as much the dictate of prudence, as of equity. I find by one of his letters before me, dated but a few months after his happy change, that he was solicited to improve his interest with the Earl of Stair, in favour of one whom he judged a very worthy person; and that it had been suggested by another who recommended him, that if he succeeded he might expect some handsome acknowledgment. But he answers with some degree of indignation, "Do you imagine I am to be bribed to do justice?" For such it seems he esteemed it, to confer the favour which was asked from him, on one so deserving. Nothing can more effectually tend to humble the enemies of a state, than that such maxims should universally prevail in it: and if they do not prevail, the worthiest men in an army or fleet may be sunk under repeated discouragements, and the basest exalted, to the infamy of the public, and perhaps to its ruin.

§ 90. In the midst of all the gentleness which Colonel Gardiner exercised towards his soldiers, he made it very apparent, that he knew how to reconcile the tenderness of a real, faithful, and condescending friend, with the authority of a commander. Perhaps hardly any thing conduced more generally to the maintaining of this authority, than the strict decorum and good manners with which he treated even the private gentlemen of his regiment; which has always a great efficacy towards keeping inferiors at a proper distance, and forbids, in the least offensive manner, familiarities, which degrade the superior, and enervate his influence. The calmness and steadiness of his behaviour on all occasions, did also greatly tend to the same purpose. He knew how mean a man looks in the transports of passion, and would not use so much freedom with any of his men, as to fall into such transports before them; well knowing, that persons in the lowest rank of life are aware, how unfit they are to govern others who cannot govern themselves. He was also sensible, how necessary it is in all who preside over others, and especially in military officers, to check irregularities, when they first begin to appear: and that he might be able to do it, he kept a strict inspection over his soldiers; in which view it was observed, that as he generally chose to reside among them as much as he could, (though in circumstances which sometimes occasioned him to deny himself in some interests which were very dear to him,) so, when they were around him, he seldom staid long in a place; but was frequently walking the streets, and looking into their quarters and stables, as well as reviewing and exercising them himself. It has often been observed, that the regiment of which he was so many years lieutenant-colonel, was one of the most regular and orderly regiments in the public service; so that perhaps none of our dragoons were more welcome than they to the towns where their character was known. Yet no such bodies of men are so blameless in their conduct, but something will be found, especially among such considerable numbers, worthy of censure, and sometimes of punishment. This Colonel Gardiner knew how to inflict with a becoming resolution, and with all the severity which he judged necessary: a severity the more awful and impressing, as it was always attended with meekness; for he well knew, that when things are done in a passion, it seems only an accidental circumstance that they are acts of justice, and that such indecencies greatly obstruct the ends of punishment, both as it relates to reforming offenders, and to deterring others from an imitation of their faults.

§ 91. One instance of his conduct, which happened at Leicester, and was related by the person

chiefly concerned, to a worthy friend from whom I had it, I cannot forbear inserting. While part of the regiment was encamped in the neighbourhood of that place, the Colonel went incognito to the camp in the middle of the night; for he sometimes lodged at his quarters in the town. One of the centinels then on duty had abandoned his post, and on being seized broke out into some oaths, and profane execrations, against those that discovered him: a crime of which the Colonel had the greatest abhorrence, and on which he never failed to animadvert. The man afterwards appeared much ashamed and concerned for what he had done. But the Colonel ordered him to be brought early the next morning to his own quarters, where he had prepared a piquet, on which he appointed him a private sort of penance: and while he was put upon it, he discoursed with him seriously and tenderly upon the evils and aggravations of his fault; admonished him of the divine displeasure, which he had incurred; and urged him to argue from the pain which he then felt, how infinitely more dreadful it must be, to fall into the hands of the living God, and indeed to meet the terrors of that damnation, which he had been accustomed impiously to call for on himself and his companions. The result of this proceeding was, that the offender accepted his punishment, not only with submission, but with thankfulness. He went away with a more cordial affection for his colonel than ever he had before; and spoke of it some years after to my friend, in such a manner, that there seemed reason to hope it had been instrumental in producing, not only a change in his life, but in his heart.

§ 92. There cannot, I think, be a more proper place for mentioning the great reverence this excellent officer always expressed for the name of the blessed God, and the zeal with which he endeavoured to suppress, and, if possible, to extirpate, that detestable sin of swearing and cursing, which is every where so common, and especially among our military men. He often declared his sentiments with respect to this enormity, at the head of his regiment, and urged his captains and their subalterns, to take the greatest care that they did not give the sanction of their example to that which by their office they were obliged to punish in others. And indeed this zeal on these occasions wrought in a very active, and sometimes in a remarkably successful, manner, not only among his equals, but sometimes among his superiors too. An instance of this in Flanders I shall have an opportunity hereafter to produce, at present I shall only mention his conduct in Scotland a little before his death, as I have it from a very valuable young minister of that country, on whose testimony I can thoroughly depend; and I wish it may excite many to imitation.

§ 93. The commanding officer of the king's forces then about Edinburgh, with the other colonels, and several other gentlemen of rank in their respective regiments, favoured him with their company at Bankton, and took a dinner with him. He too well foresaw what might happen amidst such a variety of tempers and characters; and fearing lest his conscience should have been insnared by a sinful silence, or that, on the other hand, he might seem to pass the bounds of decency, and infringe upon the laws of hospitality, by animadverting on guests so justly entitled to his regard, he happily determined on the following method of avoiding each of these difficulties. As soon as they were come together, he addressed them with a great deal of respect, and yet at the same time with a very frank and determined air; and told them, that he had the honour in that district to be a justice of the peace, and consequently that he was sworn to put the laws in execution, and among the rest those against swearing; that he could not execute them upon others with any confidence, or by any means approve himself as a man of impartiality and integrity to his own heart, if he suffered them to be broken in his presence by persons of any rank whatsoever; and that therefore he entreated all the gentlemen who then honoured him with their company, that they would please to be upon their guard; and that if any oath or curse should escape them, he hoped they would consider his legal animadversions upon it as a regard to the duties of his office, and the dictates of his conscience, and not as owing to any want of deference to them. The commanding officer immediately supported him in this declaration, as entirely becoming the station in which he was, assuring him that he would be ready to pay the penalty, if he inadvertently transgressed; and when Colonel Gardiner on any occasion stepped out of the room, he himself undertook to be the guardian of the law in his absence; and as one of the inferior officers offended during this time, he informed the Colonel, so that the fine was exacted, and given to the poor,* with the universal approbation of the company. The story spread in the neighbourhood, and was perhaps applauded highly by many who wanted the courage to go and do likewise. But it may be said of the worthy person of whom I write, with the utmost propriety, that he feared the face of no man living where the honour of God was concerned. In all such cases he might be justly said, in Scripture phrase, to set his face like a flint; and I assuredly believe, that had he been in the presence of a sovereign prince, who had been guilty of this fault, his looks at least would have testified his grief and surprise; if he

* It is remarkable, that the money which was exacted on this occasion by the same officer, whose humane and pious regard to the honour of God, and the good of his fellow-creatures, gave them the kindest pressing invitation to pay their money into his hands, was by the Colonel's command laid out in a book for the poor, and kept for a good while, with this title, "The Swearers' Box."

had apprehended it unfit to have borne his testimony any other way.

§ 94. Lord Cadogan's regiment of dragoons, during the years I have mentioned, while he was lieutenant-colonel of it, was quartered in a great variety of places, both in England and Scotland, from many of which I have letters before me: particularly from Hamilton, Ayr, Carlisle, Hereford, Maidenhead, Leicester, Warwick, Coventry, Stamford, Harborough, Northampton, and several other places, especially in our inland parts. The natural consequence was, that the Colonel, whose character was on many accounts so very remarkable, had a very extensive acquaintance: and I believe I may certainly say, that wherever he was known by persons of wisdom and worth, he was proportionably respected, and left behind him traces of unaffected devotion, humility, benevolence, and zeal, for the support and advancement of religion and virtue.

§ 95. The equable tenor of his mind in these respects, is illustrated by his letters from several of these places; and though it is but comparatively a small number of them which I have now in my hands, yet they will afford some valuable extracts; which I shall therefore here lay before my reader, that he may the better judge as to his real character, in particulars of which I have already discoursed, or which may hereafter occur.

§ 96. In a letter to his lady, dated from Carlisle, Nov. 19, 1733, when he was on his journey to Herefordshire, he breathes out his grateful, cheerful soul in these words: "I bless God, I was never better in my life-time; and I wish I could be so happy as to hear the same of you; or rather, in other words, to hear that you had obtained an entire trust in God: that would infallibly keep you in perfect peace; for the God of truth hath promised it. Oh, how ought we to be longing to be with Christ, which is infinitely better than any thing we can propose here! To be there, where all complaints shall be for ever banished; where no mountains shall separate between God and our souls: and I hope, it will be some addition to our happiness, that you and I shall be separated no more; but that as we have joined in singing the praises of our glorious Redeemer here, we shall sing them in a much higher key through an endless eternity. Oh eternity, eternity! What a wonderful thought is eternity!"

§ 97. From Leicester, August 6, 1739, he writes thus to his lady: "Yesterday I was at the Lord's table, where you and the children were not forgotten: but how wonderfully was I assisted when I came home, to plead for you all with many tears!" And then, speaking of some intimate friends, who were impatient (as I suppose by the connexion) for his return to them, he takes occasion to observe the necessity "of endeavouring to compose our minds, and to say with the Psalmist, My soul, wait thou only upon God." Afterwards, speaking of one of his children, of whom he heard that he made a commendable progress in learning, he expresses his satisfaction in it, and adds, "But how much greater joy would it give me, to hear that he was greatly advanced in the school of Christ! Oh that our children may but be wise to salvation; and may grow in grace as they do in stature!"

§ 98. These letters, which to so familiar a friend evidently lay open the heart, and show the ideas and affections which were lodged deepest there, are sometimes taken up with an account of sermons he had attended, and the impressions they had made upon his mind. I shall mention one only as a specimen of many more, which was dated from a place called Cohorn, April 15: "We had here a minister from Wales, who gave us two excellent discourses on the love of Christ to us, as an argument to engage our love to him. And indeed, next to the greatness of his love to us, methinks there is nothing so astonishing as the coldness of our love to him. Oh that he would shed abroad his love upon our hearts by his Holy Spirit, that ours might be kindled into a flame! May God enable you to trust in him, and then you will be kept in perfect peace!"

§ 99. We have met with many traces of that habitual gratitude to the blessed God, as his heavenly Father and constant friend, which made his life probably one of the happiest that ever was spent on earth. I cannot omit one more, which appears to me the more worthy of notice, as being a short turn in as hasty a letter as any I remember to have seen of his, which he wrote from Leicester, in June 1739. "I am now under the deepest sense of the many favours the Almighty has bestowed upon me: surely you will help me to celebrate the praises of our gracious God and kind Benefactor." This exuberance of grateful affection, which, while it was almost every hour pouring itself forth before God in the most genuine and emphatical language, felt itself still, as it were, straitened for want of a sufficient vent, and therefore called on others to help him with their concurrent praises, appears to me the most glorious and happy state in which a human soul can find itself on this side heaven.

§ 100. Such was the temper which this excellent man appears to have carried along with him through such a variety of places and circumstances; and the whole of his deportment was suitable to these impressions. Strangers were agreeably struck with his first appearance, there was so much of the Christian, the well-bred man, and the universal friend in it; and as they came more intimately to know him, they discovered more and more the uniformity and consistency of his whole temper and

behaviour: so that, whether he made only a visit for a few days to any place, or continued there for many weeks or months, he was always beloved and esteemed, and spoken of with that honourable testimony from persons of the most different denominations and parties, which nothing but true sterling worth, (if I may be allowed the expression,) and that in an eminent degree, can secure.

§ 101. Of the justice of this testimony, which I had so often heard from a variety of persons, I myself began to be a witness about the time when the last-mentioned letter was dated. In this view I believe I shall never forget that happy day, June 13, 1739, when I first met him at Leicester. I remember, I happened that day to preach a lecture from Psalm cxix. 158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy law. I was large in describing that mixture of indignation and grief (strongly expressed by the original word there) with which the good man looks on the daring transgressors of the divine law; and in tracing the causes of that grief, as arising from a regard to the divine honour, and the interest of a Redeemer, and a compassionate concern for the misery such offenders bring on themselves, and for the mischief they do to the world about them. I little thought how exactly I was drawing Colonel Gardiner's character under each of those heads; and I have often reflected upon it as a happy Providence, which opened a much speedier way than I could have expected, to the breast of one of the most amiable and useful friends which I ever expect to find upon earth. We afterwards sung a hymn, which brought over again some of the leading thoughts in the sermon, and struck him so strongly, that, on obtaining a copy of it, he committed it to his memory, and used to repeat it with so forcible an accent, as showed how much every line expressed of his very soul. In this view the reader will pardon my inserting it; especially, as I know not when I may get time to publish a volume of these serious, though artless, composures, which I sent him in manuscript some years ago, and to which I have since made very large additions.

I.

Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise,
To torrents melt my streaming eyes;
And thou, my heart, with anguish feel
Those evils which thou canst not heal.

II.

See human nature sunk in shame!
See scandals poured on Jesu's name!
The Father wounded through the Son,
The world abused, the soul undone.

III.

See the short course of vain delight
Closing in everlasting night!
In flames, that no abatement know,
The briny tears for ever flow.

IV.

My God, I feel the mournful scene;
My bowels yearn o'er dying men:
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the fire-brands from the flame.

V.

But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep, where most it loves.
Thine own all-saving arm employ,
And turn these drops of grief to joy!

§ 102. The Colonel, immediately after the conclusion of the service, met me in the vestry, and embraced me in the most obliging and affectionate manner, as if there had been a long friendship between us; assured me, that he had for some years been intimately acquainted with my writings; and desired that we might concert measures for spending some hours together before I left the town. I was so happy as to be able to secure an opportunity of doing it; and I must leave it upon record, that I cannot recollect I was ever equally edified by any conversation I remember to have enjoyed. We passed that evening and the next morning together; and it is impossible for me to describe the impression which the interview left upon my heart. I rode alone all the remainder of the day; and it was my unspeakable happiness that I was alone, since I could be no longer with him; for I can hardly conceive what other company would not then have been an encumbrance. The views which he gave me even then, (for he began to repose a most obliging confidence in me, though he concealed some of the most extraordinary circumstances of the methods by which he had been recovered to God and happiness,) with those cordial sentiments of evangelical piety and extensive goodness, which he poured out into my bosom with so endearing a freedom, fired my very soul; and I hope I may truly say, (what I wish and pray many of my readers may also adopt for themselves,) that I glorified God in him. Our epistolary correspondence immediately commenced upon my return; and though, through the multiplicity of business on both sides, it suffered many interruptions, it was in some degree the blessing of all the following years of my life, till he fell by those unreasonable and wicked men, who had it in their hearts with him to have destroyed all our glory, defence, and happiness.

§ 103. The first letter I received from him was so remarkable, that some persons of eminent piety, to whom I communicated it, would not be content without copying it out, or making some extracts from it. I persuade myself, that my devout reader will not be displeased that I insert the greatest part of it here; especially, as it serves to illustrate the

affectionate sense which he had of the divine goodness in his conversion, though more than twenty years had passed since that memorable event happened. Having mentioned my ever dear and honoured friend, Dr. Isaac Watts, on an occasion which I hinted at above, (§ 70.) he adds, "I have been in pain these several years, lest that excellent person, that sweet singer in our Israel, should have been called to heaven, before I had an opportunity of letting him know, how much his works have been blessed to me, and of course, of returning him my hearty thanks: for though it is owing to the operation of the blessed Spirit, that any thing works effectually upon our hearts, yet if we are not thankful to the instrument which God is pleased to make use of, whom we do see, how shall we be thankful to the Almighty, whom we have not seen? I desire to bless God for the good news of his recovery, and entreat you to tell him, that although I cannot keep pace with him here, in celebrating the high praises of our glorious Redeemer, which is the greatest grief of my heart; yet I am persuaded, that when I join the glorious company above, where there will be no drawbacks, none will out-sing me there: because I shall not find any that will be more indebted to the wonderful riches of divine grace than I.

'Give me a place at thy saints' feet
Or some fall'n angel's vacant seat
I'll strive to sing as loud as they,
Who sit above in brighter day.'

I know, it is natural for every one who has felt the Almighty power which raised our glorious Redeemer from the grave, to believe his case singular; but I have made every one in this respect submit, as soon as he has heard my story. And if you seemed so surprised at the account which I gave you, what will you be when you hear it all?

'Oh! if I had an angel's voice,
And could be heard from pole to pole,
I would tell all the listening world
Proclaim thy goodness to my soul.'

He then concludes, after some expressions of endearment, (which, with whatever pleasure I review them, I must not here insert,) "If you knew what a natural aversion I have to writing, you would be astonished at the length of this letter, which is I believe the longest I ever wrote. But my heart warms when I write to you, which makes my pen move the easier. I hope it will please our gracious God long to preserve you a blessed instrument in his hand of doing great good in the church of Christ; and that you may always enjoy a thriving soul in a healthful body, shall be the continual prayer of." &c.

§ 104. As our intimacy grew, our mutual affection increased, and "My dearest friend," was the form of address with which most of his epistles of the last years were begun and ended. Many of them are filled up with his sentiments of those writings which I published during these years, which he read with great attention, and of which he speaks in terms which it becomes me to suppress, and to impute in a considerable degree to the kind prejudices of so endeared a friendship. He gives me repeated assurances, "that he was daily mindful of me in his prayers;" a circumstance which I cannot recollect without the greatest thankfulness; the loss of which I should more deeply lament, did I not hope, that the happy effect of these prayers might still continue, and might run into all my remaining days.

§ 105. It might be a pleasure to me to make several extracts from many others of his letters; but it is a pleasure which I ought to suppress, and rather to reflect with unfeigned humility, how unworthy I was of such regards from such a person, and of that divine goodness which gave me such a friend in him. I shall therefore only add two general remarks, which offer themselves from several of his letters. The one is, that there is in some of them, as our freedom increased, an agreeable vein of humour and pleasantry, which shows how easy religion sat upon him, and how far he was from placing any part of it in a gloomy melancholy, or stiff formality. The other is, that he frequently refers to domestic circumstances, such as the illness or recovery of his children, &c. which I am surprised how a man of his extensive and important business could so distinctly bear upon his mind. But his memory was good, and his heart was yet better; and his friendship was such, that nothing which sensibly affected the heart of one whom he honoured with it, left his own but slightly touched. I have all imaginable reason to believe, that in many instances his prayers were not only offered for us in general terms, but varied as our particular situation required. Many quotations might verify this: but I decline troubling the reader with an enumeration of passages, in which it was only the abundance of friendly sympathy that gave this truly great as well as good man so cordial a concern.

§ 106. After this correspondence, carried on for the space of about three years, and some interviews which we had enjoyed at different places, he came to spend some time with us at Northampton, and brought with him his lady and his two eldest children. I had here an opportunity of taking a much nearer view of his character, and surveying it in a much greater variety of lights than before; and my esteem for him increased, in proportion to these opportunities. What I have wrote above, with respect to his conduct in relative life, was in a great measure drawn from what I now saw: and I shall mention here some other points in his behaviour, which particularly struck my mind; and likewise shall touch on his sentiments on some

topics of importance, which he freely communicated to me, and which I remarked on account of that wisdom and propriety which I apprehended in them.

§ 107. There was nothing more openly observable in Colonel Gardiner than the exemplary gravity, composure, and reverence, with which he attended public worship. Copious as he was in his secret devotions before he engaged in it, he always began them so early, as not to be retarded by them, when he should resort to the house of God. He, and all his soldiers who chose to worship with him, were generally there (as I have given a limited) before the service began; that the entrance of so many of them at once might not disturb the congregation already engaged in devotion, and that there might be the better opportunity for bringing the mind to a becoming attention, and preparing it for converse with the divine Being. While acts of worship were going on, whether of prayer or singing, he always stood up; and whatever regard he might have for persons who passed by him at that time, though it were to come into the same pew, he never paid any compliment to them: and often has he expressed his wonder, at the indecency of breaking off our address to God to bow to a fellow-creature, which he thought a much greater indecency, than it would be, on a little occasion and circumstance, to interrupt an address to our prince. During the time of preaching, his eye was commonly fixed upon the minister, though sometimes turned round upon the auditory, where if he observed any to trifle, it filled him with just indignation. And I have known instances, in which, upon making the remark, he has communicated it to some friend of the persons who were guilty of it, that proper application might be made to prevent it for the time to come.

§ 108. A more devout communicant at the table of the Lord has perhaps seldom been any where known. Often have I had the pleasure to see that manly countenance softened to all the marks of humiliation and contrition on this occasion; and to discern, in spite of all his efforts to conceal them, streams of tears flowing down from his eyes, while he has been directing them to those memorials of his Redeemer's love. And some, who have conversed intimately with him after he came from that ordinance, have observed a visible abstraction from surrounding objects; by which there seemed reason to imagine that his soul was engaged in holy contemplation. And I particularly remember, that when we had once spent good part of the following Monday in riding together, he made an apology to me for being so absent as he seemed, by telling me, that his heart was flown upwards, before he was aware, to him whom not having seen he loved;* and that he was rejoicing in him with such unspeakable joy, that he could not hold it down to creature-converse.

§ 109. In all the offices of friendship he was remarkably ready, and had a most sweet and engaging manner of performing them, which greatly heightened the obligations he conferred. He seemed not to set any high value upon any benefit he bestowed; but did it without the least parade, as a thing which in those circumstances came of course, where he had professed love and respect. Which he was not over-forward to do, though he treated strangers, and those who were most his inferiors, very courteously, and always seemed, because he in truth always was, glad of any opportunity of doing them good.

§ 110. He was particularly zealous in vindicating the reputation of his friends in their absence: and though I cannot recollect that I had ever an opportunity of observing this immediately, as I do not know that I ever was present with him when any ill was spoken of others at all; yet by what I have heard him say, with relation to attempts to injure the character of worthy and useful men, I have reason to believe, that no man living was more sensible of the baseness and infamy, as well as the cruelty, of such a conduct. He knew and despised the low principles of resentment for unreasonable expectations disappointed, of personal attachment to men of some crossing interests, of envy, and of party zeal, from whence such a conduct often proceeds: and was particularly offended, when he found it (as he frequently did) in persons that set up for the greatest patrons of liberty, virtue, and candour. He looked upon the murderers of reputation and usefulness, as some of the vilest pests of society; and plainly showed, on every proper occasion, that he thought it the part of a generous, benevolent, and courageous man, to exert himself in tracing and hunting down the slander, that the authors or abettors of it might be less capable of doing mischief for the future.

§ 111. The most plausible objection that I ever heard to Colonel Gardiner's character is, that he was too much attached to some religious principles, established indeed in the churches both of England and Scotland, but which have of late years been much disputed, and from which, it is at least generally supposed, not a few in both have thought proper to depart, whatever expedients they may have found to quiet their consciences, in subscribing those formularies in which they are plainly tangled. His zeal was especially apparent in opposition to those doctrines which seemed to derogate from the divine honours of the Son and Spirit of God, and from the freedom of divine grace, or the reality and necessity of its operations in the conversion and salvation of sinners.

* N.B. [illegible] Saturday [illegible]

§ 112. With relation to these I must observe, that it was his most stedfast persuasion, that all those notions which represent our blessed Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as mere creatures, or which set aside the atonement of the former, or the influences of the latter, do sap the very foundation of Christianity, by rejecting the most glorious doctrines peculiar to it. He had attentively observed (what indeed is too obvious) the unhappy influence which the denial of these principles often has on the character of ministers, and on their success; and was persuaded, that an attempt to substitute that mutilated form of Christianity which remains, when these essentials of it are taken away, has proved one of the most successful methods which the great enemy of souls has ever taken in these latter days, to lead men by insensible degrees into deism, vice, and perdition. He also sagaciously observed the artful manner in which obnoxious tenets are often maintained or insinuated, with all that mixture of zeal and address with which they are propagated in the world, even by those who had most solemnly professed to believe, and engaged to teach, the contrary; and, as he really apprehended that the glory of God and the salvation of souls was concerned, his piety and charity made him eager and strenuous in opposing what he judged to be errors of so pernicious a nature. Yet I must declare, that, according to what I have known of him, (and I believe he opened his heart on these topics to me with as much freedom as to any man living,) he was not ready upon light suspicions to charge tenets which he thought so pernicious on any, especially where he saw the appearances of a good temper and life, which he always reverenced and loved in persons of all sentiments and professions. He severely condemned causeless jealousies, and evil surmisings of every kind; and extended that charity in this respect, both to clergy and laity, which good Bishop Burnet was so ready, according to his own account, to limit the latter, "of believing every man good till he knew him to be bad, and his notions right till he knew them wrong." He could not but be very sensible of the unhappy consequences which may follow on attacking the characters of men, especially of those who are ministers of the gospel: and if, through a mixture of human frailty, from which the best of men in the best of their meanings and intentions are not entirely free, he has ever, in the warmth of his heart, dropped a word which might be injurious to any on that account, (which I believe very seldom happened,) he would gladly retract it on better information; which was perfectly agreeable to that honest and generous frankness of temper, in which I never knew any man who exceeded him.

§ 113. On the whole, it was indeed his deliberate judgment that the Arian, Socinian, and Pelagian doctrines were highly dishonourable to God, and dangerous to the souls of men; and that it was the duty of private Christians to be greatly on their guard against those ministers by whom they are entertained, lest their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Yet he sincerely abhorred the thought of persecution for conscience' sake; of the absurdity and iniquity of which, in all its kinds and degrees, he had as deep and rational a conviction as any man I could name. And indeed the generosity of his heroic heart could hardly bear to think that those glorious truths, which he so cordially loved, and which he assuredly believed to be capable of such fair support, both from reason and the word of God, should be disgraced by methods of defence and propagation, common to the most impious and ridiculous falsehoods. Nor did he by any means approve of passionate and furious ways of vindicating the most vital and important doctrines of the gospel; for he knew, that to maintain the most benevolent religion in the world, by such malevolent and infernal methods, was destroying the end to accomplish the means; and that it was as impossible that true Christianity should be supported thus, as it is that a man should long be nourished by eating his own flesh. To display the genuine fruits of Christianity in a good life, to be ready to plead with meekness and sweetness for the doctrines it teaches, and to labour by every office of humanity and goodness to gain upon them that oppose it, were the weapons with which this good soldier of Jesus Christ faithfully fought the battles of the Lord. These weapons will always be victorious in his cause; and they who have recourse to others of a different temperature, how strong soever they may seem, and how sharp soever they may really be, will find they break in their hands when they exert them most furiously, and are much more likely to wound themselves, than to conquer the enemies they oppose.

§ 114. But while I am speaking of Colonel Gardiner's charity in this respect, I must not omit that of another kind, which has indeed engrossed the name of charity much more than it ought, excellent as it is; I mean almsgiving, for which he was very remarkable. I have often wondered how he was able to do so many generous things this way: but his frugality fed the spring. He made no pleasurable expense on himself, and was contented with a very decent appearance in his family, without affecting such an air of grandeur as could not have been supported without sacrificing to it satisfactions far nobler, and, to a temper like his, far more delightful. The lively and tender feelings of his heart in favour of the distressed and afflicted, made it a self-indulgence to him to relieve them; and the deep conviction he had of the vain and transitory

nature of the enjoyments of this world: together with the sublime view he had of another, engaged him to dispense his bounties with a very liberal hand, and even to seek out proper objects of them: and, above all his seasons and ardent love to the Lord Jesus Christ engaged him to feel, with a true sympathy, the concerns of his poor members. In consequence of this, he honoured several of his friends with commissions for the relief of the poor; and particularly with relation to some under my pastoral care, he referred it to my discretion to supply them with what I should judge expedient, and frequently pressed me in his letters to be sure not to let them want. And where persons standing in need of his charity happened, as they often did, to be persons of remarkably religious dispositions, it was easy to perceive that he not only loved but honoured them; and really esteemed it an honour which Providence conferred upon him, that he should be made, as it were, the almoner of God for the relief of such.

§ 115. I cannot forbear relating a little story here, which, when the Colonel himself heard it, gave him such exquisite pleasure, that I hope it will be acceptable to several of my readers. There was in a village about three miles from Northampton, and in a family which of all others near me was afterwards most indebted to him, (though he had never then seen any member of it,) an aged and poor, but eminently good, woman, who had, with great difficulty, in the exercise of much faith and patience, diligence and humility, made shift to educate a large family of children, after the death of her husband, without being chargeable to the parish; which, as it was quite beyond her hope, she often spoke of with great delight. At length, when worn out with age and infirmities, she lay upon her dying bed, she did in a most lively and affecting manner express her hope and joy in the views of approaching glory. Yet, amidst all the triumph of such a prospect, there was one remaining care and distress which lay heavy on her mind; which was, that, as her journey and her stock of provisions were both ended together, she feared that she must either be buried at the parish expense, or leave her most dutiful and affectionate daughters the house stripped of some of the few movables which remained in it, to perform the last office of duty to her, which she had reason to believe they would do. While she was combating with this only remaining anxiety, I happened, though I knew not the extremity of her illness, to come in, and to bring with me a guinea, which the generous Colonel had sent by a special message on hearing the character of the family, for its relief. A present like this (probably the most considerable they had ever received in their lives) coming in this manner from an entire stranger, at such a crisis of time, threw my dying friend [illegible] such amidst all her poverty, I removed to call her into a perfect transport of joy. She esteemed it a singular favour of Providence, sent to her in her last moments as a token of good, and greeted it as a special mark of that living kindness of God which should attend her for ever. She might even be so raised up in her bed, that she might bless God for it upon her knees, and with her last breath pray for her kind and generous benefactor, and for him who had been the instrument of directing his bounty into this channel. After which she soon expired, with such tranquillity and sweetness as could not but most sensibly delight all who beheld her, and occasioned many, who knew the circumstances, to glorify God on her behalf.

§ 116. The Colonel's last residence at Northampton was in June and July, 1742, when Lord Cadogan's regiment of dragoons was quartered here: and I cannot but observe, that wherever that regiment came, it was remarkable, not only for the fine appearance it made, and for the exactness with which it performed its various exercises, (of which it had about this time the honour to receive the most illustrious testimonials,) but also for the great sobriety and regularity of the soldiers. Many of the officers copied also the excellent pattern which they had daily before their eyes; and a considerable number of the private men seemed to be persons, not only of strict virtue, but of serious piety. And I doubt not, but they found their abundant account in it; not only in the serenity and happiness of their own minds, which is beyond comparison the most important consideration; but also, in some degree, in the obliging and respectful treatment which they generally met with in their quarters. And I mention this, because I am persuaded, that if gentlemen of their profession knew, and would reflect, how much more comfortable they make their own quarters by a sober, orderly, and obliging conduct, they would be regular out of mere self-love: if they were not influenced, as I heartily wish they may always be, by a nobler principle.

§ 117. Towards the latter end of this year he embarked for Flanders, and spent some considerable time with the regiment at Ghent, where he much lamented the want of those religious conferences and opportunities which had made his other absence so delightful. But, as he had made so eminent a progress in that divine life which they are all intended to promote, he could not be inactive in the cause of God. I have now before me a letter dated from thence October 16, 1742, in which he writes: "As for me, I am indeed in a dry and barren land, where no water is. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because nothing is to be heard in our Sodom but blaspheming the name of my God: and I am not honoured as the instrument of doing any great service. Last week, I have rebuked six or seven field-

officers of swearing. I dine every day with them, and have entered them into a voluntary contract to pay a shilling to the poor for every oath: and it is wonderful to observe the effect it has had already. One of them told me this day at dinner, that it had really such an influence upon him, that, being at cards last night when another officer fell a swearing, he was not able to bear it, but rose up and left the company. So, you see, restraints at first arising from a low principle may improve into something better."

§ 118. During his abode here he had a great deal of business upon his hands; and had also, in some marches, the care of more regiments than his own: and it has been very delightful to me to observe what a degree of converse with heaven, and the God of it, he maintained amidst these scenes of hurry and fatigue; of which the reader may find a remarkable specimen in the following letter, dated from Lichwick, in the beginning of April, 1743, which was one of the last I received from him while abroad, and begins with these words: "Yesterday being the Lord's day, at six in the morning, I had the pleasure of receiving yours at Nortonick; and it proved a sabbath-day's blessing to me. Some time before it reached me" (from whence by the way it may be observed, that his former custom of rising so early to his devotions was still retained) "I had been wrestling with God with many tears; and when I had read it, I returned to my knees again, to give hearty thanks to him for all his goodness to you and yours, and also to myself, in that he hath been pleased to stir up so many who are dear to him, to be mindful of me at the throne of grace." And then, after the mention of some other particulars, he adds, "Blessed and adored for ever be the holy name of my heavenly Father, who holds my soul in life, and my body in perfect health! Were I to recount his mercy and goodness to me even in the midst of all these hurries, I should never have done.—I hope your Master will still encourage you in his work, and make you a blessing to many. My dearest friend, I am much more yours than I can express, and shall remain so while I am J. G."

§ 119. In this correspondence I had a further opportunity of discovering that humble resignation to the will of God, which made so amiable a part of his character, and of which before I had seen so many instances. He speaks, in the letter from which I have just been giving an extract, of the hope he had expressed in a former, of seeing us again that winter; and he adds, "To be sure, it would have been a great pleasure to me: but we poor mortals form projects, and the Almighty Ruler of the universe disposes of all as he pleases. A great many of us were getting ready for our return to England, when we received an order to march towards Frankfort, to the great surprise of the whole army, neither can any of us comprehend what we are to do there; for there is no enemy in that country, the French army being marched into Bavaria, where I am sure we cannot follow them. But it is the will of the Lord; and his will be done! I desire to bless and praise my heavenly Father, that I am entirely resigned to it. It is no matter where I go, or what becomes of me, so that God may be glorified, in my life, or my death. I should rejoice much to hear that all my friends were equally resigned."

§ 120. The mention of this article reminds me of another, relating to the views which he had of obtaining a regiment for himself. He endeavoured to deserve it by the most faithful services; some of them indeed beyond what the strength of his constitution would well bear: for the weather in some of these marches proved exceeding bad, and yet he would be always at the head of his people, that he might look to every thing that concerned them with the exactest care. This obliged him to neglect the beginnings of a feverish illness: the natural consequence of which was, that it grew very formidable, forced a long confinement upon him, and gave animal nature a shock which it never recovered.

§ 121. In the mean time, as he had the promise of a regiment before he quitted England, his friends were continually expecting an occasion of congratulating him on having received the command of one. But still they were disappointed; and on some of them the disappointment seemed to sit heavy. As for the Colonel himself, he seemed quite easy about it; and appeared much greater in that easy situation of mind than the highest military honours and preferments could have made him. With great pleasure do I at this moment recollect the unaffected serenity, and even indifference, with which he expresses himself upon this occasion, in a letter to me, dated about the beginning of April, 1743. "The disappointment of a regiment is nothing to me; for I am satisfied that, had it been for God's glory, I should have had it; and I should have been sorry to have had it on any other terms. My heavenly Father has bestowed upon me infinitely more than if he had made me emperor of the whole world."

§ 122. I find several parallel expressions in other letters; and those to his lady about the same time were just in the same strain. In an extract from one which was written from Aix la Chapelle, April 21, the same year, I meet with these words: "People here imagine I must be sadly troubled that I have not got a regiment (for six out of seven counsel are now disposed of;) but they are strangely mistaken, for it has given me no sort of trouble. My heavenly Father knows what is best for me, and blessed and for ever adored be his name, he has given me an entire resignation to his will; besides,

I do not know that ever I met with any disappointment since I was a Christian, but it pleased God to discover to me that it was plainly for my advantage, by bestowing something better upon me afterwards: many instances of which I am able to produce; and therefore I should be the greatest of monsters if I did not trust in him."

§ 123. I should be guilty of a great omission if I were not to add how remarkably the event corresponded with his faith on this occasion. For whereas he had no intimation or expectation of any thing more than a regiment of foot, his Majesty was pleased, out of his great goodness, to give him a regiment of dragoons, which was then quartered just in his own neighbourhood. And it is properly remarked by the reverend and worthy person through whose hand this letter was transmitted to me, that when the Colonel thus expressed himself, he could have no prospect of what he afterwards so soon obtained; as General Bland's regiment, to which he was advanced, was only vacant on the 19th of April, that is, two days before the date of this letter, when it was impossible he should have any notice of that vacancy. And it also deserves observation, that some few days after the Colonel was thus unexpectedly promoted to the command of these dragoons, Brigadier Cornwallis's regiment of foot, then in Flanders, became vacant: now had this happened before his promotion to General Bland's, Colonel Gardiner in all probability would only have had that regiment of foot, and so have continued in Flanders. When the affair was issued, he informs Lady Frances of it, in a letter dated from a village near Frankfort, May 3, in which he refers to his former of the 21st of April, observing how remarkably it was verified in God's having given him (for so he expresses it, agreeably to the views he continually maintained of the universal agency of divine Providence) "what he had no expectation of, and what was so much better than that which he had missed, a regiment of dragoons quartered at his own door."

§ 124. It appeared to him, that by this remarkable event Providence called him home. Accordingly, though he had other preferments offered him in the army, he chose to return; and, I believe, the more willingly, as he did not expect there would have been any action. Just at this time it pleased God to give him an awful instance of the uncertainty of human prospects and enjoyments, by that violent fever which seized him at Ghent in his way to England; and perhaps the more severely, for the efforts he made to push on his journey, though he had for some days been much indisposed. It was, I think, one of the first fits of severe illness he had ever met with, and he was ready to look upon it as a sudden call into eternity: but it gave him no painful alarm in that view. He committed himself to the God of his life, and in a few weeks he was so well recovered as to be capable of pursuing his journey, though not without difficulty: and I cannot but think it might have conduced much to a more perfect recovery than he ever attained, to have allowed himself a longer repose, in order to recruit his exhausted strength and spirits. But there was an activity in his temper not easy to be restrained, and it was now stimulated, not only by a desire of seeing his friends, but of being with his regiment; that he might omit nothing in his power to regulate their morals and their discipline, and to form them for public service. Accordingly, he passed through London about the middle of June, 1743, where he had the honour of waiting on their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, and of receiving from both the most obliging tokens of favour and esteem. He arrived at Northampton on Monday the 20th of June, and spent part of three days here. But the great pleasure which his return and preferment gave us, was much abated by observing his countenance so sadly altered, and the many marks of languor, and remaining disorder, which evidently appeared; so that he really looked ten years older than he had done ten months before. I had however a satisfaction, sufficient to counterbalance much of the concern which this alteration gave me, in a renewed opportunity of observing, indeed more sensibly than ever, in how remarkable a degree he was dead to the enjoyments and views of this mortal life. When I congratulated him on the favourable appearance of Providence for him in the late event, he briefly told me the remarkable circumstances that attended it, with the most genuine impressions of gratitude to God for them; but added, "that, as his account was increased with his income, power, and influence, and his cares were proportionably increased too, it was as to his own personal concern much the same to him, whether he had remained in his former station, or been elevated to this; but that, if God should by this means honour him as an instrument of doing more good than he could otherwise have done, he should rejoice in it."

§ 125. I perceived that the near views he had taken of eternity, in the illness from which he was then so imperfectly recovered, had not in the least alarmed him; but that he would have been entirely willing, had such been the determination of God, to have been cut short in a foreign land, without any earthly friend near him, and in the midst of a journey, undertaken with hopes and prospects so pleasing to nature, which appeared to me no inconsiderable evidence of the strength of his faith. But we shall wonder the less at this extraordinary resignation, if we consider the joyful and assured prospect which he had of a happiness infinitely superior beyond the grave, of which that worthy minister

of the church of Scotland, who had an opportunity of conversing with him quickly after his return, and having the memorable story of his conversion from his own mouth, (as I have hinted above,) writes thus in his letter to me, dated January 14, 1746-7.—"When he came to review his regiment at Linlithgow, in summer 1743, after having given me the wonderful story as above, he concluded in words to this purpose;—Let me die whenever it shall please God, or wherever it shall be, I am sure I shall go to the mansions of eternal glory, and enjoy my God and my Redeemer in heaven for ever."

§ 126. While he was with us at this time he appeared deeply affected with the sad state of things as to religion and morals; and seemed to apprehend that the rod of God was hanging over so sinful a nation. He observed a great deal of disaffection, which the enemies of the government had, by a variety of artifices, been raising in Scotland for some years; and the number of Jacobites there, together with the defenceless state in which our island then was, with respect to the number of its forces at home, (of which he spoke at once with great concern and astonishment,) led him to expect an invasion from France, and an attempt in favour of the Pretender, much sooner than it happened. I have heard him say, many years before it came so near being accomplished, "that a few thousands might have a fair chance for marching from Edinburgh to London uncontrolled, and throw the whole kingdom into an astonishment." And I have great reason to believe, that this was one main consideration which engaged him to make such haste to his regiment, then quartered in those parts; as he imagined there was not a spot of ground where he might be more likely to have a call to expose his life in the service of his country; and perhaps, by appearing on a proper call early in its defence, be instrumental in suppressing the beginnings of most formidable mischief. How rightly he judged in these things, the event did too evidently show.

§ 127. The evening before our last separation, as I knew I could not entertain the invaluable friend who was then my guest more agreeably, I preached a sermon in my own house, with some particular reference to his case and circumstances, from those ever-memorable words, than which I have never felt any more powerful and more comfortable, Psalm xci. 14, 15, 16. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him: with long life (or length of days) will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation. This Scripture could not but lead our meditations to survey the character of the good man, as one who so knows the name of the blessed God, has such a deep apprehension of the glories and perfections of his nature) as determinately to set his love upon him, to make him the supreme object of his most ardent and constant affection. And it suggested the most sublime and animating hopes to persons of such a character, that their prayers shall be always acceptable to God; that though they may, and must, be called out to their share in the troubles and calamities of life, yet they may assure themselves of the divine presence in all; which shall issue in their deliverance, in their exaltation, sometimes to distinguished honour and esteem among men, and, it may be, in a long course of useful and happy years on earth; at least, which shall undoubtedly end in seeing, to their perpetual delight, the complete salvation of God, in a world where they shall enjoy length of days for ever and ever, and employ them all in adoring the great Author of their salvation and felicity. It is evident that these natural thoughts on such a Scripture were matters of universal concern. Yet had I known that this was the last time I should ever address Colonel Gardiner as a minister of the gospel, and had I foreseen the scenes through which God was about to lead him, I hardly know what considerations I could have suggested with more peculiar propriety. The attention, elevation, and delight, with which he heard them, was very apparent; and the pleasure which the observation of it gave me, continues to this moment. And let me be permitted to digress so far as to add, that this is indeed the great support of a Christian minister under the many discouragements and disappointments which he meets with in his attempts to [illegible] on the thoughtless part of mankind a deep sense of religious truth; that there is another important part of his work, in which he may hope to be more generally successful; as by plain, artless, but serious discourses, the great principles of Christian duty and hope may be nourished and invigorated in good men, their graces watered as at the root, and their souls animated both to persevere and improve in holiness. And when we are effectually performing such benevolent offices, so well suiting our immortal natures, to persons whose hearts are cemented with ours in the bonds of the most endearing and sacred friendship, it is too little to say it overpays the fatigue of our labours; it even swallows up all sense of it in the most rational and sublime pleasure.

§ 128. An incident occurs to my mind which happened that evening, which at least for the oddness of it may deserve a place in these memoirs. I had then with me one Thomas Porter, a poor but very honest and religious man, (now living at Hatfield Broadoak, in Essex,) who is quite unacquainted with letters, so as not to be able to distinguish one from another; yet is master of the contents of the Bible in so extraordinary a degree, that he has not

only fixed an immense number of texts in his memory, but merely by hearing them quoted in sermons, has registered there the chapter and verse in which these passages are to be found: this is attended with a marvellous facility in directing those that can read to turn to them, and a most unaccountable talent of fixing on such as suit almost every imaginable variety of circumstances in common life. There are two considerations in his case which make it the more wonderful: the one, that he is a person of a very low genius, having, besides a stammering which makes his speech almost unintelligible to strangers, so wild and awkward a manner of behaviour, that he is frequently taken for an idiot, and seems in many things to be indeed so; the other, that he grew up to manhood in a very licentious course of living, and an entire ignorance of divine things, so that all these exact impressions on his memory have been made in his riper years. I thought it would not be disagreeable to the Colonel to introduce to him this odd phænomenon, which many hundreds of people have had a curiosity to examine; and among all the strange things I have seen in him, I never remember any which equalled what passed on this occasion. On hearing the Colonel's profession, and receiving some hints of his religious character, he ran through a vast variety of Scriptures, beginning at the Pentateuch and going on to the Revelations, relating either to the dependence to be fixed on God for the success of military preparations, or to the instances and promises occurring there of his care of good men in the most imminent dangers, or to the encouragement to despise perils and death while engaged in a good cause, and supported by the views of a happy immortality. I believe he quoted more than twenty of these passages; and I must freely own, that I know not who could have chose them with greater propriety. If my memory do not deceive me, the last of his catalogue was that from which I afterwards preached on the lamented occasion of this great man's fall: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. We were all astonished at so remarkable a fact; and I question not but many of my readers will think the memory of it worthy of being thus preserved.

§ 129. But to return to my main subject: the next day after the sermon and conversation of which I have been speaking, I took my last leave of my inestimable friend, after attending him some part of his way northward. The first stage of our journey was to the cottage of that poor, but very religious, family which I had occasion to mention above, as relieved, and indeed in a great measure subsisted, by his charity. And nothing could be more delightful than to observe the condescension with which he conversed with these his humble pensioners. We there put up our last united prayers together; and he afterwards expressed, in the strongest terms I ever heard him use on such an occasion, the singular pleasure with which he had joined in them. Indeed it was no small satisfaction to me to have an opportunity of recommending such a valuable friend to the divine protection and blessing, with that particular freedom, and enlargement on what was peculiar in his circumstances, which hardly any other situation, unless we had been quite alone, could so conveniently have admitted. We went from thence to the table of a person of distinction in the neighbourhood, where he had an opportunity of showing in how decent and graceful a manner he could unite the Christian and the gentleman, and give conversation an improving and religious turn, without violating any of the rules of polite behaviour, or saying or doing any thing which looked at all constrained or affected. Here we took our last embrace, committed each other to the care of the God of heaven; and the Colonel pursued his journey to the north, where he spent all the remainder of his days.

§ 130. The more I reflect upon this appointment of Providence, the more I discern of the beauty and wisdom of it; not only as it led directly to that glorious period of life with which God had determined to honour him, and in which I think it becomes all his friends to rejoice; but also, as the retirement on which he entered could not but have a happy tendency to favour his more immediate and complete preparation for so speedy a remove. To which we may add, that it must probably have a very powerful influence to promote the interests of religion (incomparably the greatest of all interests) among the members of his own family; who must surely edify much by such daily lessons as they received from his lips, when they saw them illustrated and enforced by so admirable an example, and this for two complete years. It is the more remarkable, as I cannot find from the memoirs of his life in my hands, that he had ever been so long at home since he had a family, or indeed, from his childhood, ever so long at a time in any one place.

§ 131. With how clear a lustre his lamp shone, and with what holy vigour his loins were girded up in the service of his God, in these his latter days, I learn in part from the letters of several excellent persons, in the ministry, or in secular life, with whom I have since conversed or corresponded. And in his many letters, dated from Bankton, during this period, I have still further evidence how happy he was amidst those infirmities of body which his tenderness for me would seldom allow him to mention; for it appears from them what a daily intercourse he kept up with heaven, and what delightful communion with God crowned his attendance on public ordinances and his sweet hours

of devout retirement. He mentions his sacramental opportunities with peculiar relish, crying out as in a holy rapture, in reference to one and another of them, "O how gracious a Master do we serve! how pleasant is his service! how rich the entertainments of his love! Yet, oh how poor, and cold, are our services!"—But I will not multiply quotations of this sort, after those I have given above, which may be a sufficient specimen of many more in the same strain. This hint may suffice to show, that the same ardour of soul held out in a great measure to the last; and indeed it seems that, towards the close of life, like the flame of a lamp almost expiring, it sometimes exerted an unusual blaze.

§ 132. He spent much of his time at Bankton in religious solitude; and one most intimately conversant with him assures me, that the traces of that delightful converse with God which he enjoyed in it, might easily be discerned in that solemn yet cheerful countenance with which he often came out of his closet. Yet his exercises there must sometimes have been very mournful, considering the melancholy views which he had of the state of our public affairs. "I should be glad," says he, (in a letter which he sent me about the close of the year 1743,) "to hear what wise and good people among you think of the present circumstances of things. For my own part, though I thank God I fear nothing for myself, my apprehensions for the public are very gloomy, considering the deplorable prevalency of almost all kinds of wickedness amongst us; the natural consequence of the contempt of the gospel. I am daily offering my prayers to God for this sinful land of ours, over which his judgments seem to be gathering; and my strength is sometimes so exhausted with those strong cries and tears which I pour out before God on this occasion, that I am hardly able to stand when I arise from my knees." If we have many remaining to stand in the breach with equal fervency, I hope, crying as our provocations are, God will still be entreated for us, and save us.

§ 133. Most of the other letters I had the pleasure of receiving from him, after our last separation, are either filled, like those of former years, with tender expressions of affectionate solicitude for my domestic comfort and public usefulness, or relate to the writings I published during this time, or to the affairs of his eldest son, then under my care. But these are things which are by no means of a nature to be communicated here. It is enough to remark in the general, that the Christian was still mingled with all the care of the friend and the parent.

§ 134. But I think it incumbent upon me to observe, that during this time, and some preceding years, his attention, ever wakeful to such concerns, was much engaged by some religious appearances, which happened about this time, both in England and Scotland; with regard to which some may be curious to know his sentiments. He communicated them to me with the most unreserved freedom; and I cannot apprehend myself under any engagements to conceal them, as I am persuaded that it will be no prejudice to his memory that they should be publicly known.

§ 135. It was from Colonel Gardiner's pen that I received the first notice of that ever-memorable scene which was opened at Kilsyth, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Maeculloch, in the month of February, 1741-2. He communicated to me the copy of two letters from that eminently favoured servant of God, giving an account of that extraordinary success which had within a few days accompanied his preaching; when, as I remember, in a little more than a fortnight a hundred and thirty souls, who had before continued in long insensibility under the faithful preaching of the gospel, were awakened on a sudden to attend it, as if it had been a new revelation brought down from heaven, and attested by as astonishing miracles as ever were wrought by Peter or Paul; though they heard it only from a person under whose ministry they have sat for several years. Struck with a power and majesty in the word of God, which they had never felt before, they crowded his house night and day, making their applications to him for spiritual direction and assistance with an earnestness and solicitude, which floods of tears and cries, that swallowed up their own words and his, could not sufficiently express. The Colonel mentioned this at first to me as matter of eternal praise, which he knew would rejoice my very soul; and when he saw it spread in the neighbouring parts, and observed the glorious reformation which it produced in the lives of great multitudes, and the abiding fruits of it for succeeding months and years, it increased and confirmed his joy. But the facts relating to this matter have been laid before the world in so authentic a manner, and the agency of divine grace in them has been so rationally vindicated and so pathetically represented in what the reverend and judicious Mr. Webster has written upon that subject, that it is altogether superfluous for me to add any thing further than my hearty prayers, that the work may be as extensive as it was apparently glorious and divine.

§ 136. It was with great pleasure that he received any intelligence of a like kind from England; whether the clergy of the established church or dissenting ministers, whether our own countrymen or foreigners, were the instruments of it. And, whatever weaknesses or errors might mingle themselves with valuable qualities in such as were active in such a work, he appeared to love and honour them in proportion to the degree he saw reason to believe their hearts were devoted to the service of Christ, and their attempts owned and succeeded by him.

I remember that, mentioning one of these gentlemen, who had been remarkably successful in his ministry, and seemed to have met with some very unkind usage, he says, "I had rather be that despised persecuted man, to be an instrument in the hand of the Spirit, in converting so many souls, and building up so many in their holy faith, than I would be emperor of the whole world." Yet this steady and judicious Christian, (for such he most assuredly was,) at the same time that he esteemed a man for his good intention and his worthy qualities, did not suffer himself to be hurried away into all the singularity of his sentiments, or to admire his imprudences or excesses. On the contrary, he saw and lamented that artifice which the great father of fraud has so long and so successfully been practising; who, like the enemies of Israel, when he cannot entirely prevent the building of God's temple, does as it were offer his assistance to carry on the work, that he may thereby get the most effectual opportunities of obstructing it. The Colonel often expressed his astonishment at the wide extremes into which some whom, on the whole, he thought very worthy men, were permitted to run in many doctrinal and speculative points; and discerned how evidently it appeared from hence, that we cannot argue the truth of any doctrine from the success of the preacher; since this would be a kind of demonstration (if I may be allowed the expression) which might equally prove both parts of a contradiction. Yet when he observed, that a high regard to the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and to the free grace of God in him, exerted by the operation of the divine Spirit, was generally common to all who had been peculiarly successful in the conversion and reformation of men, (how widely soever their judgments might differ in other points, and how warmly soever they might oppose each other in consequence of that diversity,) it tended greatly to confirm his faith in these principles, as well as to open his heart in love to all of every denomination, who maintained an affectionate regard to them. And though what he remarked as to the conduct and success of ministers of the most opposite strains of preaching, confirmed him in these sentiments; yet he always esteemed and loved virtuous and benevolent men, even where he thought them most mistaken in the notions they formed of religion, or in the methods by which they attempted to serve it.

§ 137. While I thus represent what all who knew him must soon have observed of Colonel Gardiner's affectionate regard to these peculiar doctrines of our holy religion, it is necessary that I should also inform my reader, that it was not his judgment that the attention of ministers, or their hearers, should be wholly engrossed by these, excellent as they are: but that all the parts of the scheme of truth and duty should be regarded in their due connexion and proportion. Far from that distempered taste which can bear nothing but cordials, it was his deliberate judgment, that the law should be preached, as well as the gospel; and hardly any thing gave him greater offence than the irreverent manner in which some, who have been ignorantly extolled as the most zealous evangelical preachers, have sometimes been tempted to speak of the former; much indeed to the scandal of all consistent and judicious Christians. He delighted to be instructed in his duty, and to hear much of the inward exercises of the spiritual and divine life. And he always wished, so far as I could observe, to have these topics treated in a rational as well as a spiritual manner, with solidity and order of thought, with perspicuity and weight of expression; as well knowing, that religion is a most reasonable service: that God has not chosen idiots or lunatics as the instruments, or nonsense as the means, of building up his church; and that though the charge of enthusiasm is often fixed on Christianity and its ministers, in a wild, undeserved, and indeed (on the whole) enthusiastical manner, by some of the loudest or most solemn pretenders to reason; yet there is really such a thing as enthusiasm, against which it becomes the true friends of the revelation to be diligently on their guard; lest Christianity, instead of being exalted, should be greatly corrupted and debased, and all manner of absurdity, both in doctrine and practice, introduced by methods which, like persecution, throw truth and falsehood on a level, and render the grossest errors at once more plausible and more incurable. He had too much candour and equity to fix general charges of this nature; but he was really, and, I think, not vainly, apprehensive, that the emissaries and agents of the most corrupt church that ever dishonoured the Christian name, (by which, it will easily be understood, I mean that of Rome,) might very possibly insinuate themselves into societies, to which they could not otherwise have access, and make their advantage of that total resignation of the understanding, and contempt of reason and learning, which nothing but ignorance, delirium, or knavery, can dictate, to lead them blindfold whither it pleased, till it set them down at the foot of an altar where transubstantiation itself is consecrated.

§ 138. I know not where I can more properly introduce another part of the Colonel's character, which, obvious as it was, I have not yet touched upon: I mean, his tenderness to those who were under any spiritual distress, wherein he was indeed an example to ministers in a duty more peculiarly theirs. I have seen many amiable instances of this myself, and I have been informed of many others; one of which happened about the time of that awakening in the western parts of Scotland, which

I touched upon above; when the Reverend Mr. Maclaurin of Glasgow found occasion to witness to the great propriety, judgment, and felicity of manner, with which he addressed spiritual consolation to an afflicted soul, who applied to the professor at a time when he had not an opportunity immediately to give audience to the case. And indeed, as long ago as the year 1726, I find him writing to a friend in a strain of tenderness in this regard, which might well have become the most affectionate and experienced pastor. He there congratulates him on some religious enjoyments lately received, (in part, it seems, by his means,) when, among others, he has this modest expression: "If I have been made any way the means of doing you good, give the whole glory to God; for he has been willing to show that the power was entirely of himself, since he has been pleased to make use of so very weak an instrument." In the same letter he admonishes his friend, that he should not be too much surprised, if, after having been (as he expresses it) upon the mount, he should be brought into the valley again; and reminds him that "we live by faith, and not by sensible assurance," representing, that there are some such full communications from God, as seem almost to swallow up the actings of faith, from whence they take their rise: "whereas, when a Christian who walks in darkness, and sees no light, will yet hang, as it were, on the report of an absent Jesus;" and, as one expresses it in allusion to the story of Jacob and Joseph, "can put himself, as on the chariot of the promises, to be borne on to Him whom now he sees not: there may be sublimer and more acceptable actions of a pure and strong faith, than in moments which afford the soul a much more rapturous delight." This is the substance of what he says in the excellent letter. Some of the phrases made use of might not, perhaps, be intelligible to several of my readers, for which reason I do not exactly transcribe them all; but this is plainly and fully his meaning, and most of the words are his own. The sentiment is surely very just and important; and happy would it be for many excellent persons, who, through wrong notions of the nature of faith, (which was never more misrepresented than now among some,) are perplexing themselves with most groundless doubts and scruples, if it were more generally understood, admitted, and considered.

§ 139. An endeared friend, who was most intimately conversant with the Colonel during the two last years of his life, has favoured me with an account of some little circumstances relating to him; which I esteem as precious fragments, by which the consistent tenor of his character may be further illustrated. I shall, therefore, insert them here, without being very solicitous as to the order in which they are introduced.

§ 140. He perceived himself evidently in a very declining state from his first arrival in Britain, and seemed to entertain a fixed apprehension, that he should continue but a little while longer in life. "He expected death," says my good correspondent, "and was delighted with the prospect," which did not grow less amiable by a nearer approach. The word of God, with which he had as intimate an acquaintance as most men I ever knew, and on which, especially on the New Testament, I have heard him make many very judicious and accurate remarks, was still his daily study; and it furnished him with matter of frequent conversation, much to the edification and comfort of those that were about him. It was recollected, that among other passages he had lately spoke of the following, as having made a deep impression on his mind: My soul, wait thou only upon God! He would repeat it again and again, Only, Only, Only! So plainly did he see, and so deeply did he feel, the vanity of creature confidences and expectations. With the strongest attestation would he often mention those words in Isaiah, as verified by long experience: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. And with peculiar satisfaction would he utter those heroic words in Habakkuk, which he found armour of proof against every fear and every contingency: Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The 145th Psalm was also spoken of by him with great delight, and Dr. Watts's version of it; as well as several other of that excellent person's poetical composures. My friend who transmits me this account, adds the following words; which I desire to insert with the deepest sentiments of unfeigned humility and self-abasement before God, as most unworthy the honour of contributing in the least degree to the joys and graces of one so much my superior in every part of the Christian character: "As the joy with which good men see the happy fruits of their labours, makes a part of the present reward of the servants of God and the friends of Jesus, it must not be omitted, even in a letter to you, that your spiritual hymns were among his most delightful and soul-improving repast; particularly those on beholding transgressors with grief, and Christ's message." What is added concerning my book of the Rise and Progress of Religion, and the terms in which he expressed his esteem of it, I cannot suffer to pass my pen, only desire most sincerely to bless God that, especially by the last chapters of that treatise, I had an opportunity, at so great a distance, of exhibiting some offices of

Christian friendship to this excellent person, in the closing scenes of life, which it would have been my greatest joy to have performed in person, had Providence permitted me then to have been near him.

§ 141. The former of those hymns my correspondent mentions, as having been so agreeable to Colonel Gardiner, I have given the reader above, at the end of section 101. The latter, which is called Christ's Message, took its rise from Luke iv. 18, et seq. and is as follows:

I.

Hark! the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour, promised long!
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,
And ev'ry voice a song.

II.

On him the Spirit largely poured,
Exerts its sacred fire;
Wisdom, and might, and zeal, and love,
His holy breast inspire.

III.

He comes, the prisoners to release
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

IV.

He comes, from thickest films of vice
To clear the mental ray,
And on the eyeballs of the blind
To pour celestial day.*

V.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure;
And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor.

VI.

His silver trumpets publish loud
The jubilee of the LORD;
Our debts are all remitted now,
Our heritage restored.

VII.

Our glad hosannahs, Prince of peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

§ 142. There is one hymn more I shall beg leave to add, plain as it is, which Colonel Gardiner has been heard to mention with particular regard, as expressing the utmost sentiments of his soul, and they were undoubtedly so in the last rational moments of his expiring life. It is called, Christ precious to the Believer; and was composed to be sung after a sermon on 1 Peter ii. 7.

I.

Jesus! I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heaven should hear.

II.

Yes, thou art precious to my soul,
My transport and my trust:
Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust.

III.

All my capacious powers can wish,
In thee most richly meet:
Nor to my eyes is life so dear,
Nor friendship half so sweet.

IV.

Thy grace still dwells upon my heart,
And sheds its fragrance there;
The noblest balm of all its wounds,
The cordial of its care.

V.

I 'll speak the honours of thy name
With my last lab'ring breath;
Then, speechless, clasp thee in my arms,
The antidote of death.

§ 143. Those who were intimate with Colonel Gardiner, must have observed how ready he was to give a devotional turn to any subject that occurred. And in particular, the spiritual and heavenly disposition of his soul discovered itself in the reflections and improvements which he made when reading history; in which he took a great deal of pleasure, as persons remarkable for their knowledge of mankind, and observation of Providence, generally do. I have an instance of this before me, which, though too natural to be at all surprising, will, I dare say, be pleasing to the devout mind. He had just been reading, in Rollin's extract from Xenophon, the answer which the lady of Tigranes made, when all the company were extolling Cyrus, and expressing the admiration with which his appearance and behaviour struck them: The question being asked her, What she thought of him? she answered, I do not know, I did not observe him. On what then, said one of the company, did you fix your attention? On him, replied she, (referring to the generous speech which her husband had just made,) who said he would give a thousand lives to ransom my liberty. "O," cried the Colonel, when reading it, "how ought we to fix our eyes and hearts on him who not in offer, but in reality, gave his own precious life to ransom us from the most dreadful slavery, and from eternal destruction!" But this is only one instance among a thousand. His heart was so habitually set upon divine things, and he had such a permanent and overflowing sense of the love of Christ, that he could not forbear connecting

* Two stanzas mostly borrowed from Mr. Pope.

such reflections with a multitude of more distant occasions occurring in daily life, where less advanced Christians would not have thought of them: and thus, like our great Master, he made every little incident a source of devotion, and an instrument of holy zeal.

§ 144. Enfeebled as his constitution was, he was still intent on improving his time to some valuable purposes: and when his friends expostulated with him, that he gave his body so little rest, he used to answer, "It will rest long enough in the grave."

§ 145. The July before his death he was persuaded to take a journey to Scarborough, for the recovery of his health; from which he was at least encouraged to expect some little revival. After this he had thoughts of going to London, and designed to have spent part of September at Northampton. The expectation of this was mutually agreeable; but Providence saw fit to disconcert the scheme. His love for his friends in these parts occasioned him to express some regret on his being commanded back: and I am pretty confident, from the manner in which he expressed himself in one of his last letters to me, that he had some more important reasons for wishing an opportunity of making a London journey just at that crisis; which, the reader will remember, was before the rebellion broke out. But as Providence determined otherwise, he acquiesced; and I am well satisfied, that could he have distinctly foreseen the approaching event, so far as it concerned his own person, he would have esteemed it the happiest summons he ever received. While he was at Scarborough, I find by a letter dated from thence, July 26, 1745, that he had been informed of the gaiety which so unseasonably prevailed at Edinburgh, where great multitudes were then spending their time in balls, assemblies, and other gay amusements, little mindful of the rod of God which was then hanging over them; on which occasion he hath this expression: "I am greatly surprised that the people of Edinburgh should be employed in such foolish diversions, when our situation is at present more melancholy than ever I saw it in my life. But there is one thing which I am very sure of, that comforts me, viz. that it shall go well with the righteous, come what will."

§ 146. Quickly after his return home the flame burst out, and his regiment was ordered to Stirling. It was in the castle there that his lady and eldest daughter enjoyed the last happy hours of his company: and I think it was about eight or ten days before his death that he parted from them there. A remarkable circumstance attended that parting, which hath been touched upon by surviving friends in more than one of their letters to me. His lady was so affected when she took her last leave of him, that she could not forbear bursting out into a flood of tears, with other marks of unusual emotion. And when he asked her the reason, she urged the apprehension she had of losing such an invaluable friend, amidst the dangers to which he was then called out, as a very sufficient apology. Upon which she took particular notice, that whereas he had generally comforted her on such occasions, by pleading with her that remarkable hand of Providence which had so frequently in former instances been exerted for his preservation, and that in the greatest extremity, he said nothing of it now; but only replied, in his sententious manner, "We have an eternity to spend together."

§ 147. That heroic contempt of death which had often discovered itself in the midst of former dangers, was manifested now in his discourse with several of his most intimate friends. I have reserved for this place one genuine expression of it many years before, which I thought might be mentioned with some advantage here. In July 1725, he had been sent to some place, not far from Hamilton, to quell a mutiny among some of our troops. I know not the particular occasion; but I remember to have heard him mention it as so fierce a one, that he scarce ever apprehended himself in a more hazardous circumstance. Yet he quelled it by his presence alone, and the expostulations he used; evidently putting his life into his hand to do it. The particulars of the story struck me much; but I do not so exactly remember them as to venture to relate them here. I only observe, that in a letter dated July 16, that year, which I have now before me, and which evidently refers to this event, he writes thus: "I have been very busy, hurried about from place to place; but blessed be God, all is over without bloodshed. And pray let me ask, What made you show so much concern for me in your last? Were you afraid I should get to heaven before you? Or can any evil befall those who are followers of that which is good?"*

§ 148. And as these were his sentiments in the vigour of his days, so neither did declining years and the infirmities of a broken constitution on the one hand, nor any desires of enjoying the honours and profits of so high a station, or (what was much more to him) the converse of the most affectionate of wives, and so many amiable children and friends, on the other, enervate his spirits in the least: but as he had in former years often expressed it, to me and several others, as his desire, "that if it were

* I should not but this will remind some of my readers of [illegible] speech of Zinzendorf, when, approaching [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

the will of God, he might have some honourable call to sacrifice his life in defence of religion and the liberties of his country:" so, when it appeared to him most probable that he might be called to it immediately, he met the summons with the greatest readiness. This appears in part from a letter which he wrote to the Reverend Mr. Adams of Falkirk, just as he was on marching from Stirling, which was only eight days before his death: "The rebels," says he, "are advancing to cross the Firth; but I trust in the Almighty God, who doth whatsoever he pleaseth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." And the same gentleman tells me, that a few days after the date of this, he marched through Falkirk with his regiment; and though he was then in so languishing a state, that he needed his assistance as a secretary to write for some reinforcements which might put it in his power to make a stand, (as he was very desirous to have done,) he expressed a most genuine and noble contempt of life when to be exposed in the defence of a worthy cause.

§ 149. These sentiments wrought in him to the last in the most effectual manner; and he seemed for a while to have infused them into the regiment which he commanded: for they expressed such a spirit in their march from Stirling, that I am assured the Colonel was obliged to exert all his authority to prevent their making incursions on the rebel army, which then lay very near them: and had it been thought proper to send him the reinforcement he requested, none can say what the consequence might have been. But he was ordered to march as fast as possible to meet Sir John Cope's forces at Dunbar; which he did: and that hasty retreat, in concurrence with the news which they soon after received of the surrender of Edinburgh to the rebels, (either by the treachery or weakness of a few, in opposition to the judgment of by far the greater and better part of the inhabitants,) struck a panic into both the regiments of dragoons, which became visible in some very apparent and remarkable circumstances in their behaviour, which I forbear to relate. This affected Colonel Gardiner so much, that, on the Thursday before the fatal action at Prestonpans, he intimated to an officer of considerable rank and note, (from whom I had it by a very sure channel of conveyance,) that he expected the event would be as in fact it was. In this view, there is all imaginable reason to believe he had formed his resolution as to his own personal conduct, which was, "that he would not, in case of the flight of those under his command, retreat with them;" by which, as it seemed, he was reasonably apprehensive he might have stained the honour of his former services, and have given some occasion for the enemy to have spoken reproachfully. He much rather chose, if Providence gave him the call, to leave in his death an example of fidelity and bravery, which might very probably be (as in fact it seems indeed to have been) of much greater importance to his country, than any other service which in the few days of remaining life he could expect to render it. I conclude these to have been his views, not only from what I knew of his general character and temper, but likewise from some intimations which he gave to a very worthy person from Edinburgh, who visited him the day before the action; to whom he said, "I cannot influence the conduct of others as I could wish, but I have one life to sacrifice to my country's safety, and I shall not spare it;" or words to that effect.

§ 150. I have heard such a multitude of inconsistent reports of the circumstances of Colonel Gardiner's death, that I had almost despaired of being able to give my reader any particular satisfaction concerning so interesting a scene. But by a happy accident I have very lately had an opportunity of being exactly informed of the whole, by that brave man, Mr. John Foster, his faithful servant, (and worthy of the honour of serving such a master,) whom I had seen with him at my house some years before. He attended him in his last hours, and gave me the narration at large; which he would be ready, if it were requisite, to attest upon oath. From his mouth I wrote it down with the utmost exactness, and could easily believe, from the genuine and affectionate manner in which he related the particulars, that, according to his own striking expression, "his eye and his heart were always upon his honoured master during the whole time."*

§ 151. On Friday, September 20, (the day before the battle which transmitted him to his immortal crown,) when the whole army was drawn up, I think about noon, the Colonel rode through all the ranks of his own regiment, addressing them at once in the most respectful and animating manner, both as soldiers, and as Christians, to engage them to exert themselves courageously in the service of their country, and to neglect nothing that might have a tendency to prepare them for whatever event might happen. They seemed much affected with the address, and expressed a very ardent desire of attacking the enemy immediately; a desire, in which he and another very gallant officer of distinguished rank, dignity, and character, both for bravery and conduct, would gladly have gratified them, if it had been in the power of either. He earnestly pressed it on the commanding officer, both as the soldiers were then in better spirits than it could be supposed they would be after having

* Just as I am putting the last hand to these Memoirs, March 4, 1746-7, I have met with a Gentleman in Colonel Lascelles's regiment, who was then in the field, who informs me, that he supposed at Prestonpans, on the day of the battle, and the day before, and the account he has given me of some circumstances and persons is so exactly agreeable to what myself had received from Mr. Foster, that it would much contribute to the satisfaction of those who are not so much offended at considerations to render it uncontroverted.

passed the night under arms, and also as the circumstance of making an attack would be some encouragement to them, and probably some terror to the enemy, who would have had the disadvantage of standing on the defence: a disadvantage with which those wild barbarians (for such most of them were) perhaps would have been more struck than better disciplined troops; especially, when they fought against the laws of their country too. He also apprehended, that by marching to meet them, some advantage might have been secured with regard to the ground; with which it is natural to imagine he must have been perfectly acquainted, as it lay just at his own door, and he had rode over it so many hundred times. When I mention these things, I do not pretend to be capable of judging how far this advice was on the whole right. A variety of circumstances, to me unknown, might make it otherwise. It is certain, however, that it was brave. But it was overruled in this respect, as it also was in the disposition of the cannon, which he would have had planted in the centre of our small army, rather than just before his regiment, which was in the right wing; where he was apprehensive that the horses, which had not been in any engagement before, might be thrown into some disorder by the discharge so very near them. He urged this the more, as he thought the attack of the rebels might probably be made on the centre of the foot; where he knew there were some brave men, on whose standing he thought, under God, the success of the day depended. When he found that he could not carry either of these points, nor some others, which out of regard to the common safety he insisted upon with some unusual earnestness, he dropped some intimations of the consequences which he apprehended, and which did in fact follow; and submitting to Providence, spent the remainder of the day in making as good a disposition as circumstances would allow.*

§ 152. He continued all night under arms, wrapped up in his cloak, and generally sheltered under a rick of barley which happened to be in the field. About three in the morning he called his domestic servants to him, of which there were four in waiting. He dismissed three of them with most affectionate Christian advice, and such solemn charges relating to the performance of their duty and the care of their souls, as seemed plainly to intimate, that he apprehended it at least very probable he was taking his last farewell of them. There is great reason to believe that he spent the little remainder of the time, which could not be much above an hour, in those devout exercises of soul which had so long been habitual to him, and to which so many circumstances did then concur to call him. The army was alarmed by break of day by the noise of the rebel's approach, and the attack was made before sunrise; yet when it was light enough to discern what passed. As soon as the enemy came within gun-shot they made a furious fire; and it is said that the dragoons which constituted the left wing, immediately fled. The Colonel at the beginning of the onset, which in the whole lasted but a few minutes, received a wound by a bullet in his left breast, which made him give a sudden spring in his saddle; upon which his servant, who had led the horse, would have persuaded him to retreat; but he said it was only a wound in the flesh, and fought on, though he presently after received a shot in his right thigh. In the mean time it was discerned that some of the enemies fell by him; and particularly one man, who had made him a treacherous visit but a few days before, with great professions of zeal for the present establishment.

§ 153. Events of this kind pass in less time than the description of them can be written, or than it can be read. The Colonel was for a few moments supported by his men, and particularly by that worthy person Lieutenant-Colonel Whitney, who was shot through the arm here, and a few months after fell nobly in the battle of Falkirk; and by Lieutenant West, a man of distinguished bravery; as also by about fifteen dragoons, who stood by him to the last. But after a faint fire, the regiment in general was seized with a panic; and though their Colonel and some other gallant officers did what they could to rally them once or twice, they at last took a precipitate flight. And just in the moment when Colonel Gardiner seemed to be making a pause, to deliberate what duty required him to do in such a circumstance, an accident happened, which must, I think, in the judgment of every worthy and generous man, be allowed a sufficient apology for exposing his life to so great hazard when his regiment had left him.* He saw a party of the foot, who were then bravely fighting near him, and whom he was ordered to support, had no officer to head them; upon which he said eagerly, in the hearing of the person from whom I had this account, "Those brave

* Several of these circumstances have since been confirmed by the concurrent testimony of another very credible person, Mr. Robert Douglas, now a surgeon in the navy, who was a volunteer at Edinburgh just before the rebels entered the place; who saw Colonel Gardiner come from Haddington to the field of battle the day before the action in a chaise, being so ill from that circumstance he supposed in so weak a state that he could not well endure the fatigue of riding on horseback. He observed Colonel Gardiner in discourse with several officers the evening before the engagement, at which time it was afterwards reported, he gave his advice to attack the rebels, and when it was overruled, he afterwards saw the Colonel walk by himself in a very pensive manner.

* The Colonel, who was well acquainted with military affairs, could possibly remember, that in the battle at Dunbarton the Duke of Marlborough, Prince Eugene, when the horse at the wings were overthrown and ran away there, charged at the head of the foot, and thereby greatly contributed to the glorious success of the day. [illegible] exemplar may conduce to vindicate that noble person, whose memory [illegible] the unplatonised his country, some have been censured, and so continued to be blame. For my own part, I think it a great [illegible] to [illegible] for his reasoning his troops to [illegible] which I [illegible] have been common Border-law, and what [illegible] as he was [illegible] would have grieved me much more than [illegible] stances attending it.

fellows would be cut to pieces for want of a commander," or words to that effect: which while he was speaking, he rode up to them, and cried out aloud, "Fire on my lads, and fear nothing." But just as the words were out of his mouth, a Highlander observed to aspire him with a sword fastened to a long pole, with which he gave him such a deep wound on his right arm, that his sword dropped out of his hand; and at the same time several others coming about him while he was thus disabled, he was dragged off from his horse. The manner he still, another Highlander, who, if the king's evidence at Carlisle may be credited, (as I know not why they should not, though the unhappy creature died denying it) was one Macnaught, who was executed about a year after, gave him a stroke either with a broad sword or a Lochaber axe, for my informant could not exactly distinguish) on the hinder part of his head, which was the mortal blow. All that his faithful attendant saw further at this time was, that as his last was falling off, he took it in his left hand and waved it as a signal to him to retreat; and added, what were the last words he ever heard him speak, "Take care of yourself," upon which the servant retired.

§ 154. It was reported at Edinburgh on the day of the battle, by what seemed a considerable authority, that as the Colonel lay in his wounds, he said to a chief of the opposite side, "You are fighting for an earthly crown, I am going to receive an heavenly one;" or something to that purpose. When I preached the sermon, long since printed, on occasion of his death, I had great reason to believe this report was true; though before the publication of it I began to be in doubt, and on the whole, after the most accurate inquiry I could possibly make at this distance, I cannot get any convincing evidence of it. Yet I must here observe, that it does not appear impossible that something of this kind might indeed be uttered by him, as his servant testifies that he spoke to him after receiving that fatal blow, which would seem most likely to have taken away the power of speech, and as it is certain he lived several hours after he fell. If therefore any thing of this kind did happen, it must have been just about this instant. But as to the story of his being taken prisoner, and carried to the pretended prince, (who, by the way, afterwards came by horse, and entered upon it into Derby,) with several other circumstances, which were grafted upon that interview, there is the most undoubted evidence of its falsehood: for his attendant mentioned above assures me, that he himself immediately fled two miles at the distance of about two miles from the spot of ground on which the Colonel fell; where he changed his dress, and, disguised like a miller's servant, returned with a cart as soon as possible; which yet was not till nearly two hours after the engagement. The horse of the prince was then pretty well exercised by those who made themselves master not only possessed of his wig and other things of value, but also stripped of his upper garments and boots, yet still remaining; and also that, though he was not capable of speech, yet on taking him up he opened his eyes, which makes it something questionable, whether he were altogether insensible. In this condition, and in this manner, he conveyed him to the church of Tranent, from whence he was immediately taken into the minister's house, and laid in bed, where he continued breathing and frequently groaning, till about eleven in the forenoon; when he took his final leave of pain and sorrow, and undoubtedly rose to those distinguished glories which are reserved for those who have been so eminently and remarkably faithful unto death.

§ 155. From the moment in which he fell it was no longer a battle, but a rout and carnage. The cruelties which the rebels (as it is generally said, under the command of Lord Elcho) inflicted on some of the king's troops after they had asked quarter, are dreadfully legible on the countenances of many who survived it. They entered Colonel Gardiner's house before he was carried off from the field, and notwithstanding the strict orders which the unhappy Duke of Perth (whose conduct is said to have been very humane in many instances) gave to the contrary, every thing of value was plundered, to the very curtains of the beds and hangings of the rooms. His papers were all thrown into the street, and his house made as inexpert for the reception of those who were wounded in the action.

§ 156. Such was the close of a life which had been so zealously devoted to God, and filled up with so many honourable services. Thus was the death of him who had been so highly favoured by God in the method by which he was brought back to him after so long and so great an estrangement, and in the progress of so many years, during which (in the expressive phrase of the most ancient of writers) he had walked with him;—to fall as God threatened the people of his wrath that they should do, with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. Amos ii. 2. Several other very worthy and some of them very eminent persons shared the same fate, either prior to the battle of Prestonpans, or quickly after in that of Falkirk. Providence no doubt permitting it to establish our faith in the

rewards of an invisible world, as well as to teach us to cease from man, and fix our dependence on an Almighty arm.

§ 157. The remains of this Christian hero, (as I believe every reader is now convinced he may justly be called,) were interred the Tuesday following, Sept. 24, at the parish church at Tranent; where he had usually attended divine service with great solemnity. His obsequies were honoured with the presence of some persons of distinction, who were not afraid of paying that last piece of respect to his memory, though the country was then in the hands of the enemy. But indeed there was no great hazard in this; for his character was so well known, that even they themselves spoke honourably of him, and seemed to join with his friends in lamenting the fall of so brave and so worthy a man.

§ 158. The remotest posterity will remember for whom the honour of subduing this unnatural and pernicious rebellion was reserved; and it will endear the person of the illustrious duke of Cumberland to all but the open or secret abettors of it in the present age, and consecrate his name to immortal honours among all the friends of religion and liberty who shall arise after us. And I dare say, it will not be imagined that I at all derogate from his glory in suggesting, that the memory of that valiant and excellent person whose memoirs I am now concluding, may in some measure have contributed to that signal and complete victory with which God was pleased to crown the arms of his Royal Highness: for the force of such an example is very animating, and a painful consciousness of having deserted such a commander in such extremity, must at least awaken, where there was any spark of generosity, an earnest desire to avenge his death on those who had sacrificed his blood, and that of so many other excellent persons, to the views of their ambition, rapine, or bigotry.

§ 159. The reflections I have made in my funeral sermon on my honoured friend, and in the dedication of it to his worthy and most afflicted lady, supersede many things which might otherwise have properly been added here. I conclude, therefore, with humbly acknowledging the wisdom and goodness of that awful Providence, who 5 drew so black a gloom around him in the last hours of his life, that the lustre of his virtues might dart through it with a more vivid and observable ray. It is abundant matter of thankfulness, that so signal a monument of grace, and ornament of the Christian profession, was raised in our age and country, and spared for so many honourable and useful years. Nor can all the tenderness of the most affectionate friendship, while its sorrows bleed afresh in the view of so tragical a scene, prevent my adoring the gracious appointment of the great Lord of all events, that when the day in which he must have expired without an enemy appeared so very near, the last drop of his generous blood should be poured out, as a kind of sacred libation, to the liberties of his country and the honour of his God; that all the other virtues of his character, embalmed as it were by that precious stream, might diffuse around a more extensive fragrancy, and be transmitted to the most remote posterity, with that peculiar charm which they cannot but derive from their connexion with so gallant a fall: an event, (as that blessed apostle, of whose spirit he so deeply drank, has expressed it,) according to his earnest expectation, and his hope, that in him Christ might be glorified in all things, whether by his life or by his death.

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

Relating to the Colonel's person.

In the midst of so many important articles, I had really forgot to say any thing of the person of Colonel Gardiner, of which nevertheless it may be proper here to add a word or two. It was, as I am informed, in younger life remarkably graceful and amiable: and I can easily believe it, from what I knew him to be when our acquaintance began, though he was then turned of fifty, and had gone through so many fatigues as well as dangers, which could not but leave some traces on his countenance. He was tall, (I suppose something more than six feet,) well proportioned, and strongly built; his eyes of a dark grey, and not very large; his forehead pretty high; his nose of a length and height no way remarkable, but very well suited to his other features; his cheeks not very prominent, his mouth moderately large, and his chin rather a little inclining (when I knew him) to be peaked. He had a strong voice, and lively accent, with an air very intrepid, yet attempered with much gentleness; and there was something in his manner of address more perfectly easy and obliging, which was in a great measure the result of the great candour and benevolence of his natural temper; and which, no doubt, was much improved by the deep humility which divine grace had wrought into his heart, as well as his having been accustomed from his early youth to the company of persons of distinguished rank and polite behaviour.

The picture of him* was taken from an original done by Van Dorest in Dutchman brought me Scotland by General Wade, in the year 1727, which was the 40th of his age: and it is said to have been very like him then, though far from being an exact resemblance of what he was when I had the happiness of being acquainted with him. Perhaps he would have appeared to the greatest advantage of all could he have been exactly drawn on horseback; as many very good judges, and amongst the rest the celebrated Mons. Faubert himself, have spoken of him as one of the completest horsemen that has ever been known: and there was indeed something so singularly graceful in his appearance in that attitude, that it was sufficient (as what is very eminent in its kind generally is) to strike an eye not formed on any critical rules.

* Presented by my good friend

NUMBER II.

Poetical Pieces on the death of Colonel Gardiner.

So animating a subject as the death of such a man, in such circumstances, has occasioned a great deal of poetry. Some of this has already been published; especially one large composition, said to be done by a worthy clergyman in Lincolnshire, in which there are many excellent lines and noble sentiments: but I rather choose to refer to the piece itself, than to insert any extracts from it here. It may be more expedient to oblige my reader with the following copy of verses, and an elegiac poem, composed by two of my valuable friends whose names are annexed. I could not presume to attempt any thing of this kind myself; because I knew, that nothing I was capable of writing could properly express my sense of his worth, or even the tenderness of my friendship; the sentiments of which will (as I assuredly believe) mingle themselves with the last ideas which pass through my mind in this world, and perhaps with some of the first which may open upon it in that which is to come.

VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL GARDINER.

BY THE REV. MR. BENJAMIN SOWDEN

Quas dederis solas semper habebis opes.

Could piety perpetuate human breath,
Or shield one mortal from the shafts of death,
Thou ne'er, illustrious man! thou ne'er hadst been
A pallid corpse on Preston's fatal plain.
Or could her hand, though impotent to save
Consummate worth, redeem it from the grave,
Soon would thy urn resign its sacred trust,
And recent life re-animate thy dust.
But vain the wish.—The savage hand of war—
Oh how shall words the mournful tale declare!
Too soon the news afflicted friendship hears,
Too soon, alas! confirmed her boding fears.
Struck with the sound, unconscious of redress,
She felt thy wounds, and wept severe distress.
A while dissolved in truceless grief she lay,
Which left thee to relentless rage a prey.
At length kind Fame suspends our heaving sighs,
And wipes the sorrows from our flowing eyes;
Gives us to know thine exit well supplied
Those blooming laurels victory denied.
When thy great soul suppressed each timid moan,
And soared triumphant in a dying groan.
Thy fall, which raised, now calms each wild complaint,
Thy fall, which joined the hero to the saint.
As o'er the expiring lamp the quivering flame
Collects its lustre in a brighter gleam,
Thy virtues, glimmering on the verge of night,
Through the dim shade diffused celestial light;
A radiance death or time can ne'er destroy,
The auspicious omen of eternal joy.
Hence every unavailing grief! No more
As hapless thy removal we deplore.
Thy gushing veins, in every drop they bleed,
Of patriot warriors shed the fruitful seed:
Soon shall the ripened harvest rise in arms
To crush rebellion's insolent alarms.
While prosperous moments soothed through life his way,
Concealed from public view the hero lay:
But when affliction clouded his decline,
It not eclipsed, but made his honours shine.
Gave them to beam conspicuous from the gloom,
And plant unfading trophies round his tomb.
So stars are lost amidst the blaze of day:
But when the sun withdraws his golden ray,
Refulgent through the ethereal arch they roll,
And gild the wide expanse from pole to pole.

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THE TRULY PIOUS AND BRAVE

COLONEL JAMES GARDINER

[illegible] by the Rev. [illegible] at [illegible] 1745, to the [illegible] PRESTONIANS

BY THE REV. MR. THOMAS GILLIES

[illegible]

I.

Come, Melancholy, from the stony cave
The scope of time for thee has made
Under the broad cliff's shade,
Upon the naked shore,
Where warring tempests roar
In concert with the hoarse-resounding wave:
Come, but with solemn gait,
With trickling eyes,
And heavy sighs,
And all the scutcheoned pomp of fate:
And bring with thee the cypress and the yew,
All bathed and dropping with the mortal dew,
To this sequestered bower;
And let the midnight hour
Be hung in deeper glooms by thee,
And bid each gay idea flee
While all the baleful bargees of woe
That haunt the marble bust,
Or hover round sepulchred dust,
With conscious horrors all my soul o'erflow.
For 'tis no vulgar death
Urania means to mourn;
But in doleful strain
She bids the harp complain,
And hangs the funeral wreath
On Gardiner's awful urn.

II.

Gardiner, what various Fame
For ever crowns thy name!
For is it possible to say,
Or if the saint's or hero's ray
Shone brightest in that blended blaze,
That formed Fame's ample round of praise
Like Moses on the sacred hill
How hast thou stood with pleading eyes
Outstretching hands, and fervent cries
Unwearied wrestler with the skies!

Till Heaven, responsive to thy will,
Would all thy latent wishes fill;
Till the high heaven-bolt aside was thrown,
And the full blessing streamed in silver murmurs down.
Not less a Joshua than a Moses thou
For oft in Liberty's high strife
Hast thou exposed thy generous life,
And with impatient ardours of thy brow,
Rushed foremost in the horrid van on fight,
Driving the troops of Tyranny to flight
Unshaken in the noble cause
To pluck her bloody fangs, and break her iron jaws.

III.

When Anna sent her chosen chief,
Victorious Marlborough,
To Europe's groans to give relief
In Bourbon's overthrow;
Renowned Ramilia's tented field,
Where Gallia dropped her idle shield
And to the British standard kneeled,
Behold young Gardiner there.
Young Gardiner, where the combat mowed
The falling ranks, and widely strowed
Destruction and despair,
Wielded serene his youthful arms,
And, kindling at the dire alarms,
Enjoyed the raging war:
But here (for steel and flying shot
Fall chiefly to the hero's lot,)
Swift through his lips the glancing bullet rung,
His lips, on which the unfinished oath was hung;
Nor stopt its winged impetuous force,
Till through the neck it ploughed its angry course.
Amazing thought! that they who life expose,
Where all the thunder of the battle glows,
Who see pale death triumphant ride
Upon the crimson's surging tide,
In blasphemy and proud contempt should rise,
And hurl their mad defiance to the skies;
Whither a moment may convey
Their souls, dislodging from their quivering clay,
To take their last inexorable doom,
Big with immortal wrath, and dire despair to come.

IV

Such Gardiner was in early youth.
And while the warrior's rays
Beamed round his head, celestial Truth
He spurned, and scorned her ways:
And though the Almighty arm was near,
Made his endangered life its care,
And healed the burning sores
Yet vice, collecting with his strength,
Soon, soon bursts out in wilder length,
And like a torrent roars.
Now in the wide enchanting bowl
The hero melts his manly soul.
And now he blots the shades of night
With blacker scenes of lewd delight.
Anon in sport he lifts his brow to heaven,
And swears by the Eternal Name
Asks that the bolt may on his head be driven,
And courts the lagging flame.
So Pharaoh, when the feverish blains
No more embossed his flesh,
Nor shot infection through his veins,
Assumed his rage afresh:
And hard, grew harder still,
And propped on his wild will,
Set up the standard of his pride, [defied.
Cursed Israel's God and King, and all his plagues

V.

But, Muse, in softer notes relate,
For softer notes upon thee wait,
How Gardiner, when his youth had ranged,
These guilty scenes, to heaven estranged,
Paused in his mid career, and was divinely changed.
That God, whose piercing radiance darts
O'er all our ways and all our hearts,
The bold transgressor from his throne surveyed,
And thus in accents breathing mildness said:
"Go, Mercy, charged with my supreme command,
Thou fairest daughter throned at my right hand,
Go, wing thy downward race,
And stop that rebel in his furious way;
His heart shall thy victorious call obey,
And take the willing stamp of Grace:
For never shall thy call successless prove,
And thou lament thy baffled aim,
If thou but dart thy chosen flame,
Armed with the Saviour's energy of love."
He spoke: and gave the Almighty nod,
The sanction of the eternal God:
At once the joyful news is propagated round,
Loud anthems from the golden roofs rebound,
And heaven's high crystal domes remurmur with the sound.

VI.

Mercy obeys: and from the empyreal height
Precipitates her glittering flight;
A starry circle sparkling round her head,
And a wide rainbow o'er her progress spread.
Muse, sing the wondrous plan,
And sing the wondrous hour,
In which the Sovereign Power
The almighty work began,
And signalized her arm, and triumphed o'er the man.
Bent on adulterous shame
The sinner she beheld,
His bosom burnt with guilty flame,
And at the future joy in secret raptures swelled:

Enraged he cursed the lazy moon
In her nocturnal tour,
That thought his bliss would come too soon,
And clogged the midnight hour.
'Twas then, when lust's malignant sway
Had stifled conscience' pang, and smothered rea-
That Mercy stept between [son's ray,
The adulterer and his sinful scene,
And painted on his mental sight,
Dressed round in beams divinely bright,
The Saviour stretched upon the tree,
In purple sweats, and dying agony.
(Such was the vision, and the blaze the same,
That Saul, intent on murders, saw,
When Jesus, speaking from the radiant flame,
O'erwhelmed his conscious soul with awe.)
Then thus a voice arrests his ear:
"See, Gardiner, see thy Saviour here!
And was this wood
Tinged in my blood,
And did I languish in these woes for thee,
And canst thou plunge these recent wounds in me?"
O'erpowered with vast surprise,
A prisoner of the skies
The swooning champion falls,
And fear, that never yet his soul had shook,
Bedews his limbs, glares wild upon his look,
And all his soul appals:
But half the agony was unfulfilled,
Till Mercy from her crystal urn instilled
Fierce on his heart three burning drops:*
Drops that from Sinai came,
From Sinai, where the Almighty Thunderer forms
His shafted lightnings, and his bolted storms,
And from whose boiling tops [flame.
The wild sulphureous surge runs down in liquid
Stung with the unsufferable smart,
That festered at his heart,
Gardiner awakes, and round he throws
His ghastly eyes, and scarce he knows
Or if he lives in nature's midnight gloom,
Or, closed in hell's unfathomable womb,
Black o'er his head eternal horrors roll,
And the keen gnawing worm devours his inmost soul.

VII.

But when his wandering thought had found
Himself a tenant of the ground,
Still, still his conscience felt the flaming wound.
Sudden before his prospect glows
The everlasting gulph of woes.
From the o'erhanging brink he seems to bend,
(The brink, that crumbled as he stood,
And nodded o'er the dreadful flood,)
And down in headlong ruin to descend [end.
To the broad burning waves, and pains that never
He turns, but ah! no friendly hand,
Not spark of glimmering hope, appears
Amidst the raging torrent of his fears:
But, outlawed from the realms of shining bliss,
He thinks he feels the unextinguished fires,
A waving waste of blue ascending spires,
And plunges in the bottomless abyss:
For, oh! his sins in crowding numbers stand,
And each tempts vengeance from the Almighty hand;
But fiercer o'er the rest Ingratitude appears,
That scorned the Saviour's love, and flaming horror
But while in sad confusion tossed, [wears.
And tortured with despair,
He doomed his soul for ever lost,
The bright ethereal Fair,
(For 'twas her kind design
Not to destroy, but to refine,)
Amidst the darkness and the storms
Her sacred embassy performs;
For guilt displayed in all its frightful dyes,
And crimsoned over with redeeming blood,
Draws out the rolling anguish from his eyes,
And all his stubborn soul with [illegible]
'Tis done: O miracle of love!
Not minds below, nor minds above,
Great God, can trace thy mystic ways,
And pay the equal note of praise.
'Tis done. And now with outstretched wings
Back to the skies the radiant Power withdrew;
And, as her mounting path she springs,
The silver trump of victory she blows,
In stronger dyes her arch refulgent glows,
And a far-streaming glory [illegible]

VIII

At once abjuring all his sins,
Gardiner the heavenly life begins,
And pleads the honours of his God
With irresistible defence
Against the coloured arts of Eloquence,
Though clouded with his Maker's frown, and
crushed beneath his rod.
But quickly a celestial ray
Shot o'er his soul unclouded day,
And balmy dews, and blooming life were given,
The early antepast of heaven.
And now what equal words shall paint
How Gardiner, freed from tyrant lusts,
Nor longer tossed in passion's gusts,
Felt, spoke, and acted all the saint!
That holy name, which he profaned before,
Behold him now with suppliant knee adore:
At morn and ev'n his warm devotions rise,
Like clouds of incense, fragrant to the skies
No more the grape's nectareous juice
Could tempt beyond a prudent use:
No wanton speech defiled his tongue;
No deed designed his neighbour's wrong;

* See Milton's Paradise Lost, b. xi. l. 27.

But the fair streams of innocence
And unconfined benevolence,
O'er all his life uninterrupted ran,
And through their crystal mirrors showed the man.
The numerous characters he bore
With a distinguished praise he wore,
And subject, subject, husband, parent, friend,
He blended, and ennobled to the end.
Now with seraphic transports fired
The pinions of his zeal aspired,
Scarce patient till he broke the mortal shell,
And bid this empty scene, and dusky globe, farewell.
Heaven was his home, and to his home he bent,
And, ere the rounds of fatal life were spent,
Thither his passions would divinely roll,
The swift-winged heralds of his coming soul.
Peace at his tent would often light, and sing,
And shed the dewy blessings from her wing;
And rills, devolving from the fount above,
Poured o'er his heart ecstatic life and love.

IX.

Thus Gardiner lived; till from the gloomy North
Rebellion, grasping targe and steelly arms,
Rushed, like a mountain bear, murderous forth,
And shook our realms with horrible alarms;
Rebellion aiming at one wasteful sway
To strike the diadem from Brunswick's head,
Tear Liberty, and all her mounds away,
And Popery's o'erwhelming horrors spread.
The news to Gardiner came,
And fanned the noble flame,
Which pure Religion, heaven born Liberty,
And dauntless Fortitude had raised,
And as the gathering terrors thundered nigh,
With a redoubled strength the mourning fervors blazed.
What, though distemper had subdued his limbs,
And age defrauded half the purple streams
That bloomed his features o'er,
When in rebellion's storm before
He, rising in the glorious cause
Of George's rights, and Britain's laws,
Swept down the traitorous files, and Preston swam with gore;
Yet his unbroken soul disdains
Age's dull load of cramps and pains;
His youthful rage returns,
And for the battle burns:
Then springing from Francissa's tender arms,
Dissolved in flowing tears,
O'erwhelmed with boding fears,
And only solaced with the view
That heaven their friendship would renew,
He, in the unshaken confidence of power,
Sways the keen flame of his revenging sword
For his eternal, and his earthly, lord,
Serenely meets the danger's wild alarm,
Plants his embattled force, and waits the rushing war
So Michael,* bent on glorious fight,
Against Satanic rage and might,
Came towering to the field;
Unconscious of a quivering fear,
He saw the foe his dusky horrors rear,
Wave his broad flaming sword, and heave his mossy shield.

X.

Not far from where Edina lifts
Her towers into the skies,
Or where the ocean-bounding cliffs
In clouded summits rise,
Preston extends her humble cots,
Long, long unknown to fame;
But flying routs, and purple spots,
Have stamped the eternal shame.
Here, here (oh could Time's brazen pen
Dash the reproach away,
Or, as the day returns again,
Might midnight choke its ray!)
Britannia's troops in vain
Opposed the rebel-host,
And fled inglorious o'er the plain,
Their courage withered and their standards lost.
Muse paint the doleful scene
With sighs and tears between;
For sighs and tears should rise
From every British heart, and gush from all our eyes.
Swift on the royal van
The yellow furies ran,
Like the wild ocean that has rent
Its shores, and roars along the continent;
Or the winged lightning's vivid glare
Darting along the immeasured fields of air.
Confounded at the shock,
The yielding squadrons broke:
And now (for hell inspired the throng)
The gloomy murderers rushed along;
And fierce the steelly blade
Its horrid circles played,
Till hideous cries,
Quivering sighs,
Hopeless screams,
Battered limbs,
Bloody streams,
And universal rout deformed the ground,
And waste the British strength, and the wide champaign drowned.
"Come on, come on!" mad Elcho cries,
And for his murders thanks the skies;
(While the Italian from afar,
Too soft a soul to mix in war,
Enjoying all the guilt, beheld
His bloody harpies tear the field;)

* See Milton's Paradise Lost, book vi. [illegible]

Ply, ply the thirsty steel,
Round the full vengeance wheel,
Each heretic must yield his breath,
That for the Hanoverian brood
Or lifts a sword,
Or speaks a word;
Come, gorge your souls with death,
And drown your steps in blood:
Think, think what blissful periods roll behind,
Let London's mighty plunder fill your mind,
When boundless wealth shall be with boundless empire joined."

XI.

Gardiner, with mind elate
Above the rage of fate,
His country's bulwark stood
Midst broken lines of death, and rising waves of blood.
His soul disdains retreat,
Though urged by foul defeat:
Now to his scattering friends he calls,
To wheel again and charge the foe;
Now hurls the wide-destroying balls,
Now deals the vengeful blow.
Forsaken and alone,
And torn with gashing wounds,
He hears the treasonous shout, he hears the loyal groan;
But nought the purpose of his soul confounds:
And still with new delight
He tempts the midmost fight,
Propped on his sacred cause, and courage of his own.
The embattled ranks of foot he spies
Without a leading chief,
And, like a shooting ray, he flies
To lend his brave relief.
Here the broad weapon's forceful sway,
Swung with tempestuous hand,
Ploughed through his flesh its furious way,
And stretched him on the strand.
Weltering in gore, with fiery fiends beset,
The dying Gardiner lies:
No gentle hand to wipe the mortal sweat,
And close his swimming eyes.
The unrelenting crew
The hero disarrayed:
But, struck at his majestic view,
Their souls were half dismayed:
And, had not hell instamped its hate,
Their stony eyeballs o'er his fate
Had streamed with human woe; for heavenly mild
He o'er their gloomy forms the Christian pardon smiled.
But not a tear must bathe, or garment shield
His mangled limbs from sight,
Down trodden in the fight:
While his fair mansion, that o'ertops the field,
The naked murder sees, and trembles from its height.
Still the departing flame of life
Waved languishing in double strife;
Till, such his servant's faithful care,
(May Heaven's distinguished goodness crown
The goodness to his master shown!)
The wheels slow-moving from the scenes of war,
To Tranent bore the expiring chief,
In sullen sounds remurmuring to his grief.
Urania, mark the melancholy road,
And with thy tears efface the scattering blood;
Nor stop, till on the late reposing bed
(Oh! rather 'tis the funeral bier!)
You see the hero's pallid body spread,
And his last anguish hear.
Half choked with clotted gore,
He draws the hollow moan;
Flitting his pulse, and fixed his eyes,
All pale and motionless he lies,
And seems to breathe no more.——
Oh! that's the life-dissolving groan:
Farewell, dear man! for in that pang thy mind
Soars to its God, and leaves the clog behind.

XII.

Gardiner is dead!—The bloody trump of fame
Proclaimed the mighty death;
In every look the posting rumour came,
And flew on every breath.
The widowed partner of his life
The doleful tidings hears,
And, silent in stupendous grief,
Her eyes refuse their tears:
Oppressed beneath the immensurable weight,
Her spirit faints away,
As, sympathetic with the hero's fate,
It meant to quit its clay.
The pledges of his love
Their filial duty prove,
And each with tender hand uprears,
With hands all covered o'er in tears,
Their mother's sinking head;
And groan resounds to groan:
For oh, the best of husbands gone,
The best of fathers dead!
But Gardiner's death is more than public woe.
Wide and more wide the increasing sorrows run,
O'er British lands unlimited they go,
And fly across the seas, and travel with the sun.
Religion, that from heaven had bowed
To watch the souls of light,
When holy Gardiner fell,
Who loved and who adorned her cause so well,
Retired behind a crimson cloud,
Nor could sustain the sight.
Britannia, where she sate
Upon the sea-beat shore,
To eye the battle's fate,
Her silver mantle tore:

Then thus, her blushing honours wanned,
Her sceptre quivering in her hand,
Her laurels withered, and her head declined,
Ten thousand terrors boding in her mind,
She to the deep in bitter wailings grieved,
While her fallen helm the trickling drops received:
"What havoc of my martial force
Has this sad morn beheld,
Torn, gashed, and heaped without remorse
Upon the naked field!
But Gardiner's death afflicts me most,
Than whom a chief I could not boast
More faithful, vigilant, and brave;
And should across his grave
An hecatomb of Highland brutes be slain,
They could not recompense his injured ghost,
Nor fully quench my rage, and wipe away my stain."

XIII.

But see, in splendid state
Cherubic convoys come,
And waft the hero from his fate
To his celestial home.
Now, now he sails along,
Encircled with the throng,
(The throng that clap their mantling wings,
And to loud triumphs strike their strings,)
Through liquid seas of day
Ploughing the azure way,
Till to the starry towers the squadrons rise.
The starry towers, thick sown with pearl and gold,
Their adamantine leaves unfold,
And show the entrance to the empyreal skies:
Through them our hero marked his road,
And through the wheeling ranks of heaven
An unobstructed path was given,
Till he attained the eternal throne of God;
A throne that blazed in uncreated beams,
And from its footstool gushed unnumbered streams,
Streams that in everlasting currents roll,
And pour the boundless joy o'er all the expanded soul.
"Well hast thou done," the Almighty Father spoke;
"Well hast thou done," the exalted Jesus cried;
"Well hast thou done," (all heaven the euge took,)
The saints and angels in their songs replied.
And now a robe of spotless white,
But where the Saviour's flowing vein
Had blushed it with a sanguine stain,
Invests him round: in various light,
(For such was the divine command,)
Refulgent on his brows a crown was placed,
And a triumphal palm his better hand
With golden blossoms graced.
Nigh to the seat of bliss
His mansion was assigned.
Sorrow and sin forsook his breast,
His weary soul was now at rest.
And life, and love, and ecstasies
Unbound his secret powers, and overflowed his mind.

XIV.

Nor has thy life, heroic man, been spilt
Without a wrath proportioned to the guilt;
Enkindled by the cries that rose
From thy dear sacred blood, with those
That shrieked for vengeance from the brave Munros,
Who fell a martyred sacrifice
To cool remorseless butcheries,
Heaven sends its angel righteously severe,
And from the foe exacts the last arrear.
For when the barbarous bands,
Thick as the swarms that blackened Egypt's strands,
And furious as the winter's rushing rains
Impelled by whirlwinds through the plains,
Had o'er our country rolled,
Young William rose, (auspicious name,
Sacred to liberty and fame!)
And their mad rage controlled.
Back to their hills and bogs they fled
(For terror winged their nimble speed,)
And howled for help in vain:
William pursued, and launched his vengeful ire
(As o'er the stubble runs the crackling fire)
Upon the grovelling train:
Shuddering with horror and despair,
With bellowing pain they rend the air,
Till Culloden's illustrious moor [rebel-gore.
Groaned with the heaps of slain, and smoked with
Then, Muse, suppress thy rising sighs,
And wipe the anguish from thine eyes;
Sing, how rebellion has received its doom,
How Gardiner dwells in his eternal home,
And in each British heart has raised a lasting tomb.

NUMBER III.

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME REMARKABLE PARTICULARS

CONCERNING THE ANCIENT FAMILY

OF THE MUNROS OF FOWLIS.

While I was endeavouring to do justice to the memory of that excellent man, and most beloved friend, whose memoirs I have now concluded, and was mentioning, in the course of my narration, the tragical consequences which the unnatural rebellion, by which he fell, had drawn along with it, and the many other valuable persons of which it had also deprived us; I could not but particularly reflect on the awful catastrophe of Sir Robert Munro, and his two brothers, the captain, and the doctor, who all within the compass of eight months, and

in less than twelve after the death of Colonel Gardiner, with whom they were well acquainted, and to whom they were allied in the bonds of a virtuous and honourable friendship, fell a sacrifice to the rage and cruelty of the same savage destroyers.—I was desirous of interweaving so remarkable a piece of history with a subject to which it was, alas! so nearly connected; and therefore I applied myself to a person of high rank most nearly related to them, on whose information I was sure I might entirely depend; entreating the favour of such an account of these three excellent brothers, and of the circumstances of their death, as I might safely and properly offer to the view of the public.

This honourable person referred me to a gentleman well acquainted with the history of the family of the Munros of Fowlis, and possessed of a distinct historical account of it, taken from the annals which have been kept of that family for many ages past, and from the old writs, charters, and other authentic deeds, belonging to it, which are the vouchers of these annals.

This gentleman was pleased to favour me with a pretty large historical account of this family, beginning it much higher, and carrying it through a much wider extent, than I could have expected from the particular view with which I first requested information.—I next obtained instructions on the same subject from a gentleman at London.—I was then furnished with a particular relation from another gentleman, a pious minister of the church of Scotland, with whom I have the happiness of being well acquainted. And as all these are persons of such a character, that none who know them can question the veracity and testimony of each, so they were each of them happy in a most intimate acquaintance with all the three deceased brothers after whom I inquired. At last of all, I received from a fourth gentleman a historical account of this family from the most early times; which, by the date it bears, was compiled a great many years ago, and which, it seems, was intended to have been published in a historical account of some of the ancient families of Scotland; which work became abortive through the death of the author.

When I compared these several accounts, as I received them from time to time, it gave me great satisfaction to find them all agree, and tally so exactly, in their accounts of this family, and of the three excellent brothers last deceased.—On an attentive perusal of these informations, I found they contained what was too curious and important to be lost, and yet too long to be inserted in the memoirs of Colonel Gardiner, without breaking the unity of design in a manner that would have proved inconvenient.—I concluded therefore, that (especially as those memoirs were finished before some of these papers came to my hands) it would be best to present it to the world in a distinct piece, connected by way of appendix to the former. And I feel a most sensible pleasure in the addition I am hereby making to the work, as it is paying some little debt of gratitude to the illustrious dead, and at the same time doing a just honour to the surviving branches of a family, from whence so many heroes have sprung, and of which there are still (though after much sad desolation made in it) most worthy remains. And I hope, that it may not only entertain my readers with some remarkable facts worthy of commemoration, but excite in their breasts something of the same generous spirit, to which nothing can more powerfully instigate the mind than the view of such glorious examples.

The family of the Munros of Fowlis is among the most ancient and honourable families in the north of Scotland, and has generally been remarkable for a brave, martial, and heroic spirit. It is mentioned by Buchanan with a memorable testimony,* when, after speaking of the difficulties in which Mary Queen of Scots was involved at Inverness, he adds, "That as soon as they heard of their sovereign's danger, a great number of the ancient Scots poured in around her, especially the Frasers and Munros; which (says he) were esteemed among the most valiant of the clans inhabiting those countries." And how well the latter have ever since continued to deserve that character, the following memoirs, brief as they are, may in some degree show.

The Munros of Fowlis have, in every one of their generations, been intermarried with many of the best families of nobility and gentry in the north of Scotland. And it is yet more for their honour, that they were among the first in those parts that embraced the Reformation, and have ever since been zealous assertors of it. And many of them have not only given great countenance and encouragement to the ministers of the gospel in the parishes under their influence, in consequence of which a great harvest of most eminent Christians hath been produced there; but also have themselves been signal examples of true piety, and a behaviour in all its branches most ornamental to a Christian profession.—I fear there have been few families to which such a character can be universally applied: but it is certain, that so far as it is the case, it is the most illustrious of all hereditary honours; and therefore seems to have been mentioned with the utmost propriety by my several correspondents in this connexion.

According to Buchanan, it was in the beginning of the eleventh century, and about the time of the conquest in England, when Malcolm, the IInd of that name, King of Scots, first distributed, or, as it is

* Arolit. Buchan. Rer. Scot. Hist. lib. VI. p. 107. Mirabant, imprimis Fraserorum et Munrorum [illegible] quorum [illegible] Familiæ [illegible] Hist. lib. XV. p. 358.

expressed, fenced out, or fenced, the lands of Scotland to the great families thereof, on account of their eminent services in his many battles with the Danes, until he forced them quite out of his kingdom. And, according to tradition, it was on that occasion that the country betwixt the burnings of Dingwall and the water of Alness, in the shire of Ross, was given to Donald Munro: and which is therefore to this day called Feringdonald, that is, Donald's Land. And part of these lands were afterwards by the King erected into a barony, called the Barony of Fowlis.

I shall not follow the annals of this family so far as to entertain the public with a detail of the barons of Fowlis in their several generations through these early ages, but shall begin my particular narration of them only from the time they became protestants, when their brave behaviour and example will afford us more instruction, and the facts concerning them may be depended on with more certainty. And therefore I shall only before that time observe,

That George, IXth baron * of Fowlis (in a direct lineal descent from the above Donald, the first baron) was slain at the memorable battle of Bannockburn, fought by King Robert Bruce of Scotland against King Edward II. of England, in the year 1314.—George, Xth baron of Fowlis, and son of the former, was also slain with a great many of his name at the battle of Halidonehill, near Berwick; in which battle the Scots were defeated by the English, and a great number of them killed, on the 22nd of July, A. D. 1333.—Robert Munro, XVIIth baron of Fowlis, was slain at the battle of Pinkie, near Edinburgh, with many of his name; where the Scots were again defeated by the English, and a great number of them killed, A. D. 1547.—I mention the fall of these three gentlemen, with their friends and followers, fighting valiantly in the cause of their country, as illustrating the valour and bravery of this family in their different generations, and showing how justly they merited the character which Buchanan gives them in the place before cited. How long this brave spirit has continued, as it were, hereditary to them, will appear from what follows.

The first protestant of this family was Robert Munro, the XVIIIth baron of Fowlis, son to Robert last mentioned, and the same who came to the assistance of Mary Queen of Scots, upon the occasion before cited, A. D. 1562. He embraced the protestant religion quickly after, and being a wise and a good man, he left an opulent estate to the family and died A. D. 1588. He was succeeded by his son Robert Munro, XIXth baron of Fowlis, who died the same year with his father.—The next to him was his brother, Hector Munro, XXth baron of Fowlis, who died A. D. 1603.—Robert Munro, his son, succeeded him, the XXIst baron of Fowlis, who (to resume) when Gustavus Adolphus, that justly celebrated king of Sweden, (whose religion and valour were so distinguished among his many religious and valiant contemporaries,) was engaged in a protestant war against the emperor Ferdinand II. in defence of the civil as well as sacred liberties of Germany. The generous heart of this worthy gentleman was so struck with a regard to the common cause, in which he himself had no concern but what piety and virtue gave him, that he joined Gustavus with a very great number of his friends, who bore his own name. Many of them gained great reputation in this war; and that of Robert their leader was so eminent, that he was made colonel of two regiments at the same time, the one of horse, and the other of foot, in that service; in which he acquitted himself with so much fidelity and zeal, that he died of the wounds which he received in crossing the Danube, and was buried at Ulm, in the month of March, 1633.

He was succeeded by Sir Henry Munro, XXIId baron of Fowlis, the next male heir of the family,† who was also colonel of a regiment in the same service; and, upon his coming over to Britain, was created a baronet in June, 1633. Returning afterwards to Germany, he died at Hamburg, in April, 1635. His son, Sir Hector Munro, was XXIIId baron of Fowlis, who died, without issue, in the year 1651, at seventeen years of age. Sir Robert Munro, XXIVth baron of Fowlis, succeeded as the nearest male heir, being grandson to George Munro of Obsdale, who was third son to Robert Munro, the XVIIIth baron of Fowlis.

My information imports, that in the before-mentioned annals of this family there is a well-attested list of officers, (of which I have a copy in the memorial last sent me,) wherein there are three generals, eight colonels, five lieutenant-colonels, eleven majors, and above thirty captains, all of the name of Munro, besides a great number of subaltern. Most of these were in that religious war under the great Gustavus Adolphus; and some of the descendants of this family are at this day in possession of considerable military commands in Sweden, and various parts of Germany.

General Robert Munro (who was uncle to Sir

Robert, the XXIVth baron of Fowlis) published, in the year 1644, an account of this religious war under Gustavus Adolphus, in a folio volume, entitled "Military Discipline learned from the valiant Swede:" a book of which (though I never happened to see it) I have heard a high character. I am informed that it contains an exact journal of that expedition into Germany for the relief of the distressed protestants; and it is said to be filled with most excellent observations on military affairs, delivered in a strain of piety which seems to breathe the spirit of its brave and worthy author. And, indeed, by what I have heard of that instructive history, it is hard to say when there has been, even in the Christian world, so religious and so well disciplined an army as this; at the head of which a mysterious Providence permitted that royal hero and martyr, the great Gustavus, to fall. Would to God the time might at length come when our commanders shall take their lessons from it; at least so far as to learn, from the example of some of the bravest and greatest of men, to maintain in the military bodies under their command the authority of the Lord of hosts; and particularly that reverence for his name and for his day, which was there so beautifully and gloriously conspicuous!

This worthy general, in the year 1641, was appointed by King Charles I. major-general of the Scotch forces that were sent to Ireland to suppress the infamous and destructive rebellion there. It is not my business here to insist on those unhappy circumstances which so long retarded their march, and so greatly obstructed their success. I find, however, that he had at length the honour to be in the number of those by whom God gave blood to drink to those miscreants, who had rendered themselves so eminently worthy of it by a series of outrages, which the most sanguinary and detestable faction on earth (I mean that of popery) has seldom been able to exceed. For, in the year 1644, this illustrious commander, at the head of 14,000 of the Scotch and English protestants, fought and defeated 22,000 of the Irish in Ulster, killed and took many thousands of them, and seized on a great quantity of cattle and other provisions, of which the protestants were then in great want.

The general was a great favourer of the presbyterian interest, and among the first who established it in Ireland. He sat in their presbyteries and synods; and adhered to the interest of the parliament till he apprehended they were carrying matters to an excessive height against the king: on which he accepted of a commission from him, and acted under the Duke of Ormond; to which he was persuaded by his nephew Sir George Munro, (of whom afterwards,) who had always adhered to the interest of Charles I. as he afterwards did to that of Charles II.

In the year 1645, the general was surprised by Colonel Monk before he could draw out his men from their quarters; and he and they were by that means taken prisoners: but he continued not long in their hands; for death came and set him at liberty soon after.

It is worthy of our notice by the way, that in the year 1644, we find Monk imprisoned by the parliament for having accepted a commission from the king, and acted in consequence of it, though before that he had acted by commission from the parliament: and again, in the year 1648, we find him fighting for the parliament against the king: and his surprising and taking General Munro, was the first thing that brought him into favour with the parliament. For in that reeling time we find men of a much better character than Monk changing sides again and again, as they apprehended the one party or the other to be in the right, from the many different demands, refusals, and concessions, which then happened between them.

The General was succeeded in his command by Sir George Munro, brother to the last-mentioned Sir Robert, and both of them nephews to General Robert by his brother Colonel John Munro of Obsdale, in the Swedish service: Sir George was also bred in that service with his uncle, and afterwards served with him in Ireland; where he arrived to the rank of a colonel. He was made major-general by king Charles II. and had a body of forces under his command at Kendal, when James Duke of Hamilton was defeated by Cromwell at Lancaster, A. D. 1648. Upon this defeat Sir George returned to Scotland, and defeated the Earl of Argyle: and afterwards, his forces being disbanded by order of the states of Scotland, he went to Holland, and joined King Charles II. After whose restoration he was made lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief in Scotland.

Sir John Munro, XXVth baron of Fowlis, succeeded his father Sir Robert, A. D. 1668. He was a member of the convention of the estates of Scotland, at the Revolution, and a very zealous promoter of that happy event. He was no less strenuous in asserting presbytery; and on that account, being also remarkable for a large and corpulent stature, he was nick-named the Presbyterian Mortar-piece. His eminent piety and zeal had exposed him to great sufferings in the cause of religion, in those unhappy and infamous days, when the best friends to their country were treated as the worst enemies to the government: and when to be conscientiously solicitous to depart from evil made so many thousands a prey. Sir John suffered greatly, among many others, of whom the world was not worthy: his person was doomed to long imprisonment for no pretended crime nor what was found against him in the matters of his God, and his estate,

which was before considerable, was harassed by severe fines and confiscations, which reduced it to a diminution much more honourable indeed than any augmentation could have been, but from which it has not recovered even to this day. He died A. D. 1696, and was succeeded by his son.

Sir Robert Munro, XXVIth baron of Fowlis, who succeeded his father, was also a pious and benevolent man, and for some time a captain: but it pleased God early to deprive him of his sight, and to continue him in that condition during the remainder of his life. Under this calamity he calmly submitted himself to that God who can shed abroad a far more cheering light on the soul than these bodily eyes can admit. Providence was pleased to bless him with children, in whom he could not but find the highest satisfaction; and whose amiable characters in general leave no room to doubt of the tenderness and respect with which they would treat so worthy a parent, under a distressing calamity, which would naturally move compassion even in strangers. There were four of them who all reached maturity of age, and were the heirs of many blessings, though Providence suffered three of them to fall almost at once, by most unjust and barbarous hands; Sir Robert, Captain George Munro, and the Doctor, whose Christian name was Duncan; their only sister, married to Mr. Gordon, of Ardoch, still survives; an example of profound submission and fortitude, mingled with the most tender sensibility of temper.

Sir Robert Munro, XXVIIth baron of Fowlis, succeeded his father, A. D. 1729. He went early from the university to the camp, where he served seven years in Flanders; being some time captain in the Royal Scots, before that fatal cessation of arms, A. D. 1712; as his late Majesty with so much propriety publicly called it, to which therefore I shall not presume to give either a milder or a severer name. It was here that Sir Robert contracted that acquaintance and strict friendship with good Colonel Gardiner, which ran through the remainder of their lives, and of which each was so worthy. On Sir Robert's return from Flanders, he was reduced, on account of his inflexible opposition in parliament, (of which he was then a member,) to the measures which the ministry were then taking to subvert the succession in the present royal family, and with it, no doubt, the protestant religion, of which that family was, and is, under God, the firmest barrier.

My correspondent observes, concerning Sir Robert, "That he was noted for the countenance he gave to divine worship, both in public and his family, and for the regard which he always expressed to the word of God, and its ministers:" and then adds, "That he was sincere in his friendship, and full of compassion even to the meanest of those around him: and that he was remarkable, above most, for his activity in the discharge of any office of friendship, where he had professed it, and for his great exactness in the performance of his promises."

His military services are particularly worthy of being mentioned here. In the year 1715, he, with his clan, in conjunction with the Earl of Sutherland, kept the Earl of Seaforth, with 3000 men under his command, from joining the rebel camp at Perth, for near two months; and thereby prevented the Earl of Marr from crossing the Forth till the Duke of Argyle had gathered strength sufficient to oppose him. In consequence of this, Sir Robert exposed his own country to the fiercest resentments of the rebels, by whom it was plundered and destroyed; while others, who yet pretended to be friends to the government, saved themselves and their lands by capitulations with the enemy. Being then made governor of Inverness, Sir Robert kept 400 of his name there, during the rest of that rebellion, regularly paid and regimented: and these, together with some other clans, well affected to the interest of the present royal family, kept possession of that important pass, whereby the rebels were hindered from making a stand there, when they were dislodged from Perth by the Duke of Argyle.

He was, in the year 1716, made a commissioner of inquiry into the forfeited estates of the rebels; in which he strenuously exerted himself in procuring a number of parishes to be erected through the rebel countries, and provided with suitable stipends out of the confiscated land; whereby the gospel was preached in places where it had not been preached since the Reformation: so that some new presbyteries were formed in countries where the discipline and worship of protestant churches had before no footing. And such was the compassion and humanity which attempered his high courage, that by his interest with the government he did eminent service to the unfortunate widows and children of such as had, to the ruin of their families, been engaged in the rebellion.

Sir Robert was thirty years a member of parliament by his family interest; during which time he always maintained the firmest attachment to the service of his Majesty and his royal father, and to the religion and liberties of his country. His fidelity and zeal for these did not need to be purchased, solicited, or quickened, by personal favours: it continued through all this period unshaken and active, though from the ending of his commission of inquiry in 1724, till the year 1740, he had no post under the government. He then found the nation was to be involved in a foreign war, the necessity of which was generally apprehended and acknowledged: and therefore, though his friends thought his merit and experience might have pretended to something more, as he had been in the

rank of a lieutenant-colonel twenty-five years, his heart was too generous and too warm not to accept of the same commission, which was then given him in the Highland regiment. This regiment, when first formed out of independent Highland companies, was under the command of the Earl of Crawford as its colonel, who, all the while he stood in that relation to it, was abroad, confined by the wounds he had received as a volunteer against the Turks. During this time Sir Robert Munro was his lordship's lieutenant-colonel. Before it went to Flanders Lord Semple was its colonel; but he also being generally absent, and Sir Robert an old experienced officer, the regiment during the war was left under his care; and the manner in which he modelled and conducted it will remain in many respects an immortal honour to his name.

It is indeed surprising that a regiment composed of Highlanders, who are generally used to so rapacious a life at home, should yet by discipline have been brought to so good a behaviour, as that they should be judged the most trusty guards of property; and that, when the people in Flanders were allowed a protection for their goods, they should choose to have some of this regiment, among others of the British soldiers, appointed to protect them. This may, indeed, seem hardly credible:* yet my informer assures me, that he had it from an officer of their own of unquestionable credit; who added further, that it was but seldom he had observed a man among them drunk, and as seldom heard any of them swear. This is very agreeable to the high character which I heard of this regiment from an English gentleman then in Flanders, whose veracity is undoubted, and who cannot, I am sure, be suspected of any prejudice here. And among Sir Robert's papers there is still existing a copy of a letter from the Elector Palatine to his envoy at London, desiring him to thank the king of Great Britain, in his name, for the excellent behaviour of the Highland regiment while they were in his territories, "which," as he says expressly, "was owing to the care of Sir Robert Munro, their lieutenant-colonel; for whose sake (he adds) he should always pay a regard to a Scotchman for the future."

I the rather mention these particulars, not only as they do an honour to Sir Robert, and his worthy brother, through whose interest, and that of the other officers, with the private men, this great reformation was effected; but likewise, as they seem to show, in a very convincing manner, of how great importance it is that some methods be seriously thought of for breaking the other uncultivated inhabitants of these countries into useful men, by bringing them at once under the protection and discipline of the laws, and enforcing their obedience to them, by teaching them the principles of religion, and the arts of peace and commerce. This is a happy effect, which, methinks, we may naturally hope for from the late rebellion, pernicious as it has in many respects been: considering how much it has reduced them to the power of the government, and how justly obnoxious it has made the chiefs of many fierce and barbarous clans.

According to my best information, from persons who are most thoroughly acquainted with affairs in the North, the two great springs of rebellion amongst the inhabitants of these Highland countries are, their idleness and their ignorance. The former subjects them to a slavish dependence on their masters, and is also the cause of their being so addicted to stealing; and the latter makes them a prey to popish priests and missionaries from Rome, who are constantly, and in great numbers, trafficking among them. It has been very justly remarked, that the success they have in seducing these poor ignorant people is occasioned, in a great measure, by the vast extent of parishes in those Highland countries; some of them being betwixt thirty and forty miles in length, and twenty and thirty in breadth, full of great mountains, rapid rivers, and arms of the sea; and those parishes which are more moderate in their extent, are about twenty miles in length, and ten or twelve in breadth: and it is every where to be observed through these parishes, that around the place of the minister's residence, the inhabitants are almost all protestants; but in the corners which are remote from his residence, they are generally all papists.

Now it is evident, that these poor people can only be cured of idleness by teaching them manufactures, to which they are wholly strangers: and it is hard to imagine how they can be rescued from popish ignorance, until there are several new parishes erected in those extensive countries. It would ill become me to pretend to direct the government of Britain on such an occasion; but I know it to be the opinion of many persons in those parts, of distinguished wisdom and experience, that if it should be thought fit to employ the produce of the estates confiscated by the late rebellion for these valuable purposes, this, with the thousand pounds of his Majesty's royal bounty annually bestowed, would go a good way towards remedying these two great evils, with their train of miserable consequences, which we have of late so deeply felt. And who would not rejoice to see all these poor people sharing with us fully in all the privileges and advantages of Christians and of Britons? I pray God to guide and prosper every scheme for this purpose, and in

* A very worthy person, to whose inspection this appendix has been committed since it was finished, observes here: That though the Highlanders are much addicted to depredations, their neighbours, yet the very actors even in them are generally as faithful to their trust as any set of people whatever; and that this action shows but my degree of cruelty and kindness to one of those people, the love of obedience has a greater influence than that of stripes generally has on others of the common people. This remark I thought proper to insert here, that the representation of this affair might be as impartial as possible.

this connexion, I cannot but mention, and recommend, the society for propagating the knowledge of religion, and with it the principles of loyalty, in those Highland countries; a design, in which so many worthy persons, both in the northern and southern parts of our island, are incorporated: but their stock is by no means equal to the purposes here mentioned; and by their constitution they are confined to the support of schools which are indeed going on with great success, as far as the revenue will allow them.

But to return from this natural, and therefore, I hope, very pardonable, digression: The behaviour of Sir Robert Munro and his regiment at the battle of Fontenoy was heard through all Britain. He had obtained leave of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland to allow them their old way of fighting. They were early in the field, and were ordered to attack the main battery of the French at the village from which the battle derives its name, which they did, and drove the enemy from it: but finding the body of the French forces deeply intrenched behind the battery, they did not give over the charge, but bravely drew up to attack them. Sir Robert, according to the usage of his countrymen, ordered the whole regiment "to clap to the ground" on receiving the French fire; and instantly, as soon as it was discharged, they sprung up, and coming close to the enemy, poured in their shot upon them, to the certain destruction of multitudes, and drove them precipitately through their own lines; then retreating, they drew up again, and attacked them a second time after the same manner. These attacks they repeated several times that day, to the surprise of the whole army.

Sir Robert was every where with his regiment, notwithstanding his great corpulency, and wherein the trenches, he was hauled out again by the legs and arms by his own men. And it is observable, that when he commanded the whole regiment to "clap to the ground," he himself alone, with the colours behind him, stood upright, receiving the whole fire of the enemy; and this, because, as he said, though he could easily lie down, his great bulk would not suffer him to rise so quickly.

His preservation that day was the surprise and astonishment, not only of the whole army, but of all that heard the particulars of the action: and my information relates, that a most eminent person in the army was heard to say upon the occasion, "That it was enough to convince one of the truth of the doctrine of predestination, and to verify what King William, of glorious memory, had been used to say, that 'every bullet has its billet,' or its particular direction and commission where it should lodge." It is added, that on the retreat of our army, the Highland regiment was in the rear; and a great body of the French horse being ordered to pursue, Sir Robert made his regiment face about, and gave them a general fire so full and effectual, that a great number of them being brought to the ground, the rest wheeled about and rode off.

But to close what relates to Sir Robert Munro: As an acknowledgment for his brave services at Fontenoy, as well as on former occasions, his Majesty was pleased to appoint him to succeed General Ponsonby, who was slain there in the command of his regiment, which was among the troops that arrived at Newcastle during the rebellion, and made a part of General Wade's army. They were afterwards ordered to Scotland; and being upon the left wing at the battle of Falkirk, on that fatal day, the 17th of January, 1745-6, they shamefully left their brave colonel and lieutenant-colonel, with five or six more of their officers, to be cut in pieces.

By the account which the rebels themselves give of Sir Robert, he defended himself against six of them with his half-pike, and killed two of their number; upon which, a seventh came up, and (as they expressed it) poured a shot into his belly, which brought him immediately to the ground. In this dreadful moment, in the midst of all this extremity, his brother, Doctor Munro, whom the warmest instances of his friends could not divert from exposing his person in defence of his country, and who was near at hand, ran to him to support him, attended by his servant and the surgeon of the regiment; but they were all murdered on the spot, in the most barbarous manner, by those cruel men.

Sir Robert's body was the next day sought out; and his face was so cut and mangled by these savages after he fell, that it could scarce be known. He was found, and buried honourably in the church-yard at Falkirk, by the Macdonalds, who, though engaged in rebellion against their lawful sovereign, could not but pay some public regard to the memory of so valiant a man, the principal persons among the rebels attending him all the way to the grave.

And thus fell these two brave brothers, for the Doctor undoubtedly deserves that title with Sir Robert, who, though professing the peaceful art of medicine, adventured himself amidst the most visible danger, fired with love to his illustrious brother, and attempting in vain to bring him some aid in his last extremities, amidst armed enemies, expired with him, no less lamented than he by all that intimately knew him. How just that lamentation was, will appear from the accounts which I have had of the Doctor's character from his most intimate friends, which I here subjoin.

He was a gentleman of an excellent understanding, and had a brightness and solidity in his genius which are not often united; but which, when they occur, do greatly illustrate each other. He had

been bred up to the study of medicine and surgery, which in Scotland are frequently joined, as they have so great an affinity. "He had a large stock of knowledge, not only in his own profession, but in most parts of polite literature. But these (adds my correspondent) I hold cheap, when compared to the goodness of his heart. His greatest study was to know himself; and I verily believe, that since the early ages of Christianity, there has not appeared a more upright person."

He spent a great many years in the East Indies, and had most accurately and diligently inquired into the manners, customs, arts, and manufactures of the natives, and into the produce and commodities of the country; so that he was much more capable of giving entertainment to persons of curiosity in such things, than travellers commonly are; and his veracity was such, that all who knew him could entirely depend upon whatever he reported as on his own knowledge. To all these advantages, was added a memory remarkably tenacious of every circumstance with which he charged it; but perhaps it was a loss to the world that it was so, as it hindered him from committing many extraordinary things to writing, which might have afforded improvement, as well as delight, to the public.

The want of such memoirs from so able a hand is the more to be regretted, as his remarkable modesty did not permit him to talk much in company. One might spend a good deal of time with him without perceiving, by any hints from him, that he had ever been out of Britain: but when his friends seemed desirous of information on any of these topics, as they fell in his way, he communicated his observations upon them with the utmost freedom, and gave them the greatest satisfaction imaginable; of which some remarkable instances happened at the houses of persons of very considerable rank, who paid him that respect which he so well deserved.

It was the more to be desired, that he should have left behind him some written memoirs of his own remarks and adventures, as he was a most attentive observer of divine Providence, and had experienced many singular instances of it. One is so remarkable, that it claims a place here, brief as these hints must necessarily be.—After he had continued eight or ten years in the East Indies, he was shipwrecked on the Malabarian coast, as he was on his passage home: he saved his life on a plank, but lost all his effects, except a small parcel of diamonds. This ruinous calamity, as it seemed to be, obliged him to return to Fort St. George, where he experienced, far beyond what he could have expected, the extraordinary friendship of several English gentlemen of that settlement; and felt the solid effects of it, as by their assistance he acquired much more in six or seven years following (for his whole stay in that country was about sixteen years) than he had lost by shipwreck; and when he left the settlement, he had all sort of encouragement offered him to induce him to stay; but his health and other circumstances obliged him to return home.

This return (which happened, if I mistake not, about the year 1726,) was a happy providence to many; for, as he was remarkably successful in both the branches of the peculiar profession, he took great pains in both; and, as he did this without fee or reward, when he was satisfied the circumstances of the afflicted needed such assistance, he was an instrument of saving many limbs, and many lives, which must otherwise in all probability have been lost.

To this account I must beg leave to add what another of my correspondents writes to me concerning the Doctor in the following words: "As we were often by ourselves, I still found him inclined to turn our discourse to spiritual subjects, concerning God and religion, the offices of the great Redeemer, and the power of God's Spirit in converting and sanctifying the souls of men, and the hope of eternal life through Christ." I transcribe the passage thus particularly concerning this pious physician, as I esteem it, in one view, a peculiar honour to him, and permit me to say, in another, to the profession itself: blessed be God, that though it is so rare a case, yet there are those of that learned body who are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; but who, knowing it to be true on incontestable evidence, and having felt (what one would imagine every rational creature who believes it to be true must immediately see) its infinite importance, have steadily determined to submit to its influence, and to maintain its honours in the midst of all the scorn and derision of their infidel brethren; a determination which perhaps requires no less courage, especially in some tempers, than that generous instance of fraternal love which will entail such lasting glory on the memory of Doctor Munro.

There yet remained one valiant brother of this family, whom Providence reserved for a few months, before he shared the fate of the other two. The person I mean was Captain George Munro of Culcairn, Esq. of whom I have conceived such an idea, from the account of him which has been put into my hands, that I cannot forbear wishing the world were blessed with a much larger narrative of his life and character than my instructions will [illegible] than I should have room to insert in such an appendix as this. Much do I regret that Providence never favoured me with an opportunity of being personally acquainted with him, especially as I have reason to believe, from what my friends in the North write, that he had the like disposition towards

forming a friendship with me, as produced so quick a growth of it in the breast of Colonel Gardiner, whom, on the whole, Captain Munro seems to have resembled almost in every part of his character, taking it as it was since that happy change which I have so largely described in the foregoing memoirs: but what was wanting in my personal knowledge, is supplied by a large and animated account from my correspondents, who had the best opportunity of knowing them, and upon whose information I can safely depend.

Captain George Munro was the second brother of the family; the Doctor being the youngest son. He, like the other gentlemen, had the advantage of a very liberal education, and soon discovered marks of a good genius, which might have qualified him for making a figure under any character in the learned world. Besides the other branches of literature, common to all the professions, he acquired a stock of theological knowledge; and before he was seventeen years old he was well acquainted with ecclesiastical history, so as to be able to give a good account of the advance and decline of the Christian interest in various ages and countries, and the degrees and manner by which the corruption and reformation of the church had been introduced, established, or obstructed. I the rather mention this, as it seems to be an accomplishment of great importance; on which account I much wonder that the generality of young gentlemen should think it so little worth attending to; and I wish I could say, that all who are intended for the ministry were so careful in pursuing it, as its usefulness and its absolute necessity to them might demand.

But his taste and talents particularly lay for a military life; and in the year 1715 he behaved himself with great courage and activity during the whole course of that rebellion; and after the dispersion of the rebels he was employed in reducing the inhabitants of those Highland countries and the adjacent isles to a submission to the government.

In the year 1719, when, on occasion of the invasion from Spain, General Wightman, with the troops under his command, had waited long at Inverness for a body of Highlandmen to conduct the troops through the mountains to Glenshiel, where the Spaniards and rebels were encamped; and when many promises of such assistance made to the general had failed, Sir Robert Munro being then out of the country, his brother the Captain (of whom we now speak) assembled in a most expeditious manner a body of the Munro clan, and marched with the regular troops to Glenshiel; where they distinguished themselves by the gallantry of their behaviour, driving the enemy before them in a sharp action, in which many of them were killed, and more wounded; and among the rest the Captain himself, in a very dangerous manner. He had, however, the satisfaction to see these foreign invaders and their rebel abettors, totally routed and dispersed, on the Pretender's birth day, June 10: and though his constitution suffered much by the loss of his blood on this occasion, yet it pleased God to recover him for further service to his country.

As he still continued vigorous and active in the service of the government, he obtained the command of one of the independent companies then in the national pay; and when they were afterwards regimented and sent to Flanders, he attended them thither, and continued in the public service till the year 1744; when he became so exceedingly asthmatic, that he could not breathe in the Flanders air: on which General Wade not only allowed him to sell his commission, but, out of compassion to his distress, joined his brother Sir Robert in obliging him to do it, and to return home; to which at length he submitted, though not without regret, and thereupon returned to his domestic seat at Newtown in Ross-shire, in the view of spending his days with his family and friends in a peaceful retreat. But Providence determined otherwise, and had reserved for him further labours of a military life, in which it had appointed him gloriously to toil and fall, after services which might have done an honour to his most vigorous and active days.

The late wicked and unnatural rebellion broke out soon after his arrival; and the danger of his country, and its civil and religious constitution, gave him at once a new stock of life and spirits.

When General Cope came to Inverness, and had been assured of being joined by a number of Highlanders, to conduct him and his small army through the rebel countries between that town and Aberdeen, Captain Munro, with 200 of his brother's clan, were indeed the only persons that were found willing to perform the promises that were made by several others. He marched with the General directly to Aberdeen, from whence he was ordered to return home; in which return he was under the necessity of marching through a great number of the rebels under the command of Gordon of Glenbucket, who lay on the road to attack the Captain and his party; but Glenbucket, finding that the Captain was determined to dispute every inch of ground with him, retired, and allowed him to proceed without disturbance to Inverness.

Not long after that the Earl of Loudoun sent Captain Munro, in conjunction with the Laird of Macleod, with a body of men, to relieve the city of Aberdeen, and the neighbouring country, then greatly oppressed by the outrages committed upon them by Lord Lewis Gordon, and the rebels under his command. Accordingly the Captain and Macleod proceeded as far as Inverury, a small town a few miles west of Aberdeen, where they halted to receive intelligence, and, from the narrowness of the

place, they were obliged to quarter a great number of their men in distant places through the adjacent country. In the mean time, a considerable reinforcement from the main body of the rebel army, which then lay at Perth, was sent under the command of a French officer, supported by their piquets and Irish brigades; by the assistance of which Lord Lewis attempted to surprise and cut off the Captain and his whole party. In this view they were moving towards Inverury, in the dusk of the evening, after Captain Munro and Macleod had sent their men through the country to their quarters; but though there was not such good intelligence provided as might have been wished, they were providentially discovered at such a distance, that Captain Munro and the Laird of Macleod had time to draw up the men they had in the town of Inverury, in so regular a manner, that, in consequence of it, they gave the enemy such a warm reception, attacking them at once in front and flank, that many of them were left dead in the field. The brave Captain and his associate continued very sedate, intrepid, and active during the heat of the skirmish, till at last, being overpowered by far superior numbers, they thought it advisable to retire; and brought off their party safe and in good order, excepting some few who had been killed or taken prisoners. Among the latter was Mr. Adam Gordon, of Ardoch, nephew to Captain Munro, who was seized by the rebels, and treated with a deal of rigour and severity for a considerable time, while detained in their power: but they did not presume to pursue the rest; and the young gentleman at length made his escape, to the great joy of the family; being, I hope, reserved by Providence to tread in the steps of his heroic uncles, and to bless his country with some considerable future services.

Upon the retreat of the rebels northward before his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, the Earl of Loudoun had not sufficient strength to maintain his possession of Inverness against them: whereupon he, with the Lord President and Captain Munro, retreated to the shire of Sutherland, proposing to defend themselves there until the season allowed his Royal Highness to march the troops to Inverness. But in this interval, the rebels having spread themselves through the shires of Inverness, Murray, and Ross, they got possession of a great many boats; by the help of which they transported a great part of their body to the Sutherland coast, under the covert of a very thick fog. Upon which the Earl of Loudoun, with the Lord President and the Captain, were obliged to retreat, through the western parts of Ross, into the Isle of Sky; where they continued until the rebel army was broke and dispersed at the battle of Culloden.

I have been the more particular in this narrative of the Captain's conduct during the rebellion, as it gives some light into the situation and transactions of the friends of our constitution in those parts at that time: and my information assures me, that the facts are taken from persons of undoubted veracity, who were present with the Captain in his march to Aberdeen with General Cope, and in his return from it; and who were with him in the skirmish at Inverury, and were afterwards witnesses of his death.

Upon his return from the Isle of Sky he was constantly employed in expeditions through the rebel countries of great extent, to reduce them to a submission to the government; which he performed with diligence and zeal, but still with the greatest humanity. This the rebels themselves must acknowledge; as he never did the least injury to any man, and in all that vast circuit which he made through these distant countries, he neither himself seized, nor allowed those under his command to seize, any thing but arms: and yet, notwithstanding all this humanity, his diligence and zeal had been such in the whole of this rebellion, as rendered him obnoxious to the rage and revenge of the rebels, who had vowed his destruction upon the first opportunity; and because they had not courage to face him, they had recourse to the base method of assassination, which was effected on the Lord's day, the 31st of August, 1746. He was then on a long and necessary march at the head of 500 men, on the side of Locharkey, amongst the wild rocks of Lochaber; where, as he was passing by the side of a wood, between the advanced guard and the main body of his men, he was shot dead by a villain who concealed himself behind the trees and rocks in the wood, and who, by the advantages of that situation, got off without being discovered, and has never since been found out: an event to the Captain, no doubt, most happy; and a blessed kind of instantaneous translation to the regions of endless peace and triumphant joy; but to all who loved the public, not to be mentioned without the tenderest sensibility and deepest regret.

One of my correspondents on this occasion concludes his accounts of the deaths of Sir Robert, the Doctor, and the Captain, in these words: "Thus died these three worthy men, to the irreparable loss of the country in which they lived: all of them remarkable for a brave spirit, full of love to their native land, and of disinterested zeal for religion and liberty; faithful in their promises, stedfast in their friendship, abundant in their charity to the poor and distressed; moderate in their resentments, and easy to be reconciled: and especially remarkable for their great and entire love to each other, so that one soul seemed, as it were, to actuate all the three." To which it might have been added

* [illegible] Secretary of the [illegible] August 24, 1881 [illegible]

blessed with a sister, not unworthy to make the fourth person in such a friendship.

My other correspondent, in his character of the Captain, speaks in this manner: "The great foundation of all his other virtues was laid in a most sincere and stedfast regard to the Supreme Being. He carefully studied the great doctrines of our holy religion, which he courageously professed, and, as it was requisite, defended, in whatever company he might be cast: he did this with the greater freedom, as his practice was always agreeable to it, and in particular his regard, both to the book and to the day of God. He had from his infancy been trained up in an acquaintance with the Scripture; and he daily perused it with pleasure, and doubtless with advantage. And, though the natural cheerfulness of his temper inclined him on other days to facetious turns in conversation, yet on the sabbath he was not only grave and devout, but carefully attentive that all his speech might tend to edification, and as far as possible minister grace to the hearers. He was exemplary in the social virtues, temperate in the use of food and sleep, and rose early for devotion (wherein, as in many other respects, he remarkably resembled his beloved friend Colonel Gardiner). He was also thoroughly sensible how much a faithful discharge of relative duties is essential to the character of a Christian. He approved himself, therefore, as a brave and vigilant officer, a most active and faithful servant of the crown, and a true patriot to his country in the worst of times, and in domestic life was exemplary as a husband, a father, and a master. He was a most affectionate brother, a faithful friend, a constant benefactor, and a sure patron of the oppressed; and, to crown all, was at last in effect a martyr in the cause of that religion he had so eminently adorned, and of those liberties he had so long and bravely defended."

It must give a sensible pleasure to every reader, who enters into these things with a becoming spirit, to reflect, that, notwithstanding these unparalleled and irreparable losses, this family, which has been long celebrated for so many worthy branches, is not yet extinct; but that both Sir Robert Munro and the Captain have left those behind them who may not only bear up the name, but, if they answer the hopes which in the opening of life they give to their country, may add new honours to it.

I hope the reader will not lay down this narrative, which is now brought to a close, without deriving some useful lessons from the remarkable train of Providence which this Appendix, as well as the preceding Memoirs, offer to his observation. And the more he enters into these lessons, the more will he be disposed to lift up his wishes and prayers to God for those valuable remains, both of Sir Robert Munro's and of Colonel Gardiner's family, which may yet be within the reach of such addresses; that God may graciously support them in their sorrows, and that all the virtues and graces of the illustrious dead may live in them, and in their remotest posterity. Amen!

Captain, September 18, 1685, and the Doctor September 19, 1687. Sir Robert therefore was slain in heavenly second year, the Captain in his sixty first, and the Doctor in his fifty-ninth.

SOME ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. THOMAS STEFFE.

PREFIXED TO

A VOLUME OF SERMONS PUBLISHED AFTER HIS DECEASE.

TO THE REV. MR JOHN BARKER.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

If the dedication of a book be any token of gratitude and respect, or the patronage of it any instance of generosity and favour, you have the justest title to this volume in one view, and I the greatest encouragement to address it to you in the other. I know, Sir, that to enlarge on these topics, would, to a gentleman of your character, be making a very disagreeable kind of return. But you will allow me to let the world know, that I am inscribing these posthumous sermons of Mr. Steffe to one of the best of his friends, as well as of mine; and to him, to whom, had he been engaged to publish them himself, he would surely have chosen to present the first-fruits of his labours. And permit me, Sir, thus publicly to thank you for all the pleasure you gave me in an opportunity of cultivating the mind of so worthy a youth, and for the foundation which you laid for that excellent example he gave, as well as for the wise and pious instructions he delivered in circumstances and relations of life, which, unsupported by your bounty and care, it is probable he had never known. You, Sir, discovered this promising plant in its tenderest state, and presented it to the garden of God; and though we must not arraign the wise hand that removed it, every one will own it reasonable that these early, yet pleasant and wholesome, fruits which dropped from it should be presented to you. And I persuade myself, Sir, that, though they are not ripened to all that height of beauty and of flavour which a maturer growth might have given them, you will receive them with candour; and, indeed, I am not without some cheerful hope, that they may afford you both delight and nourishment.

When I intimate that Mr. Barker may not only be entertained, but edified, by the productions of our young friend, I might seem to speak with too little caution, and to raise an expectation which a prudent friendship will always avoid, when it would introduce persons or books into the world with advantage. But it is the happiness of great wisdom and goodness (I had almost said it is a part of its reward) to be entertained and edified by the writings of those who are much its inferiors, and most readily to exercise an indulgence which itself least needs. In this view you, Sir, would have read these Sermons with pleasure had they been the work of a stranger; but you cannot, and I think you ought not, to forget, that you were, through the divine goodness, the instrument of giving them to the world. And you will be quickened to renew your bounties of this kind, and a more important kind is not easily to be named, when you so sensibly perceive that, short as the date of our friend's life was, your labour, with regard to its present effects, hath not been in vain in the Lord.

They who know the relation in which I stood to Mr. Steffe, will readily believe that I have some peculiar share in your joys on such an occasion; but if there were not such a distinguishing tie, as in the present case, I must be insensible to a long train of personal obligations, if I did not affectionately take my part in all your satisfactions and joys. I bless God that they arise from such a variety of springs, that they swell into so full a stream; and, above all, that they are so faithfully and so constantly returned back to him from whom they originally proceed.

I do, Sir, in my conscience, apprehend that, when addressing the ministers of the gospel, there is seldom reason to congratulate them on their distinguished circumstances in temporal life. When the more abundant gifts of the divine bounty seem to be received, as if, like those given to the Hebrew servants, they were a part of the ceremonial of their dismission from their Lord, they are indeed the calamity rather than the happiness of the proprietors, be they ever so copious, or ever so splendid. That is really a poisonous draught, be it ever so luscious, which intoxicates the mind, and lulls it into a forgetfulness of the interest of Christ, and of immortal souls. But where affluent circumstances are considered as an engagement to serve God with greater cheerfulness and zeal in the abundance of all things; where the possessor considers himself as the steward of God in temporals as well as spirituals, and as the almoner who is to distribute the divine bounties to his indigent brethren, whether ministers or private Christians; and where all this is done in the easy, cheerful, endearing manner of a heart that feels how much more blessed it is to give than to receive; this, Sir, is a most grateful spectacle, not only to the eye of an intimate and obliged friend, but of a stranger who understands any thing of the beauty of character; and is, I doubt not, venerable, as well as amiable, in the eyes of those celestial

spirits from whom it seems to be copied. Human acknowledgments on such an occasion are little things to the voice of an approving conscience and an approving God. I hope, therefore, Sir, that the many, whose burdens (to my certain knowledge) you have eased, and whose hearts you have gladdened, will express their gratitude in a nobler way, by endeavouring to serve the public with greater alacrity, while they are freed from the encumbrances which must otherwise have depressed and broken their spirits.

I heartily bless God, that while good Mr. Barker is possessed of these pleasures, which so few of his brethren in the dissenting ministry can have, he also shares with the most acceptable, and I hope I may add, the most successful, of them, in those which immediately arise from the exercise of his sacred office. It is with unutterable delight that I see so valuable a friend recovered from the remainders of that disorder which seemed some years ago to threaten the speedy period of his public services. To be able to vent the fulness of your heart under a sense of the grace of the gospel, and to represent the important engagements to vital and universal holiness which so naturally arise from it, would give a nobler pleasure than money could purchase, though it were only in your own house, to a little circle which might fill one of its rooms. There, indeed, you might equally approve the sincerity of your heart in the presence of him that searches it: but you must give your friends, that is, as I should imagine, all the friends of virtue and religion who know you, leave to rejoice, that Providence, having invigorated you for it, has called you out to constant service in one of the most numerous and important congregations which is to be found among us, even in London, that great support of our interest through the whole kingdom. There, my dear and honoured friend, may you long continue to delight and to bless crowded, attentive, and serious auditories, growing daily more attentive, and more serious, while your doctrine drops upon them like the dew, and distils like the rain! May you have the pleasure to see, not merely that they are capable of relishing the dignity of sentiment, the propriety of language, and the gracefulness of delivery; but, which is infinitely more desirable, that they continually advance in faith, in holiness, and in love, to the glory of that God whom you serve with your spirit in the gospel of his Son, and to whom all that you are and have is so faithfully and so zealously devoted!

For these great purposes may your important life be prolonged, and your health, with that of your valuable lady, be supported to many future years! May the secret blessing of the God of heaven sweetly mingle itself with all the concerns of both! May it fill your house with prosperity, and your hearts with that joy which a stranger intermeddleth not with; and which, though it were in a royal palace, can grow upon no stock but benevolence, friendship, and devotion! And may the various blessings of a long and a happy life be at length crowned with those of an infinitely happier immortality!

Whenever that solemn moment comes which is to remove you from time to eternity, I know that it must leave multitudes lamenting; so deeply lamenting, that it is painful to speak of or to think of it. But I rejoice, Sir, to reflect, how many friends above will then be waiting to receive you to everlasting habitations. I doubt not but the spirit of our dear author will be numbered and distinguished among them; and that your generous concern to promote the spread and the acceptance of these his remains, will, so far as it may be known to him, increase his acknowledgment. In the mean time, Sir, I persuade myself, that among all your other good offices, you will join your earnest prayers for their success, with those of,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your most obliged and affectionate brother,

And obedient humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, June 8, 1742.

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The pious author of these discourses was so early removed from our world, and made so short an appearance on any public stage of action, that there is no room for any to expect a variety of remarkable occurrences in his life. By far the greater part of those few years which Providence allotted him, was spent in assiduous preparation for services, which, alas! he was never permitted to accomplish. Nevertheless, as a person curious in the anatomy of vegetables would look with some satisfaction on a blossom yet folded up in the bud, while he traced the first rudiments of its future form, as well as that peculiar apparatus which was subservient to its preservation and growth in that infant state, though it never grew up to display its vivid colours and diffuse its fragrancy; so I flatter myself, that something may occur in this narration, not unworthy the notice of survivors.

They who, like our author, in the years I shall principally describe, are growing up to the work of the ministry, may, I hope, learn in many instances, what it is to be desired they may be, while I am telling them what Mr. Steffe was, and if they go and do likewise, it may be for the benefit of multitudes who are yet unborn that this little sketch has been drawn. And the generality of readers may, perhaps, be more disposed to edify by his writings, as they grow better acquainted with his character: for it is certain, that nothing adds greater authority to a minister's instructions from the pulpit or the press, than an apprehension that they are transcribed and uttered from his heart.

Our author was the son of a worthy clergyman of the established church, the Reverend Mr. John Steffe, once of Emanuel College in Cambridge, and afterwards Rector of Wrentham in the county of Suffolk. This gentleman, remarkable for his piety, learning, and moderation, married Mrs. Martha Popland, of Raydon, in Suffolk, by whom he had several children, who survive their honoured father, I hope, to be long-lived blessings to their other pious parent, and to supply, as far as possible, the great loss she sustained, so soon after she became a widow, by the death of two most hopeful and delightful sons.*

Mr. Thomas Steffe was born April 6, 1716; and though he had a very weak constitution, so that his life was hardly expected from his infancy; (for he soon appeared subject to an asthmatic disorder, besides other infirmities;) yet he discovered such an early solidity of genius, seriousness of temper, and fondness for books, that his father soon determined to indulge his desire of being bred a scholar. And as he candidly referred it to himself, as his judgment advanced towards maturity, to judge for himself in religious matters, he generously acquiesced in the young gentleman's choice of pursuing his studies among the protestant dissenters.

I am informed that he had most of his education in the languages under his father, who was well acquainted with them, and especially a very accurate judge in the elegances of the Latin, of which I have some remarkable proofs in my correspondence with him. It is not very material to mention the particular places in which our author improved and perfected his studies. It may suffice to say, that when he was judged nearly qualified for the academy, as he resolutely declined, from principles of conscience, those offers which a person of the

* The Rev. Mr. Steffe, of Wrentham, died April 7, 1736, in the 58th year of his age, and was buried in the chancel of that church. His widow died June 4, 1746.

first rank in the established church had kindly made of providing for him at the university, his case was accidentally mentioned to that excellent person to whom I have ascribed those traits of his labours, who, ready to embrace all opportunities to serve the public interest, made a particular inquiry into his character and disposition, and in concurrence with another, and to me unknown, benefactor, determined to assist this hopeful youth with a supply of twenty pounds a year, that his education might not be burthensome to his good father, then far advanced in years, charged with the care of a numerous family.

In the year 1733, Mr. Steffe was sent, at the request of his friends, to one of those little seminaries among the protestant dissenters, where attempts are used to supply, in the best manner we can, the want of more public advantages for education, and to guide the minds of young persons intended for the ministry into such preparatory studies as may in some measure qualify them for appearing properly in it. He was then in his 18th year; but as he well knew the importance of making himself master of the learned languages in younger life, he desired to be excused from entering upon the philosophical part of his course, till he had spent almost another year in applying himself to them; and particularly to Greek: which, I am sorry to say it, is not generally cultivated in private schools with that care and exactness which it deserves and requires. He prosecuted these studies with such resolution, and such success, that, on the whole, the most celebrated classics both of Greece and Rome were a delight rather than a drudgery to him; and thus a foundation was laid for that solidity, strength, and correctness both of sentiments and style, which must seldom be expected, where those great originals are unknown or disregarded.

I cannot forbear mentioning two other particulars, which Mr. Steffe took in his entrance on this stage of life, which appeared to me remarkably prudent. The one was, that he endeavoured to gain an early acquaintance with the character of books, especially those of the little library to which he had access: and was ready to take the advice of more experienced friends in the choice of those he should read, that he might not throw away his time in those which were of little importance; and also that he might not anticipate the perusal of others, which might more properly be reviewed in some future time. And I must needs say, that the neglect of this caution, obvious as it is, may make a well furnished library a snare rather than a benefit. The other particular I referred to, was his care immediately to learn short-hand, and that not merely in its first rudiments, with which too many content themselves, but to some degree of exactness, elegance, and readiness. In consequence of this, he became capable, with great ease, and in a very little time, to make many valuable extracts from the books he read and consulted; not to mention the many hours which it afterwards saved him, in the composition of discourses for the pulpit.

I think it was also during the first year that he laid a foundation for reading the Old Testament in its original language; a care so very necessary, that I wonder it should ever be omitted; or that any young gentleman, in an age like ours, should be judged competently qualified for the pulpit, who lies as much at the mercy of translators in studying the larger half of his Bible, as any of the people he is to teach. It is, however, with pleasure that I observe, how seldom this is done among the protestant dissenters, so far as I have an opportunity to learn; and I am sorry to hear from many learned clergymen, with whom I have the honour to be acquainted, how often it is totally neglected by those, whose advantages for literature are so very much distinguished.

I shall not here give a particular account of the method in which Mr. Steffe's education, and that of his companions, was carried on, while at the academy, though I have often been requested and importuned to write largely on this head. I content myself with observing in general, that he did not despise any part of polite literature, which seemed subservient to his honourable appearance in the ministry, in so learned an age and country as our own; but, nevertheless, applied himself with the greatest assiduity to those things which appeared of the most eminent and immediate service; in which view he is worthy of being imitated by all that regard either their acceptance or usefulness in the churches.

In the former view, besides the general preparations of logic, rhetoric, and metaphysics, he made himself acquainted with the principles of geometry and algebra, and, I think, also of conic sections, and celestial mechanics. That steady command of thought, and attention of mind, for which our author was remarkable, and the traces of which were discoverable in his countenance, made these studies pleasant rather than fatiguing to him; and he soon saw the tendency they have to teach us to distinguish our ideas with accuracy, and to dispose our arguments in a clear, concise, and convincing manner. These introduced him into the easy knowledge of mechanics, statics, hydrostatics, optics, pneumatics, and astronomy, so far as it was judged material to open to him the chief phenomena of each with their respective solutions. He added to these some other articles, which have their place in what is usually called the Encyclopædia of Learning, especially something of natural history, and a pretty large view of the anatomy of the human body; the knowledge of which he cultivated

with peculiar care and pleasure, as well observing the tendency it has to promote our veneration and love to the great architect of this amazing frame, whose wonders of providential influence also are so apparent in its support, nourishment, and motion.

For all these studies Mr. Steffe had a relish, and a genius; but the far greater part of his time, especially in the last three years of his course, was employed in others more directly preparatory for the great work he had in view. In this number I must reckon a large and particular investigation of Jewish Antiquities, in which he met with the illustration of numberless texts in the Old Testament, which cannot be well understood without them: as likewise his survey of Ecclesiastical History, of which Lampe's admirable Epitome was the ground-work; which I mention, because I wonder it is no more generally known, though so very far superior to any thing else of the like kind, for the vast variety of judicious hints which it contains, in a little room, and most beautiful order. His view of the doctrines of the ancient philosophers in their various sects, had been taken with greater advantage, had Buddæus's Compendium Historiæ Philosophicæ been then known: but something of this kind he surveyed, and it could not but serve to endear Christianity to him, that glorious light which dispels these shades of learned and artificial darkness.

These articles took up some hours every week, in the latter years of his course; but by far the greater part of his time throughout this whole period, so far as it fell under the direction of his tutor, was employed in a series of about 250 lectures of divinity, in the largest extent of the word, that is, considered as including what is most material in pneumatology and ethics.* In this compendium were contained, in as few words as perspicuity would admit, the most material things which had occurred to the author's observations, relating to the nature and properties of the human mind, the proof of the existence and attributes of God, the nature of moral virtue, the various branches of it, the means subservient to it, and the sanctions by which its precepts, considered as God's natural law, are enforced; under which head the natural evidence of the immortality of the soul was largely examined. To this was added some survey of what is, and generally has been, the state of virtue in the world; from whence the transition was easy to the need of a revelation, the encouragement to hope it, and the nature of the evidence which might probably attend it. From hence the work naturally proceeded to the evidence produced in proof of that revelation which the Scripture contains. The genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of these sacred books were then cleared up at large, and vindicated from all the most considerable objections, which modern infidels (those sinners against their own souls) have urged. When this foundation was laid, the chief doctrines of Scripture were drawn out into a large detail; those relating to the Father, Son, and Spirit, to the original and fallen state of man, to the scheme of our redemption by Christ, and the offices of the Spirit as the great agent in the Redeemer's kingdom. The nature of the covenant of grace was particularly stated, and the several precepts and institutions of the gospel, with the views which it gives us of the concluding scenes of our world, and of the eternal state beyond it. What seemed most evident on these heads was thrown into the propositions, some of which were problematical; and the chief controversies relating to each were thrown into the scholia; and all illustrated by a very large collection of references,† containing perhaps, one lecture with another, the substance of forty or fifty octavo pages, in which the sentiments and reasonings of the most considerable authors on all these heads might be seen in their own words; which it was the business of the students to read and contract, in the intervals between these lectures, of which only three were given in a week, and sometimes but two. The mind of this excellent youth knew how to judge of the importance of this part of his course; it struck him strongly; and as he made it his early care to transcribe the manuscript with great exactness, so he studied both the lectures and references diligently, and made himself master of them to such a degree, as to be able to handle such points of theology as occurred to him in his course of preaching, not in a crude indigested manner, but with an accuracy and solidity, rather worthy of a divine who had numbered more years of study than he of life.

As he was always encouraged and exhorted to inquire freely, and to judge for himself, so it was particularly recommended to him to take his system of divinity, not from the sentiments of any human teacher, but from the word of God. This therefore he early studied, and set a great value on those critical lectures on the New Testament, which he weekly attended, and carefully transcribed; besides those daily expositions in the family, in which, within the five years he spent in the course, he had an opportunity of hearing almost the whole Old Testament explained from the original, as well as the New twice or thrice illustrated, partly, though not entirely, in a practical view. If I remember right, he soon took the wise precaution (which I would recommend to every young student) to get an interleaved

* The manuscript, which was [illegible] [illegible] definitions, propositions, demonstrations, corollaries, and scholia, and in the method which mathematicians [illegible] that the introduction of these scholastic terms [illegible] like occasions.

† See [illegible]

Bible, and a Wetstein's Greek Testament interleaved with good paper in quarto, in which he wrote memorandums of the most considerable remarks for the illustration of Scripture, which occurred to him in reading, conversation, or reflection. And had Providence continued him a few years longer in that prudent and diligent course, I question not but these manuscripts would have been a rich repository of valuable materials; for he had a true genius for criticism, in those which I take to be its noblest and masterly parts; which are those which depend, not merely on dint of industry, but on sagacity, elevation, and vivacity of thought; to which I must add, a truly devotional temper of mind, without which it will be impossible for any man to relish, and therefore, to be sure, impossible to point out the beauties, of the sacred writers.

His great desire to appear in a becoming manner under the character of a preacher, as well as a concern to cultivate religion in his own soul, engaged him intimately to converse with the best practical writers our fertile country has produced; in which number, I know, he peculiarly esteemed Mr. Howe and Mr. Baxter, not to mention any of those lights of the sanctuary, which through the great goodness of God to us, are not yet extinguished, and who will, I doubt not, preach with abundant success to generations long to come. I believe that day seldom passed, in which some of these writers were not in his hands, in whom he sought at once the improvement of the Christian and the minister; and I think it must argue a great defect of understanding, as well as of real piety, if any theological students are negligent of this.

The same good principle, which led Mr. Steffe to be very conversant with such books, engaged him also to attend with great diligence to those instructions which were largely given him, on the important head of preaching and pastoral care. And while I speak of this, I must not forget how gladly he embraced the opportunity, which the custom of the place gave him, to submit, first, the schemes of his sermons, and then several of the sermons themselves, to the examination and correction of that friend who had the charge of his education: a privilege which those that least need it generally value most; and which, if I do not much mistake, may be more instructive to young preachers, than any general rules for composition, which can be offered them by those, who are themselves most eminent in their profession. An early care to get a due management of his voice, and to form himself to a just, animated, yet unaffected delivery, set an agreeable varnish on what was in itself much more important, and greatly contributed to that extensive and well-merited popularity, which attended him, so far as I can learn, from the first sermon he preached to the last. Sad calamity to the church, and the world, that the interval between the one and the other was so short!

Hitherto I have considered Mr. Steffe's character and conduct as a scholar, during the series of his academical studies: I must now describe him in another yet more important view, which will carry us a little further into his life, as well as deeper into his heart; I mean, as a Christian. And here I shall not mention a variety of particulars, which I comprehend in saying, "He was, as I am verily persuaded, a Christian indeed;" but shall only mention some of those exemplary effects, which the sincere and lively piety of his heart produced, in a beautiful correspondence to those circumstances of life in which he was placed. And this I attempt, not in a view of raising a monument to the memory of a dear deceased friend, I doubt not but the applause of his great Master has raised him high above all such; but rather of hinting instruction to others, by exhibiting him more fully in a point of light which has seldom been enlarged upon by those who have written lives, whether from a very mistaken apprehension that it was of little moment, or, as I would rather hope, for want of materials. Providence has ordered it so, that it was almost all the history that can be given of Mr. Steffe, and has assigned this office to one who had an opportunity of collecting materials from what he himself saw; though I must add, that in what I have further to write, my personal observations have been much illustrated by a collection of his letters to his parents and other near relations, the originals of which are now before me.

No advantages of genius, and, could they have come into question, no views of preferment, could have engaged so worthy a clergyman as Mr. Steffe's father was, to enter into measures for his being brought up to the ministerial office, if he had not known him to be a blameless and a virtuous youth: but from some things which he has written of himself in papers now before me, the particulars of which it is not necessary to transcribe, I have reason to believe that real religion was of a later date in his heart, than his first views of undertaking the sacred work in which he afterwards engaged. An awful text of Scripture, solemnly and seasonably dropped from the venerable lips of his pious father, a little before he quitted the family, seems to have given a most happy turn to his mind, and, under divine influence, to have been the immediate occasion of producing that sincere piety there, which afterwards grew so fast, and shone so bright.

I find, that when he first came to the academy, his religious resolutions were seriously renewed and confirmed, and he was very early animated with a solicitous concern to do good to the souls of others, as well as to secure the salvation of his own. This particularly appears in a letter which he then wrote

to an elder brother, who was just then coming out of an apprenticeship, and entering on life; and it is pleasant to observe, what a mixture of prudence, fidelity, and tenderness, runs through the whole of it. He was very apprehensive, from what he had observed in his brother's temper and conduct, as well as from the remarks he had even then made upon the world in general, that he would be in great danger of being insnared; and though he was afterwards remarkably recovered by divine grace, some circumstances which followed too plainly showed how just those apprehensions were. Our author therefore plainly admonishes him of his danger, and seriously urges him to make religion his choice and his business, as the great point of wisdom both for time and eternity: yet he mingles this with so many acknowledgments of his own imperfections, of his having neglected many early advantages of improvement, and having perhaps, in some instances of sin and folly, insnared so intimate a companion, that it plainly shows he did not forget the respect due to an elder brother, and that it was not pride, but cordial love, that dictated what he wrote. "I am," says he, "unworthy to be called a child of God; yet through his goodness I see and taste so much sweetness in religion, that I cannot but recommend it to others." And accordingly he does recommend it, by a variety of most weighty arguments; and concludes them all with such a serious representation of the uncertainty of youth and health, and the possibility of an early surprise by death, as is peculiarly moving, when one recollects that the person by whom this letter was written, and he to whom it was addressed, were both called into eternity in their blooming years.

It is with some difficulty that I forbear inserting the whole; but I fear swelling these memoirs to a disproportionate size. Nevertheless I find myself, as it were, constrained to transcribe great part of another letter, which he wrote much about the same time to a younger brother, Mr. John Steffe, to engage him to resume those views of the ministry which he seemed at that time inclinable to lay aside. It discovers much of the heart of the writer; and I hope they who are training up for that office, whose benefit I have here particularly in view, will read it with some peculiar attention, as coming from one of their companions, if they will allow the name of companion to one who was as yet only in the pursuit of his grammatical studies. That was Mr. Steffe's circumstance when he wrote the following epistle; and yet I freely own, that while I read it, (such is the gravity, propriety, and spirituality with which he writes,) I seem to be rather perusing the charge of a brother long experienced in the ministry, than the letter of a child who was but looking towards it.

Speaking of the ministry, he says, "I must acknowledge that it was with great reluctance I was brought to comply with the proposals which were made to me in this view, from a sense of the greatness and importance of the work, and of my own insufficiency for it; which argument was strongly backed with frequent fears, lest I should not have had a work of grace wrought in my own heart, without which I saw an impossibility of becoming a faithful and successful minister; and I doubt not but you have had some apprehensions like these. But I would not have you nor myself overwhelmed with these discouraging thoughts; since it is so delightful, so honourable a work, and has so great a tendency to the promotion of religion in the world.

"It is true, this is an office which is attended with great difficulties, even such as would be too considerable for any mortal creature to encounter with, if he had not inward supports from Christ, the chief shepherd and bishop of souls. The greatness and difficulty of the ministerial work will evidently appear, if we consider, that whilst they are engaged in their office, they are personating even the great God himself, whose mouth they are to the people: the purposes they serve are high and godlike; and besides, what greatly adds to the difficulty of it, is the opposition and discouragements which attend the faithful discharge of this duty. The prince of this world is active by temptations to divert and discourage every one from engaging in this work, often suggesting what may pervert and mislead their minds in it. If allurements, terrors, or reproaches will avail, they are sure to be tried; for ministers are the butt against which Satan by these instruments levels his sharpest darts, well knowing that the strongest batteries against his kingdom are placed there; and therefore the most faithful are sure to be most assaulted. There are also our own indispositions, which render the work the harder. And besides all, there is a strict account to be given at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, when we shall hear Christ saying with a heart-impressing power, *Give an account of your stewardship.* He will demand an account of the souls he committed to our care, and the trust he reposed in us. There, if we be pronounced faithful servants, we shall accordingly receive the reward of such; but if unfaithful, the blood of others will be required at our hands, and their misery will be an aggravation of ours.

"Now upon mature consideration of the great importance and difficulty of the work, as it is of so great consequence, we may justly cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things? His labor, his agony:* this is a work indeed. What piety, what prudence, what zeal, what courage, what faithfulness, and what holy watchfulness is necessary, to the right discharge of this so great an office! The work is great; our strength is small: yea, of ourselves we

have no strength at all; but all our sufficiency is of God, to him therefore must we go for it. Here is our comfort, and our hope. *It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell*; fulness of merit and righteousness, of strength and grace, even a grace that shall be sufficient for us. God himself hath said, that *if any lack wisdom*, they should *ask it of him who giveth to all liberally*; and he hath expressly added, *it shall be given*. Therefore let us make our application to him; let us come with a holy *boldness to the throne of grace*, deeply impressed with a sense of our weakness and folly; and thus let us ask wisdom, and then we need not fear being disappointed, but shall *of his fulness receive, and grace for grace*.

"In vain may we have recourse to the most refined and polite parts of human learning, to qualify ourselves for this work: all human arts, and the whole circle of the sciences, will be unable to furnish us for it, unless God, who first *commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, lay the foundation, in *shining* by his Spirit *into our hearts*, and displaying the invincible efficacy of his grace, to work in us a true repentance and conversion *never to be repented of*. Not that I would have you neglect your studies, but use a double diligence in your earnest pursuit of them: yet I write thus, that you may not rest in these, but be aspiring after more noble acquirements. Be very solicitous about *the one thing needful*, without which you can never expect to become a faithful or successful minister of Christ's gospel.

"My dear brother, I hope you will take in good part what I have here said; and though you do not want advice and direction in this affair from those that are with you, and are more capable of giving you better admonition than I, yet I hope you will have so much regard to me and yourself, as to bestow some time in reading over and considering these obvious thoughts, which I have spent a few minutes in drawing up, hoping that as they are continually of use to me, they may be so to you.

"You intimate that your inclinations are rather to be of a trade. It is true, in such a station of life, you would not find so much difficulty as attends the ministry: but then you will not have such prospects of being useful in your day. What more noble or honourable employment than this! Surely it may well be called a good work, a work of the greatest importance, and designed for the most extensive good; since it is conversant about no lower concerns than the life and happiness of immortal souls, and is designed to display and illustrate God's free grace and mercy in bringing many sons to glory. Are the ways of wisdom pleasant? then ministers of all men enjoy most real, solid pleasure; for they are always exercised in her ways, spending themselves, and being spent, in the service of their Lord, who will not fail to reward them abundantly. Oh what pleasure will arise in our minds, if God shall call us to this work, and succeed our labours in it, when we shall, in the midst of those toils, see many coming to own us as their spiritual fathers! These will be *our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus*, they will be as so many jewels in our diadem of glory. But then, what still more unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction will arise in our souls, when we come in the near views of an eternal world, that we can look back upon our past lives, and see that they were spent in the service of our Creator and Redeemer; that his glory was our chief aim in all we did; so that we can say, we have *fought a good fight*, we have *finished our course, and kept the faith*; and that what *remains* is, that *there is a crown of righteousness laid up for us, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall bestow upon us in that day*.—But I must break off for this time; yet not without recommending you to God; once more desiring you would be earnest and constant in your addresses at the throne of grace, that we may both *obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need*."

It may easily be imagined, that so lively a sense of piety in the heart of this good youth would be productive of such discourses and actions, as must naturally attract the observation and esteem of those around him: and how modestly soever conducted, would be (as Solomon expresses it) like a perfume held in the hand, which the more closely it is grasped, discovers itself so much the sooner, by the agreeable odours which it diffuses.

He was soon informed of a society of private Christians, who met at stated times for religious discourse and prayer: (the first of those formed, and since so happily increased, in the place where he then dwelt;) and he was invited to enter himself a member of it. In consisted, as such societies generally, though blessed be God not always, do, of persons in lower ranks of life: but it is edifying, as well as delightful to me, to observe, in what humble strains this young gentleman expresses his admiration of the goodness of God, and of the condescension of his friends, that he should have the honour of being admitted among them, of which he seems to have apprehended himself very unworthy.

From this society he quickly passed to another, consisting only of senior students for the ministry, who used on the evening of the Lord's day to visit neighbouring villages, and hold private meetings for religious worship in some licensed houses there. Two of them generally went together; a serious sermon on some uncontroverted and important subject of religion was repeated, and one of them prayed before and the other after it, with proper intervals of singing. This custom, still continued, and extended to many other places, hath, I hope,

been very useful, both in exercising the gifts of the students, and in abating the prejudices which some have been ready to entertain against our ways of worship, as well as in spreading the knowledge of divine things; not to mention the relief it has given to some, whose circumstances have confined them from opportunities of attending, where they could have chosen to spend the sabbath. When the assembly was dismissed, a few serious people would often remain, to spend an hour or two more in conference and prayer with the persons who had been officiating; and they who appeared under the first religious impressions, or under dejection of spirit, were encouraged to open their cases, and their hearts, at such times as these.

It is not at all to be wondered at, by those who consider what Christian experience is, and how it is to be learned, that those students, who entered into these exercises with the greatest spirit and zeal, have appeared to distinguished advantage under a public character. And accordingly I am well assured, that many large and flourishing congregations, in which (having been unanimously and affectionately chosen) they are now labouring with great acceptance and success, are blessing God, that they were thus formed for more extensive service, and that they learnt in such schools as these, what no academical lectures alone could have taught them with equal advantage.

I will venture to say, that it would be well for the church of Christ, if all his ministers entered on the solemnities of their ordination-day, with that deliberation, self-examination, and prayer, which Mr. Steffe's papers show him to have used, when he first gave up his name to this repeating society: but he knew the worth of souls, and the importance of men's devotional moments! May none, who do not in some measure know both, venture to meddle with them, lest it be to their own hurt!

Well did this prudent youth apprehend, how absurd it is for any to undertake to officiate in Christian assemblies, before they are entered into full communion; and well did he consider, how great a duty and privilege it is to commemorate the death of our great Lord at his table. Accordingly, in September, 1734, some considerable time before he engaged in the society I last mentioned, he made his first approach to that ordinance, with the entire consent and approbation of the church, to whom he wrote an excellent letter on the occasion, which I would gladly insert, if I had convenient room to do it. But I cannot forbear transcribing a few of his reflections upon this head, in a letter which he wrote presently after; because I hope it may animate young Christians to attend an important duty, which I fear they are too ready to neglect.

"I did then," says he, (speaking of the preceding sabbath,) "give myself up to God, and seal my covenant with him; and it is with unspeakable pleasure that I look back on that solemn and awful transaction. I bless God, I can say, the day in which I made my first approach to the table of the Lord, was one of the best days, if not the very best, I ever lived. I then felt more sensible sorrow for sin, than I had ever done before. I was filled with admiration to think that I, who did not deserve to be set among the dogs of his flock, should have the honour of sitting among his children at his table. I hope, I had then some appropriating views of the blessed Jesus, and could call him my Saviour and my God; could esteem him the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. And while I was by faith feeding on him in this ordinance, unspeakable transports of grief and joy at once seized on my soul: grief, when I looked up, and saw my bleeding dying Redeemer bearing my sins in his own body on the tree; when I viewed him, as wounded for my transgressions, as bruised for my iniquities, and enduring that chastisement which was the purchase of my peace: and proportionable joy, when I considered that my sins, though so great, and so many, and attended with such aggravated circumstances as gave them a scarlet and crimson dye, were all washed away in the overflowing fountain of his precious blood. On the whole, I was enabled with delight to draw water out of this well of salvation, and could with great pleasure enlarge on this head: but must conclude, with entreating your prayers for me, that having vowed unto the Lord, I may never go back; but considering myself as bound by so many engagements, invited by so many encouragements, and obliged to God and godliness by so many ties of duty, interest, and gratitude, I may be running the Christian race with patience and alacrity, and continually adorning that profession, which I have in this ordinance so solemnly made."

In consequence of a resolution, so solemnly recorded in this ordinance, and often renewed and sealed in returning approaches to it, our author continued in a calm, resolute, and diligent prosecution of his studies, according to the plan laid down above: still conducting himself in a prudent and cautious manner, so as to cut off occasion, even from those who sought it, if such there had been, to bring any reproach on the society he belonged to, and the denomination of Christians in whose interest he had chosen to embark. Nor do I from this time meet with any incident relating to him, so remarkable as to require a particular notice, till August, 1737, when it pleased God to remove his reverend and worthy father, by a stroke which his family and the church will have long cause to lament. This providence occasioned two letters, which have been

so very pleasing to me, and to some pious and judicious friends to whom I have communicated them, that I cannot forbear inserting the greatest part of them here; as I think they are both a very lively and beautiful image of filial piety in its most genuine workings; and as the latter contains some such consolations on the death of friends, as the best of mankind in this dying world have, alas, frequent occasion to recollect.

The former of these was directed to his mother; but begins in this abrupt manner, without any appellation to mark the person for whom it was particularly intended.

"Last night the most melancholy letter came to my hands that ever I received, and I am now sitting down to write an answer to it. But to whom shall I address myself? and what shall I make the subject of my letter?

"Had I sufficient encouragement to hope, that my dear father could read it, or hear it read, I should not be long in determining whether I should direct a part of it to him. But the account I have had of his extreme illness discourages me from it: if he was a week ago so low and weak, as to be incapable of holding a pen to write a few lines to me, there is too, too much room to suspect, lest that disease, which made his hands so feeble, should by this time have cast a mortal veil over his eyes, and stopped his ears, so that he can neither read, nor hear, what I write. Oh could I meet with some one that is able to resolve the question! With what eagerness should I address myself to such a person, in the language, though not in the sentiments, of Joseph, *Doth my father yet live?* But oh, with what fear and anxiety should I attend the answer? How should I fear, lest my present uncertainty should be changed into a melancholy certainty; and that uneasy situation of mind, which between hope and fear concerning my father's life I am now in, should be succeeded by the deepest sorrow from hearing, *He does not live!*

"In the midst of such uncertainties, what shall I do? What course shall I take? Shall I venture to write to him? Shall I tell him, that notwithstanding the prevalence of his disease, and his extreme weakness, I have yet great hope of his recovery? Alas, there is little room for that. What hope can I have, when a physician, whose skill enables him to form a more certain judgment, than his tenderness and unwillingness to grieve will permit him to impart, does yet say, If he does recover, it will be a considerable time first? Where is the strength to hold out a considerable time under such a disease? Do the young and vigorous often fall a prey to a fever, after a few days' or a few hours' struggle? And can the aged and infirm grapple with, and conquer, so powerful an invader.

"Shall I then endeavour to administer some divine consolations to a dear parent, in the near views of death and eternity? Blessed be God, that I have so much reason to believe, this would be an unnecessary task, as I have good ground to hope, that that God whom he has served with so much faithfulness and constancy in his life, will not withhold from him the comforts of his Spirit in his death; and that God, concerning whom he has so often said in the time of health and prosperity, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*; will be the strength of his heart now when his flesh and his heart fail him, and will be his portion for ever. I doubt not, that vital active principle of love to God, and delight in him, which spread such a calm and serenity over his mind during life, will dart a cheerful ray to enlighten the dark valley of the shadow of death.

"Once more, shall I yet suppose him alive, and capable of reading or hearing my letter, though just on the brink of the grave, and almost panting out his last breath? And shall I write to take my last solemn farewell of him, till we meet in eternity? Oh how can I do that? It is a task too melancholy for me; my heart even melts at such a thought. No, though I have too much reason to believe, that if my dear father does live, to see or hear this, it will be the last that he will see or hear from me, yet I will not, cannot write it as the last. However, my uncertainty about him is so great, that I cannot prevail upon myself to address it immediately to him, too much afraid lest I should be writing to a pale corpse, instead of a living tender father.—In this dubious frame of mind, to thee, Oh my God, would I turn. I know, that thou livest, and wilt ever live: thou art the great arbiter of life and death; thou bringest down to the borders of the grave, and thou only canst say with a prevailing voice, Return. Let us join in saying, if there is yet room for prayer, do thou hear it on the behalf of thy servant: do not so lay our sins to our charge, as to take away our father and husband: oh spare him a little, that he may recover strength, &c. But if he is out of the reach of prayer, dispose us cheerfully to acquiesce in this afflictive dispensation of thy wise providence. Adored be thy name, that supposing this, we have so much reason to mingle our praises with our tears; and though we should lament the loss of a most tender, valuable, and important relative; yet we may rejoice to think, that we mourn not as those without hope for him, to whom to live was Christ, and consequently to die must be gain. Amen."

He then addresses his mother in a very tender strain, on a supposition that she might possibly be a mournful widow before this letter reached her: but as many of the considerations he there touches upon are more largely inserted in the consolatory

address which next follows, I omit them, only here transcribing the following expressive lines:—

"Now is the time especially, to reflect upon God as your constant friend, and never-failing portion. Now is the time to recollect his many exceeding great and precious promises. Look back on former experiences, and draw encouragement from them: look forward, and view that divine principle of grace implanted in your souls, by which you are united to God, and to Christ, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant.

"This, my dear mother, may be a source of calm serenity, and even of joy and transport, in circumstances, which in other respects wear the most gloomy aspect. And if you are tempted to entertain any anxious thoughts about those difficulties, which may attend us in our passage through life, now the channel through which the greatest part of its supports and enjoyments flowed down to us is dried up, let us remember, that *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:* and now the streams are cut off, let us rise to the fountain of all good."

This letter was dated the first of August, 1737, and his father died on the seventh; so that, according to the usual course of the post, it must, I suppose, come to hand while he was yet alive; and a pious and tender parent will judge perhaps better than any one can, what a noble consolation it must add to the last days and hours of his life, to hear such a letter from such a son. I question not but his generous mind would rejoice for others, as well as himself; not only thinking, what an ornament and support such a son might prove to the surviving branches of the family; but also, how useful his maturer age might be to the world, who was capable of administering such consolations to the afflicted, before he had yet gone through the studies of his youth.

A few days more brought our young friend the melancholy tidings, that his father was dead: which occasioned the following letter, dated the 15th of August, 1737; which I doubt not, has also proved a very great support to the worthy person to whom it was addressed, when mourning over the remains of this dear son by whom it was written; who seems therein to have been providentially led to lay in, if I may so speak, a cordial against his own approaching funeral. If the reader be affected with it, as I myself have been, there will be no need to make an apology for inserting it at large; and I am persuaded it must afford every believer of Christianity a secret triumph, to compare this epistle of a youth instructed in the gospel, with those of the most learned and celebrated philosophers of antiquity, and particularly of Seneca, Tully, and his correspondent friends, on melancholy occasions, which bore some resemblance to that on which this was written.

Aug. 15, 1737.

"*My dear dear Mother.*

"You may easily imagine with what sad surprise I received the last account from Wrentham. I have indeed been in an uneasy state of uncertainty ever since I left you: yet the letter which I had a few days ago, written with your hand, and which gave me an account of my father's small revival, gave me withal some comfortable hope of his recovery; so that the interval between that and the last letter, was spent in some greater degree of cheerfulness, than I was willing to allow myself before. But O how soon it was turned into sorrow! And I was lifted high in my hopes and expectations, only to be sunk the lower by that sad message which I received by the hand of my sister last Friday night. How did I tremble, when I saw the letter! How many melancholy fears did my foreboding heart suggest, even before I opened it! But when it was opened, oh, what did I see! Words that could not but cut me to the very heart. Our dear dear father is dead. Tears prevented me from reading any further; and the repetition of the cutting sentence calls up my tears afresh: you must give me leave then to weep awhile, and I will endeavour to proceed.—

"It will be painting too melancholy a scene, to tell you what a variety of gloomy thoughts passed through my mind on this occasion. No, I will not renew or increase your sorrow, by aggravating the loss we have sustained, in the death of such a husband and father. But I would fain turn my thoughts to the brighter side, and by divine assistance endeavour to suggest such things as may be of use to reconcile us to this very heavy stroke of Providence, and to form us to such a suitable disposition of mind, as that if any one should ask us, *Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with thy father? Is it well with thee?* We may even with a smile reply, It is well.

"I omitted writing the last post, that I might have time to settle and compose my own mind, and consequently be the more capable of administering consolation to you, and others, who are intimately concerned in my dear father's death. Had I wrote immediately after the reception of my sister's letter, while my mind was almost overwhelmed with sorrow, you might indeed have seen a sheet of paper filled with the most passionate expressions of tenderness and grief; but perhaps they would only have served to open your wounds afresh; whereas my design in what I now write, is, if possible, to pour in balm to heal them.

"Blessed be God, the storm that was first raised in my mind, has been by him commanded into a calm; and the consolations of God have not been few nor small to me on this occasion. And I am not without good hope, that if you are not yet

brought to a settled composed state of mind, those considerations which religion suggests, and which have been the happy means of reviving my spirits, and introducing some considerable measure of tranquillity into my mind, may answer the same end, and have the same effect, upon you.

"The dear dear man has taken his final leave of us, with regard to this world; and we cannot but mourn his departure. The desire of our eyes is taken from us; and it would argue a stupid, insensible, savage temper, not to drop a tear, or feel any tender concern under so sad a stroke. The wise Author of our nature did not place these melting emotions of soul for no other purpose but to be rooted out as weeds; and the noblest examples of faith and holiness, courage and magnanimity, which are recorded in the Old and New Testament, are represented as dropping a tear upon such an occasion. Even the spotless Jesus wept over Lazarus. But the greatest danger is, lest we abandon ourselves to immoderate sorrow, so to mourn as to refuse to be comforted. We are not, with Jacob, to resolve to *go down to the grave mourning*, because we are deprived of this or that comfort of life. That you, my dear, and now only, parent, may not sink under the weight of sorrow, let me lead your thoughts to the following reviving considerations.

"Let us consider, for our comfort, how long our dear relative was continued to us. It is not the *withering of a gourd*, which *sprung up in a night*, and *perished in a night*, whose friendly shade failed us when we had most need of it, that we now mourn. No, we lament the fall of a full-grown tree, under whose wide-spreading shadow we have long rejoiced. Now, in order to make this affliction sit the lighter, let us compare it with what it would have been had he been taken from us at a time when we his children had all been young, and unable ourselves to make our way through the world; which we now all have a pretty fair prospect of doing with comfort, by the blessing of God, and the kindness of surviving friends. Is it not some alleviation to our sorrow, to think he lived to bring up his children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*? and may I not add, to see the good effects of a religious education upon most of them?

"However, it must be confessed that the loss is great to us all. But then, let us not confine our thoughts so much to this mournful part of the subject, as to forget how great a gainer the dear departed spirit is by this separation from us. Let us lift up the eye of our faith to the invisible world, and take such a view of the *happiness* and *glory of those who die in the Lord*, as our imperfect state will allow; and then let us say whether there is any room to grieve and mourn on his behalf. Surely, when we consider his present advantageous situation, from what he is delivered, and what he now enjoys, we could not wish him back again without the greatest breach of friendship. Indeed, as others have well observed on the like occasion, we form a very wrong judgment of the condition of our departed friends, when, because we see their breathless corpses laid in the ground, to become food for worms, we are overwhelmed with grief, and bitterly mourn over them. This is owing to our ignorance of their state: as *Jacob mourned over the rent garment of* his son *Joseph*, and concluded he was *devoured by some evil beast*, when indeed he was going to *reign in Egypt*. Our dear relative is gone to reign in heaven; and would we cling so fondly about him, as to pull him from his throne? He is gone to possess a part of the *land of Canaan* above; and can we wish him back, to struggle again with the difficulties of the wilderness? Can we call ourselves his friends, and not rather rejoice in his happiness?

"This consideration, taken in conjunction with that which is drawn from his being removed from us by the hand of an all-wise and sovereign God, should be allowed to have a due influence upon us, to bring us cordially to acquiesce in this dispensation of Providence. So that I may say to you and myself, as the great Mr. Howe did to one in the like circumstances, *If God be pleased, and his glorified creature pleased, who are we, that we should be displeased?* O my dear mother, I have had such lively views of the happiness of the dear deceased, that if I have felt any sentiment of grief at that particular instant, it was because I was not in the like circumstances.

"Another consideration which has been a means of quieting and composing my mind upon this occasion, and which I would recommend to you, is this, that though our dear relative is taken from us, yet our best Friend is still continued to us. Let us remember, that *though our house be not so with God*, as we could wish it to be, *yet he has made with us an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure*. Therefore let us *encourage ourselves in the Lord our God*; and when *creature comforts* are like *broken reeds*, and *broken cisterns*, let us fix our dependence more and more on *the Rock of ages*, and have more affectionate recourse to the overflowing *Fountain of living waters*. Let us reflect a little on what it was that rendered our departed relative so amiable and desirable to us; and then let us further consider, *Was not God the author of all?* And cannot he make up our loss abundantly? I am persuaded I need not tell one who has enjoyed so much communion with God as you, Madam, have done that we may hope and expect infinitely more from him as *our covenant God*, than from the most wise, tender, and powerful friend upon earth. Let this stroke of Providence then engage us to walk closer with our God, to centre in him as our portion and

happiness, and to derive all our expectations from him.

"My dear mother, if the communicating to you my experience on this melancholy occasion may be of any service to you, I will take the freedom here to assure you, that if ever I could call God my Father, with any considerable degree of filial joy and confidence, it has been since I have had no other, to whom I could apply that endearing title. —On *this God and Father* then let us *cast all our cares and burdens*; cheerfully confiding in him, who has furnished us with the most powerful antidote against immoderate grief and anxiety in such circumstances as ours, by declaring himself *a Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widow, in his holy habitation.**

"But I must by no means omit another thought, so full of consolation, upon this occasion; that in a little time we shall be restored to this dear husband and father again, and meet and converse with him, on terms of much greater advantage. Though the separation be grievous, yet it is but short. Our days and years are rolling away apace; and every year and day brings us nearer to our home; and so brings us nearer to the house of our heavenly Father, and to the mansions of glory, one of which is inhabited by that happy spirit, to which we so lately claimed a near relation.

"Surely, my dear mother, when we consider where he is, and where we are, we may abundantly satisfy ourselves with this consideration, so much more forcible in such a case, than in that to which it was applied, *We shall go to him, though he shall not return to us.*"

I believe the reader will easily apprehend, that a person capable of writing in this manner upon such an occasion, was well qualified to compose for the pulpit; and though his tutor did not see this letter, he had a very agreeable proof of it much about this time, (I think, the October, or November, following,) when Mr. Steffe bore a part in the course of homilies, (as they were called, to distinguish them from sermons,) delivered in the lecture room, upon the being and attributes of God, and the chief points of natural religion. The subject allotted to him was, the imitation of God's moral perfections: and I cannot recollect that I ever heard a better academical discourse from any of the young students with whom I have been acquainted. It was finished with an accuracy, both of thought, and language, which would have engaged me to have added it to this collection of his remains, if I had found it amongst his papers. But as I did not, I only mention it to show the reason upon which they acted, who out of regard to the necessity of several neighbouring congregations then destitute, advised him to offer himself to the examination of a committee of ministers deputed for that purpose, in order to his preaching in public. He passed that examination highly to their satisfaction, as they declared by a proper testimonial. And my illness engaged him to preach his first sermon at Northampton, on the first of January, 1737-8.

The subject of it was those words, *Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*† As I have inserted it the first in this collection, which is now in the reader's hand, I need say nothing more to prove, that the general acceptance it met with was very well grounded; and all I shall add concerning it, is, that I find in a blank page of the notes the following memorandum, dated April 16, 1738: "I have heard that this sermon was made peculiarly useful to several persons at Northampton, the first time of its being preached, and the first time of my preaching at all. *Bless the Lord, O my soul*, for the honour he has done to thy poor worthless attempts of service in this instance! O may it be a happy specimen of far more abundant success to attend my future labours in the ministry!"

It was before the end of January this year, that the Reverend Mr. Stodden, of Taunton, and the heads of the congregation under his care, wanting an assistant, thought proper to apply to Mr. Steffe's tutor, who, knowing the importance of that place, judged it convenient to send him thither as a candidate. His labours were universally acceptable to that numerous society; insomuch, that after having spent two or three sabbaths among them, he received an unanimous and pressing invitation to settle there; which invitation, by the advice of all his friends, he accepted, only reserving to himself the liberty of continuing where he was till his academical studies were completed, which they were by Midsummer, 1738.

The last day in which he appeared in the congregation to which he had so long stood related, was the 4th of June, 1738, when he preached that excellent sermon with which this little collection concludes; a day which I cannot forbear mentioning on two accounts: the one is, that it was the last in which I ever enjoyed the pleasure of his labours and conversation, though he lived till that day two years: the other, that I find it was made, by the divine goodness, remarkably comfortable and refreshing to him. "This morning," says he, in a letter from which I must borrow a few lines, "I took my leave of the pulpit here; and have this afternoon been at the table of the Lord, reviewing with a grateful surprise the various instances of the divine goodness to me; especially in fixing me in this place, and making my abode here so comfortable and advantageous. I have now been renewing my covenant-engagements to my Father and my

* Psal. lxviii. 5.

† 2 Sam. vii. 18.

God; and in this respect I would not alter the thing that is gone out of my lips, or which has been expressed in the secret language of my heart. I would not be excused from loving the great Author of all my mercies; I would not be discharged from his service, if I might. I would not wish for any thing to lessen my obligations to my dear Redeemer, but for every thing to increase my sense of them." And then he goes on to express his tender sympathy to his mother, then under confinement by illness, and his longing desire, if it were the will of God, to share the entertainment of God's house and table with her, and to dwell with her again, though in the lowest circumstances: in which I believe he alluded to a scheme which he had, of bringing her to Taunton, which, had God spared his life, might have perhaps succeeded.

What pleasure she had in an interview with him, and in attending his ministry in that visit which he quickly after made her at Wrentham, may be more easily imagined than described. From thence he went to Taunton, and was very joyfully received by his worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Stodden, and the whole congregation under his care. How he acted in this more public scene of life, I have not an opportunity particularly to say: but am in the general fully satisfied, that he behaved in such a manner, as there was reason, from what we have already seen of him, to hope and expect, and as entitled him to the affection and esteem of his valuable pastor, of the society to whom he preached, and also of many neighbouring congregations, among whom he soon came to have an influence, far beyond what could have been imagined, considering his years.

I think I have before me all the sermons he composed during the two years he continued in this situation, which was all the remainder of his valuable life; and they are so fairly written, and, so far as I can judge, so carefully finished, that I cannot but suppose they had all, except the last, which was made when his illness began, been written out twice. They are every one of them, so far as I can recollect, upon practical and important subjects; and, if I may judge from what I have seen, they are such, both for method, thought, and language, that I should have found no difficulty in furnishing out several volumes of discourses equal to most of these which are here published. I cannot find any one of them, in the review of which a wise and good man might not have had reason to rejoice on the borders of eternity; for all are calculated to promote a reverence for God, and love to him; to convince men of their sin and misery by their apostasy; to point out the only method of their recovery, by faith in the righteousness and grace of the blessed Redeemer, and a sincere devotedness of soul to God through him; to awaken careless sinners, to reanimate slumbering Christians, to encourage the weak and timorous: and, in a word, so far as was possible, in every discourse, to give to every one his portion of meat in due season. Nothing of that solemn pomp of profound reasoning, with which the dullest and emptiest discourses often abound; none of those affected and puerile ornaments which make preaching the play of the imagination, and turn the church into a theatre; nothing arrogant, nothing petulant, nothing censorious; nothing intended to kindle the unhallowed flames of party zeal, and lead men either to judge or despise their brethren: but all serious, spiritual, and candid; and, on the whole, such as became a preacher who considered that his sermons were written in the book of God's remembrance, and that he must shortly render an account to him in whose name and presence he had the honour to speak.

As he was well convinced that religious visits made a considerable part of the care of souls, he did not imagine that his being only an assistant preacher could excuse him from it. He was willing to assist his honoured pastor in this, as well as public work; and as the congregation was so numerous, that he perceived he should be a long time going through it, he had his appointed times for visiting some of the poorer families, in which they used to call in their neighbours to share the happy opportunity; and as pious instruction was the great end of these visits, they seldom or never concluded without prayer; a labour of love, in which he was greatly animated by the writings and example of the great and excellent Mr. Joseph Allen, his predecessor; to whose Alarm to the Unconverted, our author by the way acknowledges, he was under God indebted for some of the first serious impressions that were made on his mind.

In the mean time, his care of those with whom he was, did not lead him to forget his absent friends, especially the dear family at Wrentham, and that of his tutor. To the latter he wrote several letters, expressing the most lively and affectionate acknowledgment of the care which had been taken of him, though, to be sure, no more than the duty of such an important trust had required. To his friends at home he always expressed the kindest regard, in a variety of instances which I must not here enumerate; nor must I even insert that important letter which he wrote to one of his brethren, who was removed by death the winter after he came to Taunton. I must content myself with saying, that he showed not only a pious care, but an admirable skill and dexterity, in the manner of that address; omitting nothing that might tend, on the one hand, to awaken his mind, and to secure him from all presumptuous and mistaken hopes; and, on the other, to encourage him to lay hold on the grace of the gospel in a manner that might be effectual to his eternal salvation. It is merely from

the fear of extending these memoirs too far beyond their proper bounds, which I fear they have already transgressed, that I refrain from inserting this letter at large. But I must with great pleasure add, that his pious care was so successful, that his brother died in such a truly Christian manner, as to leave in the mind of his surviving relatives a most cheerful hope that God had shown him the path of life.

He carried on a very affectionate correspondence with several of his fellow-students; in which he expressed the sincerest desire to maintain upon their minds a lively sense of religion, and an active zeal in the service of God. And in such offices of piety and friendship of various kinds he continued till the close of his life.

I remember, about the beginning of May, 1740, he wrote me the last letter I ever received from him, indeed not quite a month before he died; in which he expressed himself to the following purpose: "The small-pox prevails much in Taunton, and carries off considerable numbers. My friends express a very tender obliging solicitude on my account; and I endeavour to take all prudent precautions to avoid danger. But I bless God I find my spirits entirely calm and composed as to the event: I cheerfully commit myself to the all-wise and gracious disposal of my heavenly Father; and hope I have no uncertainty before me, but whether I shall be serving Christ in this world or in a better."

Thus prepared that illness found him, which ended in his death. On the first symptoms of it, he composed a very serious discourse on those words: *He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* * concerning the deceits which sinners practise on themselves, and those lies which they carry in their right hands, to support a foolish and dangerous hope. This was the last sermon he ever preached; and had he finished the whole of his plan, the reader would not have failed of the pleasure of perusing it. In the mean time I heartily pray, an impression of its important design may remain on the hearts of all that heard it, and of all for whose benefit it was designed.

When he fell ill, it evidently appeared how much he was valued by persons of all denominations, in that continued solicitude which all that knew him expressed for his recovery; as well as afterwards, in the universal lamentation occasioned by his death. He himself, though the symptoms soon appeared dangerous, maintained the same composure of mind, that he had expressed in the more distant prospect, through all the stages of his distemper; in which the exercise of his reason was continued, though he did not die till the 22nd day after he was seized. He gave very particular directions for the disposal of his affairs a fortnight before his death; and was frequently, throughout the whole time of his illness, employed in earnest prayer as he lay in his bed, even beyond the strength of his nature. And as he was accustomed to use his voice, he was heard (by one of the family from whom I had this account) to express himself thus: "O Lord, preserve me in the use of my rational powers and faculties, that I may not only perform those things which are necessary to the health of my body, but may also be capable of conversing with thee, and of stretching my thoughts towards the heavenly world;" and then, after a solemn pause, added—"where perhaps I may quickly be! I had rather, if it might be for thy glory, continue longer in this world for the good of thy church; but if thou hast determined this sickness shall end in death, thy will be done!" or words to that effect.

Some physician, it seems, had unhappily told him, while he was very young, that if ever he had the small-pox he would die. On the other hand, his friends did all they could to keep up his spirits, by expressing their hope of his recovery. He acknowledged their affection in it, and interpreted it as an instance of their respect; but intimated his own apprehensions as to the issue, that it would be as it proved. He, on his part, expressed his tender regard for them, by pouring out earnest prayers to God, on their account, as well as on his own; intermingling his prayers with his praises. And when he was desired not to spend himself so much, he answered, "As long as I have tongue, I will use it for my Redeemer's praise and service."

These are the most remarkable circumstances of his illness, which have been transmitted to me from a pious friend, in whose house he lived. He calmly resigned up his soul to God, on Wednesday, June 4, 1740, having lately entered on the 25th year of his age. Not only the mourning habits, but the tears, of vast numbers in that numerous congregation, in which his lot was cast, testified their sorrow for his death; and we in these parts, as well as his friends in Suffolk, had a share, a large share, in it. I am sure, no wise and pious reader will need to be told at large, that not only Taunton, but the wide neighbourhood around, had a loss in the removal of a person of such a character and abilities, and that it was a stroke long and deeply to be lamented.

I cannot conclude without acknowledging the divine goodness to my friends amongst whom he laboured, not only in still sparing their valuable pastor, but likewise in sending them from the same place another worthy and excellent assistant, the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Fawcett, if I am capable of judging, not on the whole inferior to Mr. Steffe. I should have esteemed his great neighbourhood as

* Isa. xliv. 20.

important blessing to these parts, and to me: but a sense of the importance of the interest at Taunton, and a compassion to my afflicted friends under that grievous loss they had sustained, inclined me to concur with all their measures for fixing him among them. May God multiply the years of his usefulness there, and make him an instrument of everlasting good to multitudes that are yet unborn.

Having said thus much of the author, it may be expected I should say something concerning these sermons; but I shall give no additional recommendation of them at all. My love to the person that wrote them may lead me to judge more favourably than they deserve; but the reader may be assured I had a good opinion of them, when I proposed the publication: a project, not contrived merely with a view of serving his sorrowful mother, though if any advantage be made by them, it will be shared, as it ought, between her and the printer, who runs the hazard of the edition; but designed to prolong the usefulness of this dear and lamented youth beyond the narrow limits of his life. I did indeed think, that, considering his age, and considering also that they were composed in no view of publication, they would do some honour to his memory, and would meet with encouragement in various places where he was not personally known. But I especially depended on it, that those at Taunton, and in the neighbouring parts, who knew and loved him so well, as I am sure many hundreds there did, would read them with peculiar pleasure and improvement: and the happy disposition prevailing in the young persons of that congregation to which he belonged, to associate themselves together for religious purposes, in hours when these sermons will give them a delightful employment, has further encouraged this hope.

As to the particular reasons which determined me to choose these discourses, and to omit others which some of his friends desired to see, it is not material to enter into them. I had not time to read all, and therefore took generally those, of which there was not a large number upon a single text, and those which had been most blessed to the good of souls; some of which I had heard myself, and had peculiarly struck my mind.

What I have done in reviewing them, was but little. I have here and there added a clause, and, very seldom, a sentence or two by way of illustration. I have also corrected the style a little in some places: sometimes I have contracted a period, which seemed rather too diffuse, and in one place abridged two sermons into one. But I have made no essential or very material alterations at all, either by way of omission or addition: and the greatest liberty I have taken with any, is used with respect to the last. That sermon I myself heard, and it impressed me exceedingly. I afterwards found, that it was the first plan of some discourses, branched out into a considerable number at Taunton. I could not publish them all; and I was so well pleased with what I had heard, that I could not persuade myself to omit it. I was therefore obliged to have recourse to those notes, which I had taken while he was preaching, which were generally short hints of sentences, only setting down a few particular expressions, the beauty and energy of which struck me with some peculiar pleasure. The consequence is, that here, though the whole scheme and almost all the thoughts are Mr. Steffe's, the language is often my own. I could much rather have given it to the world in the very words of the author; but as that was impossible, and as on account of throwing two of those transcribed from his notes into one, we wanted another sermon to make up the number proposed, I verily thought, I could not do better than to present it to the world as it is; at least without employing too much time in reviewing and comparing those few single sermons, which might have been considered as proper upon this occasion: and the great pleasure with which my friends had attended upon this sermon, and recollect in general the remembrance of it, engaged me to oblige them with this opportunity of reviewing it, for which I am sure of their thanks.

Nothing further remains, but to commit these discourses to the attentive perusal of all into whose hands Providence may bring them, especially of those to whom the author was dear by any peculiar bonds, and to the blessing of that God, with regard to whose honour, I am well satisfied, they were first composed, and are now published.

P. DODDRIDGE.

A

COURSE OF LECTURES

ON THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS IN

PNEUMATOLOGY, ETHICS, AND DIVINITY;

WITH

REFERENCES TO THE MOST CONSIDERABLE AUTHORS ON EACH SUBJECT

TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED,

A GREAT NUMBER OF REFERENCES,

AND

NOTES OF REFERENCE TO THE WRITERS ON THE SAME TOPICS, WHO HAVE APPEARED SINCE THE DOCTOR'S DEATH

BY ANDREW KIPPIS, D.D. F.R.S. S.A.

ADVERTISEMENT

BY THE FIRST EDITOR.

THIS work was originally drawn up for the use of the students under the Author's care; but it appears by a clause in his will, that it was his intention it should be published after his decease; and though it would, no doubt, have appeared to much greater advantage, if the Author had prepared it himself for the press, yet it is hoped that it will not be thought, even in its present form, unworthy of the public view.

The transcript from which it was printed, I have carefully compared with the original short-hand copy; and the public may be assured that the Author's sentiments have been every where scrupulously preserved,—no other alterations having been made than such as are necessary in all posthumous works that have not had the Author's last hand. A few references have been added, particularly to some books published since the Author's death, and others omitted, that seemed less important.

If the reader should think the references under the same head are sometimes too much alike, he will please to consider, that though the sentiments in each may be nearly the same, yet the different manner of expression will often serve more fully to explain and illustrate the subject: besides, that one author may be at hand when the other is not.

In order to assist the reader in consulting particular passages referred to, the reference is always made to the *chapter* and *section*, where that could be done; and as in many cases it could only be made to the *page*, an account is added at the end of the *editions* to which such references are made (where the books could be procured) with the *number of pages* in the volume, which, by the rule of proportion, may be some direction to find the passage in any other edition.

As to the work itself, it may be proper to acquaint the public that the mathematical form into which it is thrown, was taken from a work of the same kind, in manuscript, drawn up in Latin, by the Author's Tutor, the Rev. Mr. JOHN JENNINGS, of Hinckley; from whom he has borrowed some of the propositions and demonstrations, especially in the former part; but he has so much enlarged and improved upon the original plan, that the whole may properly be considered as a new work.

As my regard to the Author's memory, and my apprehension of the usefulness of the work itself, led me to comply with the request of the Author's Widow, to inspect the publication of these Lectures, I thought it necessary to give this general account of what has been done in relation to them, for the satisfaction of the public; and heartily wish they may subserve the cause of learning, religion, and moderation.

S. CLARK.

Birmingham,
31*st January*, 1763.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION

In the Life of Dr. Doddridge, prefixed to the seventh edition of his Family Expositor, it is observed, That in a future impression of the Author's Course of Lectures, it would be extremely useful to enlarge the list of references, by introducing the names and productions of those writers who have treated upon the several matters in question, since the Doctor's decease. It is added, That to a person conversant in the History of Controversies, this would be no very difficult task; and that it might, in particular, easily be executed by any gentleman who, as a tutor, has made use of the Lectures as a text-book, and who, consequently, has been in the habit of referring to succeeding authors.

Though I do not completely answer to the whole of this description, (having only been occasionally a reader on a few detached parts of Dr. Doddridge's Lectures,) I was, nevertheless, readily induced to undertake the business suggested, from a consciousness of the utility of the design, and from the hope that I had so far attended to the progress of literature as to be in some degree qualified for the employment. At the same time, I entertained no doubt of my being able to obtain assistance from the manuscript references of such tutors as had regularly gone through the Doctor's Course. In this respect I have happily succeeded. The Reverend Benjamin Edwards, of Northampton, has favoured me with the use of his copy of Dr. Savage's Notes, whence I have been supplied with a considerable number of references, several of which might have escaped my own recollection. It is still a superior aid which I have derived from the communication of the references of my late excellent friend, the Reverend Samuel Merivale, for some time theological tutor in a protestant dissenting academy at Exeter. For this communication I am indebted to the Rev. James Manning, of the same city, Mr. Merivale's relation. Mr. Manning, with that zeal for promoting every valuable undertaking which marks his character, and with that friendship which I have experienced in many pleasing instances, voluntarily undertook to transcribe the references in question, together with some other papers that might be conducive to my purpose. By such assistance, united with a due measure of diligence on my own part, the Lectures, in point of references, will be found to be very greatly augmented. This will be particularly apparent to any one who shall take the trouble of comparing the catalogue of authors inserted at the end of the present work, with that which is given in the former editions.

Besides the new references which pervade the whole body of the text, I have added, at the bottom of the page, many notes of reference, the intention of which is not only to assist theological and other pupils during their academical course, but to point out such sources of information as may be serviceable to them in their future inquiries. It is not to be expected that, in their state of pupilage, they should be able to pay a due attention to one half of the books here specified; while, at the same time, it may be of great importance to know where hereafter to apply for fresh stores of knowledge and improvement.

There is one thing which I wish particularly to be remembered, and that is, that it is no part of my design to give general illustrations of the subjects treated upon,—or either to confirm or gainsay the opinions of Dr. Doddridge. This would have been the creation of a new work. It is the business of individual tutors to enlarge upon the Lectures in that way which accords with their own sentiments. My sole aim is to mention, with freedom and impartiality, the writers on all sides of the different questions which are the objects of discussion, that hereby the mind of the student may be duly enlarged, and that he may be able with the greater advantage to prosecute his searches after truth.

It is necessary to mention, that not having received Mr. Merivale's references till the work had been printed so far as to the sixty-seventh proposition, I have inserted in an Appendix those which preceded that proposition. A second Appendix contains a list of some productions which either did not occur to my remembrance at the proper time, or have been published since the Lectures were committed to the press.

I must acknowledge a great error into which I have fallen in the note subjoined to the 295th page of the first volume. In that note I have ascribed to Dr. Wm. Wagstaffe a Treatise on the Future Existence and Immortality of the Animal Creation. The book in question was written by a Dr. Hildrop. The reader will forgive the temporary failure of recollection with regard to a performance which was perused between forty and fifty years ago, and has not since been seen. Dr. Hildrop's work was, I believe, entitled Free Thoughts on the Brute Creation.

ANDR. KIPPIS.

Westminster,
5th August, 1794.

INTRODUCTION.*

It may not be improper, in the entrance of this Work, to give some general account of the plan of it, and some directions for studying it in the most useful manner.

The Work itself contains an abstract of the most important and useful thoughts I have anywhere met with, on the chief subjects which can be supposed to come under consideration, in the review of *Pneumatology*, *Ethics*, and *Divinity*: and as these sciences do insensibly run into each other, I judged it not proper to treat of each *separately*, and so to divide the whole into three distinct parts, the first Pneumatological, the second Ethical, and the third Theological; but have chosen to consider them in such a *connected* view, as might convey to the mind, with the greatest ease and advantage, the principal truths relating to each. The whole Work is divided, therefore, into ten Parts, and contains in all 230 Lectures. The first Part (Lect. 1—22) considers the powers and faculties of the human mind. The second (Lect. 23—51) the being of a GOD, and his natural perfections. The third (Lect. 52—90) treats of the nature of moral virtue in general, and of the moral attributes of the Deity; of the several branches of virtue, and the nature of civil government. The fourth (Lect. 91—100) of the immortality and immateriality of the human soul, with its original; as also our general obligation to virtue, and the state of it in the world. The fifth (Lect. 101—110) considers the reason to desire and expect a revelation, and the external and internal evidence with which we may suppose it should be attended. The sixth (Lect. 111—153) asserts and vindicates the genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of the Old and New Testament. The seventh (Lect. 154—163) contains an account of the Scripture doctrine relating to the existence and nature of GOD, and the divinity of the SON and SPIRIT. The eighth (Lect. 164—187) treats of the fall of human nature, and our recovery by the mediatorial undertaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the nature of faith in him, and of the covenant of grace established through him. So that the doctrine of Christ's atonement, and the Spirit's influences, are also comprehended in this Part. The ninth (Lect. 188—209) is a survey of the chief duties which the gospel requires, and more particularly of the positive institutions; in which the doctrine of the Christian sabbath, the sacraments, and the constitution of the church are considered. The tenth and last Part (Lect. 210—230) contains the Scripture doctrine of angels, and of the future state, including the resurrection, and the most remarkable events to precede or attend it.

These are the great subjects of the Work,—and I believe the very mention of them is sufficient to show how important a part of an academical course it must make, and how much it must be the concern of every prudent and judicious student to give it a large share of his application.

For the more profitable studying this Course of Lectures, it will be advisable that, as soon as possible, after the Lecture has been given, it be carefully reviewed, and the chief *references* read and contracted; but in contracting them, it will be unnecessary to transcribe those passages, the substance of which is already inserted in the Lecture: it will be sufficient to take some general hints of their contents, and to transcribe only those parts which are very peculiar and observable; and here some distinction is to be made between those books, which may very probably be always at hand in reviewing the Lectures, and those which may not so probably be within your reach.

A diligent attendance on the course will, I hope, be both a pleasure and improvement; yet, I would advise every pupil (if he can) to go over it *twice*; for, though the subjects themselves, at the second review, will want the advantage of novelty, yet more thoughts will often arise in lecturing, and the whole will be made more familiar to the mind; besides, that the student will, by this means, have an opportunity of reading and studying some things, which accidental causes might have obliged him before to pass over without due attention, and, for this purpose, it may be very convenient to keep a catalogue of those Lectures, which by absence, illness, or any other accidental circumstance, were not studied so carefully as might be wished, as likewise of those things which did not, in the course of lecturing, appear solved and explained in a satisfactory manner; and if any difficulties arise which seem peculiar, let them be drawn out in writing, to be lodged in the tutor's hands, or made the subject

* This Introduction is to be considered as the Author's Address to his own Pupils, when they entered upon this Course of Lectures; which will show the propriety of some of the directions which might otherwise appear too particular and minute.

of a thesis, to be canvassed at large. In the mean time, full liberty will be given to make any objection or inquiry, from time to time, which will be examined in the hours of lecture, so far as the limits of time and other employments will allow.

Yet let it be remembered, that the student is supposed to be already acquainted with many things here brought into question. It would be a most fatal mistake, to act as if nothing were known of God and Christ, till the chief doctrines relating to both come to be examined in this course. Many small treatises, which may be read in a few hours, contain evidence enough, both of the being of a God and the truth of the Christian religion, to satisfy an upright mind. though it may be convenient that those who are to be the teachers and guardians of these truths, or those who may be exposed to peculiar temptations to doubt or disbelieve them, should be acquainted with their evidence in a larger extent. Let the great vital truths of Christianity taught in Scripture be constantly regarded. As to matters of controversy, let them be referred to their proper place, without any eagerness to anticipate them, which often produces great bigotry and error, as well as a neglect of what is proposed to immediate inquiry; and may it never be forgotten that matters of abstruse speculation and laborious inquiry, are not, even to theological students, the *one thing needful*, though they may be important in subordination to it.

I would remind you, dear Sir, (whoever you are that are going over these Lectures,) that you may enter into eternity long before you can have attended, or even transcribed them; and therefore, I would beseech and charge you, by all your hopes and prospects there, that it be your daily and governing care, after having solemnly devoted your soul to God through Christ in the bonds of the Christian covenant, to live like his servant, to keep yourself in the love of God, and to endeavour in all things to adorn his gospel. So will you be most likely to succeed in your inquiries, through the communication of light from the great Father of lights; and so will you be prepared for the infinitely nobler discoveries, enjoyments, and services, of the future state, even though you should be deprived of the residue of your days here, and cut short (as many of your brethren have been) in the intended studies and labours of this course.

LECTURES.

PART I.

OF THE POWERS AND FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN MIND.

LECTURE I.

AXIOM I.

EXISTENCE is a simple idea, which we get both by consciousness and observation.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. vii. § 7; lib. iv. c. ix. § 3. *Burnet at Boyle's Lect.* vol. i. p. 2, 3. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. iv. p. 2, 4.

DEFINITION I.

Whatever our thoughts are immediately employed about, whether as simply perceiving it, or as asserting or denying any thing concerning it, is called AN IDEA.

SCHOLIUM.

The definition more frequently given is, that an *idea* is the representation of a thing in the mind, which the mind immediately perceives; and the thing itself supposed to exist without our thoughts, is called *The Archetype* of the idea: but we do not yet choose to assert or deny any thing concerning the external existence of such supposed archetypes, and for this reason have not thought it so proper to use this definition.

DEFINITION II.

Whatever exists is called A BEING.

SCHOLIUM.

We do not here enter largely into the distinction which the metaphysicians make between *ens reale*, which exists without any dependence upon our thoughts, and *ens rationis*, which owes its existence to its being the object of them, nor into the question between the Realists and Nominalists; but by *Being*, in the process of this discourse, we mean *ens reale*.*

Watts's Ontol. c. xvi. *Watts's Logic.* c. p. 27, 28.

* The knowledge of these distinctions, and of the disputes occasioned on account of them, by the schoolmen, may be either sought for in Enfield's History of Philosophy, and in other works. Those who have found this kind of reading unprofitable, or at Boyle's Lectures.

DEFINITION III.

Whatever is contained in the adequate idea of any being, is called its PROPERTIES.

COROLLARY 1.

A being is the same, with all its properties taken together; and, therefore,

COROLLARY 2.

We can have no conception of any substance distinct from all the properties of the being in which they inhere; for this would imply that the being itself inheres; and so on to infinity.

Jennings's Log. Def. 15. *Locke's Ess.* lib. c. iv. § 18; *ib.* lib. ii. c. xiii. § 19, 20; *ib.* c. xxiii. § 2, 3, 6. *Watts's Philos. Ess.* p. 1.

DEFINITION IV.

BODY is an extended solid being.

Gravesand's Phys. l. ii. c. iii. § 9, 12, 18. *Le Clerc's Phys.* lib. v. c. iii. § 1—3. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. iv.

AXIOM II.

THOUGHT is a simple idea, which we get by reflecting on what passes in our own minds.

Cudworth's Intell. System, p. 277, 278. *Crousaz's Logic*, vol. i. p. 10.

DEFINITION V.

SPIRIT is a thinking being, or a being which has the power of thought.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxiii. § 15.

COROLLARY 1.

We have as clear an idea of spirit as we have of body,—the essential properties of each being equally known, and the inward constitution equally unknown.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxiii. § 15. *Pearce's Unders tand.* p. 74—78.

COROLLARY 2.

We are at least as certain of the existence of

spirit as of body. The former we know by consciousness, which is always infallible; the other by the senses, which may be mistaken.

Descartes Princ. part i. § 7 et 11. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxiii. § 31.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The Cartesians thought that these primary and essential properties of body and spirit, mentioned in *Def.* 4 and 5, were the respective substances whence all their other properties flow; and Dr. Watts maintains the same opinion; urging, that they agree with the received definition of *substance*, as they support the accidents of figure, size, colour, &c. in bodies; and doubting, fearing, willing, &c. in spirit: and both subsist independently on human power. He further pleads, that we have no idea of the support of these properties; and that if these be destroyed, nothing will remain.

Descartes Princ. part. i. § 53. *Watts's Ess.* ii. *present.* § 2, 3.

SCHOLIUM 2.

A power of communicating motion by impulse is improperly mentioned by Mr. Locke among the essential properties of *body*; and that of moving a body by volition among those of *spirit*.

DEFINITION VI.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY is that branch of learning which relates to *body*; giving an account of its various phenomena, and the principles on which the solution of them depends.

DEFINITION VII.

PNEUMATOLOGY is the doctrine of *spirits*, or that branch of science which relates to them.

DEFINITION VIII.

ETHICS is that branch of learning by which our faculties are directed to that manner of acting by which we may obtain the highest happiness, i. e. the supreme enjoyment of which our natures are capable.

LECTURE II.

DEFINITION IX.

The HUMAN MIND is that in or of a man which thinks. *Watts's Ess.* ii. p. 59.

COROLLARY.

The human mind is a spirit. *Comp. Def.* 5.

SCHOLIUM.

Descartes, in his definition, calls it "A thinking, incorporeal, inextended substance, which shall survive the body to which it is united, and with which it was immediately created by God, in order to form a perfect man." It is evident that on this definition it will be matter of much controversy whether man has a mind or not; yet he defines it somewhat otherwise in his *Principles*.

Descartes Princ. part. i. § 8.

AXIOM III.

It is evident that men have not one COMMON CONSCIOUSNESS.

COROLLARY.

Every one has a mind peculiar to himself.

More's Immort. of the Soul, lib. iii. c. xxi. p. 212—216. *Ditton on the Resurrect.* p. 467—471.

AXIOM IV.

VOLITION is a simple idea, which we get by reflection.

DEFINITION X.

ACTION signifies *volition, with the effect which we will.*

COROLLARY 1.

Nothing can act but spontaneously.

COROLLARY 2.

Nothing but a thinking being can act; for spontaneity implies an idea of the action to be performed.

SCHOLIUM.

Action is commonly, though in a less proper sense, applied to irrational, and even inanimate, beings, when the body immediately employed in producing a new effect, is said to act upon that in which it is produced; as the sun-beams upon the earth, the fire upon fuel. *Watts's Ontology*, p. 342.

DEFINITION XI.

As that being which acts is called THE AGENT, so that which is acted upon is called THE PATIENT, whether sensible or insensible, or whether the action produced be a pleasing or displeasing effect.

DEFINITION XII.

Pleasure and *Pain* are simple *ideas*. That which tends to produce the former, is called NATURAL GOOD; and that which tends to produce the latter, NATURAL EVIL.

COROLLARY.

The loss of good is evil, and the removal of evil is good.

SCHOLIUM.

See an unnecessary description of Pain in *Collier's Ess.* part iii. p. 1.*

AXIOM V.

POWER, whether *active* or *passive*, is a sensible idea, which we get by observing the changes produced in the beings about us by agents and patients. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxi. § 1, 2.

DEFINITION XIII.

Those properties or powers of any spirit, whereby

* [illegible] which has been severely censured, and [illegible] by a remarkable instance of the absurdity of [illegible]

it is rendered capable of action, enjoyment, or suffering, are called FACULTIES.

PROPOSITION I.

To take a survey of the principal faculties of the human mind.

SOLUTION.

1. We find within ourselves a power of perceiving, abstracting, compounding, comparing, discerning, judging, reasoning, which all lead us on in the pursuit of truth, *i. e.* in the right apprehension of the nature of things, and are called by the common name of *Understanding*.

Duncan's Logic, ap Precept. vol. ii. l. i. c. i. § 4; *ib.* l. ii. c. i. § 1; *ib.* l. iii. c. i. § 1, 2.

2. The power of retaining and recollecting our ideas in the absence of their archetypes, is what we call *Memory*; but when ideas or trains of ideas occur, or are called up by memory in a lively manner, and without regard to the order of former actual impressions and perceptions, it is said to be done by the power of the *imagination* or *fancy*.

Hartley on Man, vol. i. Introd. p. 3. *Balguy's Six Serm.* p. 44—46. *Balguy's Ser.* vol. i. p. 357—359.

3. We perceive, on many occasions, various commotions in our minds; (which also produce changes and impressions, not only on the nerves of the brain, but in the exterior parts of the body;) which commotions we call *Passions*. Pleasure and pain are the great hinges on which they turn; and the more particular modifications of them will be considered in *Prop.* 13.

Dr. Watts describes them thus:—"They are sensible commotions of our whole nature, both soul and body, which are occasioned by the perception of an object according to some special property that belongs to it." (*Watts on the Passions*, p. 5.) To excite them, it must appear rare and uncommon, good, *i. e.* agreeable, or evil, *i. e.* disagreeable.*

4. A power of forming *volitions*; which Locke defines to be the act of the mind knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in or withholding it from any particular action: but what that *exerting its dominion* is, can only be known by consciousness. *Ax.* 4. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. xxi. § 15.

5. A power of moving some parts of the body. Others it has no immediate power over, the motion of some being always involuntary, as that of the heart. In other parts, it is sometimes voluntary and sometimes otherwise, as in the lungs and intestines.

Descartes de Pass. l. i. § 13, 16.

DEMONSTRATION

We find by experience that these faculties are in our own minds; and we perceive, by their effects, they are in the minds of others.

COROLLARY 1.

Man is a being of great abilities and excellences; so that if it shall hereafter appear that he was produced by any other intelligent being, it may reasonably be concluded, that he was designed for great and important purposes.

COROLLARY 2.

While these faculties continue in a degree of vigour, he must be capable of great and noble improvements: so that much of the difference between persons, in other respects equal, will depend upon the degree in which this natural furniture is cultivated or neglected.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is not proper to speak of the understanding and other faculties of the soul as if they were distinct principles of action:—the understanding is the *soul* understanding; the will is the *soul* willing; and to represent them as distinct agents, produces confusion in our ideas.

Witsii Econ. Fœd. l. iii. c. vii. § 4, 5. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. xxi. § 17—20. *Crouzaz's Logic*, vol. 1. part i. c. viii. § 6. p. 144.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The power which the mind evidently has of moving the various parts of the body, by nerves inserted in the muscles, is truly wonderful, seeing the mind neither knows the muscles to be moved, nor the machinery, by which the motion in it is to be produced; so that it is as if a musician should always strike the right note on a very complex instrument, which he had never seen before. That no laws of mechanism can produce this, is proved by its being voluntary, as well as by other considerations.

Cheyne's Princ. c. ii. § 12. p. 29—35. *Mathe*, vol. i. p. 359, &c.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is questioned whether there be any motion in the human body which depends upon the mind, and yet is involuntary.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Berkley entirely denies the power of *abstraction*, as an evident absurdity and inconsistency; and says we have only a power of making one particular idea a representation of all the rest: but this is all grounded upon an unwary expression of Mr. Locke. The truth is, that we do not positively exclude, but only overlook, a part of the idea from which we abstract; *e. g.* when I conceive of a line by abstraction, I do not deny that it is either straight or crooked, but only think of the flowing of a point, without determining its direction.

* With Dr. Watts's Doctrine of the Passions compare A Short Theory of the Passions, by Dr. T. Balguy, in the Appendix to his Divine Benevolence asserted. An 8vo pamphlet, published in 1781.

* For a further character of [illegible] see Reid's Inquiry, Prop. [illegible] M. [illegible] M. Degerando's [illegible] of the Philosophy [illegible] Hume, M.

Locke ib. l. ii. c. xxi. § 9. *Berkley's Princ.* Introd. § 6—20. *Pneum. of Underst.* p. 186—188.

LECTURE III.

PROPOSITION II.

To survey those phenomena observable in BRUTE ANIMALS, which seem to bear some resemblance to the faculties of the human mind.

SOLUTION.

1. They seem to have a power of *perception*: i. q. to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, and to feel: and it seems that it is by this power that those bodies, which we call *Animal*, are distinguished from those that are inanimate. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. ix. § 11.

2. They seem also to have *memory*; which appears by the marks of their recollecting a train of ideas, when one that has a relation to the rest is, by sensation, presented anew; and especially by birds perfecting themselves, by practice, in tunes they have imperfectly learnt.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. x. § 10. *Pneum. of the Underst.* p. 158—162.

3. They appear capable of exerting *volitions*, and of putting them into execution by correspondent motions of their bodies.

4. They appear to be impressed with *passions*: as joy, sorrow, fear, hope, desire, gratitude, anger, &c. and sometimes in a very violent degree.

5. They appear not to have the power of *abstraction*: because they do not use articulate sounds as the signs of their ideas, though the organs of some are capable of pronouncing them.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xi. § 10, 11. *Pneum. of the Underst.* p. 188, 189.

Gr. 5 6. They are incapable of any high degree of *reasoning*, since that evidently depends upon abstract ideas. *Object.* Many of their actions seem rational. *Ans.* They are, and in so high a degree, that if they were governed by any reason of their own, they would exceed the sagacity of the generality of men: yet in other instances they appear mere idiots, and in the actions of the same species there is so little variety, that we cannot imagine this to be the case. This must therefore be granted to be a very strange phenomenon.

Spectat. No. 120. vol. ii. p. 130. *Spect. de la Nat.* vol. i. part ii. p. 70, 71. *Collib. Inq. into the Power* p. 86, 87. *ed.* 1. p. 160, 161. *ed.* 3. *Beattie's Dissertations*, p. 63—71. *Reimarus's Dissertations*, p. 216—218.

COROLLARY 1.

The *Cartesian hypothesis*, that brutes are mere machines, is very incredible: since their phenomena can by no means be accounted for on any mechanical laws, nor upon any principles, which will not prove it possible that those which appear to us human creatures may be mere machines, and not only irrational but insensible too.*

Descartes de Methode § 5. p. 34—39. *La Chaire's Phys.* l. 4. c. xii. § 9—13. *Ray's Wisdom of God*, p. 54—57. *Pneum. of the Understand.* p. 176—174. *Ess. upon Human* p. 92—98. *R. p. Pardies Conn.* vol. ii. p. 82—85. *Dutton on the Resurrection*, p. 202—190. *Watts's Ruin and Recovery, Appendix, Essay* 1.

COROLLARY 2.

It is evident that man is a creature superior to the brutes, though some authors have endeavoured to sink him to a level with them.—*Vid. Prop.* 1.

Blount's Anima Mundi, p. 10 to 36. *Orig. adv. Celsum*, lib. iv. p. 217 to 222. *Conn. Christ by Laying*, pass. *Dutton on the Resurrection*, p. 205.

SCHOLIUM.

That *Plants* are a species of animals, and have some sort of sensation, is strongly maintained, though with no appearance of reason, by

Reb. de Generat. Insect. p. 245—249. 257—260. *Edwards's Exercit.* No. viii. *ad finem.* †

LECTURE IV.

PROPOSITION XII.

That may be called a man's own BODY which is the general system over which his will exercises an immediate power, and by the organs of which ideas are transmitted to his mind: and that is to be accounted a VITAL part of it which partakes of its vegetation.

PROPOSITION XIII.

To enumerate the principal phenomena of the dependence of the human mind on the body.

SOLUTION.

1. When the nerves of the body are moved, ideas are presented to our minds whether we will or not, according to the different senses to which those nerves serve which are put into agitation; that is, certain ideas in the mind succeed to certain motions in the brain.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. i. § 24. *Glanvill. Pneum. Scep.* c. iii. § 20. p. 228, 229. *Descartes de Pass.* § 31. *Descartes Pass.* part iv. § 197. p. 216.

2. Passions are often excited by bodily motions

* [illegible]

† [illegible]

and on the other hand, when raised, produce changes in the body, sometimes even contrary to our volitions; *v. g.* in anger and blushing.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xx. § 17. *Descartes de Pass.* § 97—106, 113—135.

3. When the body is indisposed, the mind is often disabled from using its faculties: *v. g.* the understanding is disabled by drunkenness and sleep, —motion, by the palsy, —memory, by diseases, &c.

4. When the senses are gently and naturally shut up, and the command over the body intermitted, as in sleep, if we think at all, we are said to dream; and generally wander through airy tracks of thought, which have no agreement with each other, nor are at all corrected by the judgment. Ideas fetched out of the memory seem to us to be produced anew; and out of mere simple ideas laid up in the memory, new imaginary ideas of substances are formed, and seem to be produced by external objects. When the senses are obstructed in a violent and unnatural manner, as in a swoon, if we think at all, we may observe the same phenomena, but in a still more languid degree.

Lanc. street Lect. vol. ii. p. 442, 443. *Descartes Dioptrics*, c. vi. § 17. *Rohault's Phys.* lib. iv. c. 19. *Lucret.* lib. iv. ver. 905—1024. *Herv. Med.* vol. ii. p. 43, *in Note.*

5. In a frenzy, though the senses be not shut up, nor the command of the mind over the body suspended, yet the same phenomena are found as in sleep, only in a more vivid and pathetic degree.

Aretæus de Morb. Acut. lib. ii. c. iv. v. p. 17. *Boer. Ed.* Vid. *Boer. Not. in loc.*

6. Sometimes, by very intense thinking, we do not attend to impressions made on the organs of sensation, nor receive ideas from them. This, in a very high degree, may be called a trance or ecstasy.

Plutarch's Lives, vol. ii. p. 435, 436. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. ix. § 3, 4. *Ibid*, c. ii. § 19. p. 1—3. *Flavel's Pneumat. ap. Opera*, p. 276, 277. *Edin. ed.* vol. i. p. 475, 476. *Lond. ed. Gualperius in Acts* x. 10. *Col. Gardiner's Memoirs*, § 30—32.

COROLLARY.

Man is a very feeble creature, and we have little reason to boast of those intellectual powers, the exercise of which, by the very constitution of our nature, does not only depend upon an animal system, but is necessarily subject to frequent long interruptions, as in the state of sleep.

Burnet's Theory, vol. ii. p. 164. *Camb. our Exist.* p. 176, 177. *Hervey's Contempl.* vol. ii. p. 39, 40, 48—50.*

* From all these circumstances recent philosophers have deduced arguments to prove that the soul is not distinct from the body. On this side of the question, the subject has been copiously discussed by Dr

LECTURE V.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is queried, To what are we to ascribe the difference to be found in the intellectual capacities of men?

ANSWER.—The principles of physiognomy, the decay of the faculties in old age, the destruction or restoration of them by corporeal accidents, and many of the phenomena mentioned in the proposition, may convince us that the temperature and constitution of the body has a great influence on the mind. It must also be allowed, that the circumstances of education and conversation, may make a considerable difference between persons in other respects equal. Yet if we attend to the variety there is in all the works of nature, we may be inclined to think there is a like variety in the internal constitution of human souls; which conjecture is confirmed, by observing that no visible difference has yet been discovered between the brain of the weakest and the most sagacious of mankind; as well as that persons in the same circumstances, and with the same opportunities, often make very different improvements.†

Descartes de Method. sub init. p. 1. *Watts's Death and Heaven*, p. 97—102.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some have distinguished between the *rational* and the *animal* soul, as if they were two distinct beings, calling the former the *Spirit*, the latter the *Soul*. They suppose the intellect and will are seated in the former, the passions and appetites in the latter; and that the *Soul* is a principle common to brutes, which therefore they sometimes call by very contemptible names, as the *horse*, the *brute*, &c. whereas they think the *Spirit* is peculiar to man. *Vid. Prop.* 1. *Schol.* 1.

Perrenl. of the Universe, lib. ii. c. x. p. 367, 370—377. *Marc. Anton.* lib. ii. § 2; lib. iii. § 16; lib. xii. § 3, with Dac. Notes. *Descartes de Pass.* part i. § 47. *Pope's Iliad*, lib. xxiii. ver. 122, vol. vi. p. 61, 62. *Mr. [illegible] Soul Knowledge*, lib. i. c. ii. p. 14. *Vitringa Obs.* lib. iii. c. iv. pref. § 2—8.

DEFINITION XV.

The SOUL is said to be SEATED in that part of the body where sensation terminates, and voluntary motion begins.

PROPOSITION IX.

The Soul is seated in the *Brain*.

Principles of the Philosophical and Christian Morals and Notes on Mr. Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding, with a Memoir of the Author. Edinburgh, 1809. 8vo. Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense. Edinburgh, 1764. 8vo. Dr. Beattie's Dissertations, Moral and Critical. Dublin, 1783. 8vo. vol. i. p. 1—[illegible].

† [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible]

DEMONSTRATION

1. The nerves, on which sensation and motion evidently depend, terminate in the brain, or in the *medulla spinalis*, which is derived from thence, and whose fibres are probably all continued to it.

2. If a straight ligature be made on any nerve, or it be cut asunder, sensation continues in that part nearest the brain, and ceases in that which is more remote.

3. In men, and in most other animals, death immediately ensues, if the head be cut off, or the brains taken out, or the *cerebellum* wounded.

4. All known distempers that immediately take away sensation, are seated in the head.

Grad. 1—4. *Def.* 14. 5. The soul is seated in the brain.—*Q. E. D.*

Keil's Anat. c. vii. § 1. *More's Immort. of the Soul*, lib. ii. c. vii. § 10. *Watts's Ess.* iii. p. 78—80.

COROLLARY.

The ancients were mistaken in placing it in the *heart*; and *Van Helmont* in the *mouth of the stomach*. It may be observed, by the way, that *Philo*, who, with many ancients, supposed the sensitive soul to be subdivided into the irascible and concupiscible, placed the former in the heart, the latter in the belly, while he thought the rational was seated in the head.

Vitringa ubi supra, § 4. *sub fin.* *More, ibid.* lib. ii. c. vii. § 5—10. *Descartes de Pass.* § 28.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It must still be matter of controversy, in what part of the brain the soul is seated. There is no reason to think, as some have imagined, that it is in the *meninges*; but whether it be in the *pineal gland*, as Descartes supposes, or, as Dr. More thinks, among the animal spirits in the *fourth ventricle*, or in the *corpora striata*, as has been lately maintained in France, or in some part different from any of these, we cannot certainly say.*

Descartes de Pass. § 32. *More, ibid.* lib. ii. c. vii. § 12—18. c. viii. per tot.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The constitution of some animals may perhaps be different from that of men in this respect. It is certain the phenomena mentioned *gr.* 3, are not always to be found in them; for wasps will live a long time after their heads are cut off; eels are soonest killed by striking them on the tail; and vipers will live some hours after their heads are cut off, and their bowels taken out.

More, ibid. lib. iii. c. xv. § 1, 2. *Bacon's Nat. Hist. Cent.* 4, No. 400.

* The question concerning the seat of the soul, for a long time excited the attention of philosophers, and has been the subject of various discussion. At present, we believe that it is deemed of little importance.

LECTURE VI.

DEFINITION XVI.

Any idea or proposition is said to be INNATE when it is not acquired by the use of the faculties, but so implanted in the mind from its original, as to be common to the whole species, independently upon any circumstances in which individuals may be placed.

PROPOSITION V.

There are no innate ideas in the human mind.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. There can no *simple* idea be assigned, but may be traced up to *sensation* or *reflection*, or both: *e. g.* to *one sense* alone; as seeing green, hearing the sound of an organ, smelling a rose, tasting a peach, feeling solidity, &c. or more; as extension, motion, rest: to *reflection* only, as perception, volition, duration: or *sensation* and *reflection* both, as existence, and various kinds of pleasure and pain.—*Ax.* 1.

Locke, lib. ii. c. iii. v—vii; *Ibid.* c. i. § 2, 7—9.

2. We see that simple ideas are acquired gradually, and the furniture of various persons differs according to their various circumstances in life.

Locke, lib. ii. c. i. § 2, 5, 7, 20—23.

3. When the organs of sensation are destroyed, simple ideas proper to them are no more acquired; and those who, from their birth, want proper organs, want correspondent ideas, even though they be ever so important to the comfort and usefulness of life.

Locke, lib. i. c. iv. § 20; *ibid.* lib. ii. c. iii. § 1.

Grad. 1—3. 4. It is needless and unreasonable to suppose that any *simple* ideas are innate.

5. *Compound* ideas are made up of simple ones; nor can we, by any operation of the mind, produce any idea, how chimerical soever, the materials of which we are not already possessed of.

Locke, lib. ii. c. ii. § 2; *ibid.* c. xii. § 8.

Grad. 4, 5. 6. It is needless and unreasonable to suppose any of our ideas innate. *Q. E. D.*

Proced. of the Underst. p. 382—384; *More's Philos. Works*, lib. 1. c. 5, 6.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Dr. Watts supposes there are three sources of our ideas, viz. *Sensation*, *Reflection*, *and Abstraction*; but since he grants that the materials of the last are derived from the two former, this cannot be reckoned a third primary source, any more than *compounding*.

Watts's Phil. Ess. iii. § 16. p. 93—97

SCHOLIUM 2.

Brown, in his *Procedure of the Understanding* maintains that we have all our ideas originally from *sensation*; but his proof depends entirely upon hi-

definition of the word *Idea*, which he takes for a picture or representation of some *sensible* object laid up in the imagination; which is different from our definition of it.—*Vid. Def.* 1.

Proceed. of the Underst. p. 55, 63—66. *Dr. Price's Review of the Morals*, c. i. § 2. *Lord Monboddo on the Origin and Progress of Language*, vol. i. p. 1—184.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Most of those ideas which arise from reflection, come into the mind later than those which arise from sensation. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. i. § 8.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Many errors in our ideas of sensation are rectified by reflection.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. ix. § 8, 9. *Smith's Optics*, vol. ii. *Append.* p. 27, 28. *Locke's Fam. Lett.* p. 134—138; *Watts's Logic*, part ii. c. iii. § 3. p. 200.

LECTURE VII.

PROPOSITION VI.

There are no innate propositions in the human mind.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. All propositions consist of ideas; therefore, innate propositions would imply innate ideas, contrary to *Prop.* 5. *Locke's Ess.* lib. i. c. iv. § 19.

2. If any propositions could be supposed innate, it must be those that are intuitively discerned; but these, though assented to as soon as proposed, are not known before such proposal, even by those whose minds are least corrupted by education and custom; which shows (by the way) that they cannot be the principles of all our knowledge,—not being themselves first known.

Ibid. lib. i. c. ii. § 4, 16, 21—27.

3. All propositions relating to *identity* and *diversity* of ideas may be intuitively discerned, and consequently must be innate, if intuitive discerning were the mark of an innate proposition; but this would imply, that all our ideas were innate, which is evidently absurd.

Ibid. lib. i. c. iv. § 4, 5; *ibid.* lib. iv. c. vii. § 4.

4. Propositions, supposed innate, cannot be distinguished from others, so that a complete catalogue of them should be made; yet this might reasonably be expected if any were so, and would be necessary to render them useful.

Ibid. lib. i. c. iii. § 15; *ibid.* c. 4. § 21.

5. Several of those propositions, which are of greatest importance in morality, and seem most evident, and are therefore most likely to be innate, are unknown to some, and expressly contradicted by others, and all need proof.

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. iv. § 4—13. *Sale's Pref. to the Koran*, p. 131, 132. *Watts's Ess.* iv. § 1. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 381.

Gr. 1—5 6. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may be granted that there are certain circumstances, in which it is impossible for the mind to avoid receiving certain ideas, and assenting to certain propositions, and even taking them for granted in all its reasonings; and this is the necessary consequence of its constitution. It may also be granted, that there is something in natural temper disposing to gratitude, compassion, &c. as effectually as if propositions recommending them were inscribed upon the soul; but this is by no means inconsistent with what has been said above; and in this sense Mr. Locke owns innate practical principles as the *desire of happiness.*

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. iii. § 2. *Watts's Ess.* iv. § 2—4. p. 100—102, 104—107.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The dream of innate ideas seems to have arisen, on the one hand, from the desire of teachers to impose their own sentiments upon their disciples, as sacred truths stamped on their minds by the Author of Nature; and, on the other, from the ease with which such principles have been early received, and the assurance with which they have been assented to, so that people cannot remember that they have ever doubted of them.*

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. iii. § 21—26. *Ibid.* c. iv. § 24. *Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, vol. i. p. 12—18.

LECTURE VIII.

PROPOSITION VII

The same external qualities in objects, may excite different ideas in different persons.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If the organs of sensation be at all different, the ideas of the same object must be proportionably so, while the same laws of nature prevail.

2. It is probable, there may be some degree of difference in the organs of different persons; *v. g.* in the distance of the *retina* and *crystalline* hu-

* The doctrine of innate ideas and mental propositions was long maintained, and Mr. Locke was obliged to take much pains upon the subject. Though the system is now generally exploded, there has appeared in a few late writers a tendency to revive somewhat like innate propositions, under the terms of the "Principles of Common Sense." Dr Reid is guarded upon the subject, but has however been and been equally prudent. See Beattie's Immutability of Truth, and more especially Dr Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion. Sentiments very similar to those maintained by these gentlemen had long before been advanced by Pere Buffier, in his First Truths, and the Origin of our Opinions explained: a translation of which work, from the French, was published in 1780.

mour of the eye, in the degree of extension in the *tympanum* of the ear, in the acrimony of the *saliva*, &c.; and the variety which is observable in the faces, the voices, and the bones of men, and almost through the whole face of nature, would lead us to suspect that the same variety might take place here.

3. Those things which are very pleasing to one, are extremely disagreeable to another.

4. Those things which are at one time very agreeable, are at another very disagreeable to the same person, when the organs of his body are indisposed, or when other disagreeable ideas are associated with those that had once been grateful.

Gr. 1, 2, and 4, 5. *Valet propositio.*

Locke's Essay, b. ii. c. xxxii. § 15. *Ars Cogitandi*, p. i. c. i. *Le Clerc's Logic*, p. i. c. i. § 15.

SCHOLIUM.

Though the causes mentioned above may probably produce ideas which differ in *degree* in the minds of different persons, there is no apparent reason to suppose they differ in their *kind; v. g.* that what appears green to one should constantly appear red to another,—and *vice versa*.

Malebranche's Research, l. i. c. xiii. § 5, 6. *Rohault's Phys.* part. i. c. xxvii. § 6. vol. i. p. 197. *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. lxviii. part ii. for 1778.

PROPOSITION VIII.

To survey the phenomena of the human memory with the solutions that have been given of some of them. See *Prop.* 1, *gr.* 2.

SOLUTION.

1. A vast stock of ideas are treasured up in the memory, which it easily produces on various occasions.

The Cartesians say, that objects, coming in by sensation, and ideas got by reflection, make traces in the brain: but how exquisitely fine must these be, when in so small a compass the names and images of so many objects, as well as so many propositions and arguments, are inscribed! Who can sufficiently admire it, not only in such extraordinary cases as are mentioned by Derham, &c. but in those cases which are most common!

Derham's Phys. Theol. l. v. c. i. p. 262. *Descartes de Pass.* § 42. *Cicero's Tusc. Disp.* l. i. § 24, 25. *Watts's Ess.* iii. § 13, 14. *Rollin Manuere*, &c. vol. i. p. 275—277. *August. Confes.* lib. x. c. 7. *Senec. Controv.* lib. i. *sub init.*

2. We can distinguish ideas brought out of the memory from those that come in by sensation or reflection; perhaps, by the liveliness of the impression, or by the train of relations.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. 10. c. vi. § 5, 6. *Descartes de Pass.* § 26.

3. Ideas, of which we have but a general and imperfect remembrance, may often be recovered by recollection.

Watts's Ess. iii. § 15. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. x. § 7.

4. Memory, in a great measure, depends upon the body, and is often much injured by a disease, and afterwards recovered with recovering strength, which, on the Cartesian hypothesis, is accounted for, by supposing that those parts of the brain on which these characters are written, are, by such disorders, relaxed, in the same manner as the nerves in the other parts of the body are liable to be weakened or disabled.

5. The memory differs at different ages. Children soon forget, as they soon learn; old people learn with difficulty, and remember best what they learnt when young; that is, say the Cartesians, because the brain, growing by degrees more dry, retains old characters; but does not easily admit new.

6. Dreams generally make little impression on the memory; because, say some, the animal spirits are then but gently moved.

Watts's Ess. No. v. § 2.

7. An idea, attended with great pleasure or pain, makes a deep impression on the memory, *i. e.* a deep trace on the brain, the spirits being then violently impelled. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. x. § 3.

8. The power of recollecting differs extremely at different times: and it is generally strongest when we are most brisk and lively.

9. We remember that best in the morning which we learnt just before we went to sleep; because, say the Cartesians, the traces made then are not apt to be effaced by the motions of the spirits, as they would, if new objects of sensation had presented themselves; and during this interval, they have, as it were, time to stiffen.

10. Sensible ideas gradually decay in the memory if they be not refreshed by new sensations, the traces perhaps wearing out; yet they may last many years. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. x. § 4, 5.

11. When a train of ideas is very familiar to the mind, they often follow one another in the memory without any laborious recollection, and so as to arise almost instantaneously and mechanically; as in writing, singing, &c. the traces between them being worn like beaten roads.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxxiii. § 6.

12. The memory is a faculty which is almost incessantly exercised while thought continues (though the instances of laborious recollection are comparatively few): nor do we ever find the human mind entirely stript of it, though it be often impaired.

LECTURE IX.

DEMONSTRATION.

The probability of the Cartesian hypothesis will appear from considering,

1. How well it agrees with the various phenomena mentioned above.

2. The analogy upon this hypothesis between sensation and memory, the one arising from impressions made on the brain, the other depending on traces continued there.

3. The instances in which memory has been almost wholly lost at once by a sudden violent blow upon the head; insomuch, that a great scholar has entirely lost the knowledge of letters by it, and has been forced, with infinite labour, to begin again from the elements of them; and, in other instances, the recollection has been gradual, and the events of childhood and youth have been recovered first.

COROLLARY.

The memory is a useful faculty, which deserves to be carefully cultivated by attention and exercise, frequent reviews and conversation.

Free-thinker, No. 72. *Rollin's Man, &c.* vol. i. p. 277—279. *Watts's Improv. of the Mind*, part. i. c. xvii.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The artificial methods which some have proposed must be allowed to be very ingenious; but perhaps are rather calculated to improve a memory already good, than to help a bad one.

Rollin's Maniere, &c. vol. i. p. 279, 280. *Grey's Memoria Technica. Bruen's Life*, p. 56—58.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The excellency of the memory consists partly in its strength of retention, and partly in its quickness of recollection. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. x. § 8.

SCHOLIUM 3.

If the Cartesian hypothesis should be admitted, memory will still continue a great mystery; for it must be acknowledged impossible thoroughly to explain how either that or sensation should be affected by any impression on the brain, or what connexion there can be between such impressions and thought in any of its modes.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Mr. Locke accounts for the association of ideas, which is the cause of antipathies and many errors, with other strange phenomena, by memory; supposing such traces are worn on the brain as unite ideas, so that when the mind turns to one it should almost necessarily fall on the other too. See *Solution, gr.* 11.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxxiii. § 7—18. *Hartley on Man*, Prop. X. XI. vol. i. p. 65—72.

SCHOLIUM 5.

If the Cartesian hypothesis be admitted, it must be owned that nothing gives a greater idea of the minuteness of the parts into which matter may actually be divided, than the smallness of those traces, by which so many dictionaries, histories, poems, &c. are transcribed, and so many pictures exactly drawn in miniature.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

It is probable the weakness of memory in infants may be one chief cause of their being so long before they come to the use of speech, as well as the want of dexterity in using the organs of it.

LECTURE X.

AXIOM VI.

We get our ideas of SUCCESSION, by observing the train of ideas passing through our minds one after another. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xiv. § 4.

PROPOSITION IX.

The swiftness and slowness of the succession of ideas in the human mind have certain limits.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Some motions are so swift, and others so slow, that they cannot be seen.

2. Motion is always successive.

3. Could our ideas succeed each other as fast as the bodies move in one case, and as slow as they move in the other, the motion would become visible.

1, 3. 4. The swiftness and slowness of ideas coming in by sight, have their limits.

5. There is equal reason to believe it with regard to other ideas; as some of the like phenomena may be observed concerning some ideas that come in by hearing.

6. We are not able to retain one idea long in the mind without any variation; nor can we call up any given number of ideas in any given time; *v. g.* we cannot think over ten verses between one vibration of the pendulum and another.

Gr. 4, 5, and 6. 7. *Valet propositio.*

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xiv. § 6—14.

SCHOLIUM.

It is evident that there are various degrees of velocity in the ideas of different persons, and of the same person at different times; partly according to the temper in which he is, and partly according to the degree in which he exercises his volitions; and where the velocity is the same, it will seem

* That memory is an original faculty, given us by the Author of our being, of which we can give no account, but that we are so made, is maintained by Dr. Reid, in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, p. 303—310. For an account of the different theories concerning Memory, see the same author, p. 338—356.

greater in proportion as the kinds of ideas are more various. *Watts's Ess.* No. xii. § 2

AXIOM VII

The idea of DURATION is a simple idea, which we get by reflecting on the succession of our ideas.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 1—3

COROLLARY.

When we are insensible of the succession of our ideas, we are also insensible of duration.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 4, 5.

DEFINITION XVII

TIME is a part of duration, measured by some supposed equal succession,—a certain number of which makes a *period* or *epoche*.

Locke, ib. § 17. *August. Confess.* lib. ii. c. xiv. *apud Jackson's Works*, vol. i. p. 883.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The revolutions of the heavenly bodies serve for a convenient measure of time, seeing they are long, various, publicly visible, and nearly equable; yet any phenomena, returning periodically and regularly, (*e. g.* the freezing of water, the blowing of flowers, a fit of the ague, &c.) might, with regard to any particular person, answer the same end.

Locke, ib. § 19, 20.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Nevertheless, in the absence of such assistance, the train of ideas passing through a man's mind may be to himself the measure of time; though neither this nor any other measure can be demonstrated entirely equable. *Locke's Ess. ib.* § 21.

SCHOLIUM 3.

When the duration of any being is said to be either long or short, it is only as compared with that of other beings.

Free-thinker, vol. iii. No. 114. *Le Clerc's Logic*, part i. c. iv. § 6.

COROLLARY 1.

The same part of duration may appear of different lengths to different persons, and to the same persons at different times. See *Prop.* 7. *Schol.*

Spectator, vol. ii. No. 94.

COROLLARY 2.

Hence we may learn the reason why years (*cæteris paribus*) appear longer to us while very young, than as we grow up to riper age; because the objects being newer, strike the mind more forcibly, and so the succession is more observed than when they grow more familiar to the mind. The like may be observed of the day we spend in a strange place, or a road we are not used to travel; vet if, by frequent repetition, a thing is grown tedious to us, it appears of a longer duration, because we mingle many other ideas with it; and therefore, on the whole, there is a greater succession.

COROLLARY 3.

If an Almighty Power be supposed, it may make that part of duration which appears but a moment to one, appear a thousand years to another, or a much greater period, and *vice versa*; which is indeed an amazing thought.

COROLLARY 4.

Time is not (as it has often been said to be) the measure of motion; but motion is one, though not the only, measure of time; for if there were no material world, and so no motion, there might still be time, if there were any intellectual beings whose ideas succeed each other. See *Schol.* 1.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 22, 24. *Jackson's Works*, vol. i. lib. v. c. xiii. § 2. p. 881, 882. *Reid's Intellectual Powers of Man*, p. 310—314, 322—331.

LECTURE XI.

DEFINITION XVIII

Those Properties or Qualities of bodies are called PRIMARY, which are in them whether we perceive them or not, (*e. g.* bulk, number, figure, situation of their solid parts, motion, rest, &c.) but those ideas which, by means of these primary qualities, are excited in our minds, as colours, sounds, smells, tastes, &c. (being vulgarly but falsely supposed to be in bodies,) are called *Secondary Qualities*.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. viii. § 8—22. *Watts's Ess.* No. iii. p. 81—85.

SCHOLIUM.

Mr. Locke further divides secondary qualities into those that are *immediately* perceivable, *i. e.* by the ideas which the bodies themselves produce in us; and those that are *mediately* perceivable, *i. e.* by the changes which we see them produce in other bodies. *Locke's Ess.* ib. § 25—26.*

PROPOSITION X.

To enumerate several instances and causes of the imperfection of human knowledge.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION

1. We are ignorant of many things for want of ideas; perhaps, wanting proper organs for such kind of ideas, and certainly wanting such an acuteness of those organs which we have, as would be necessary to discover many things which are now concealed from us by their distance or minuteness. This occasions great imperfections in our knowledge both of body and spirit.

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. iii. § 23—27.

2. We are not able to discern the connexion between many of those ideas which we have, parti-

* See this whole matter amply discussed by Dr. Reid, in his Intellectual Powers of Man, § [illegible]—22

cularly that between the primary and secondary qualities of bodies, which is a great impediment to physical inquiries.

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. iii. § 9—17. *Ib.* c. vi. § 11—15. *Watts's Ess.* No. iii. § 9.

3. Few important propositions are intuitively known; and all demonstrative knowledge depends upon the memory,—which, being fallible, brings some degree of uncertainty on what we learn by it.

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. ii. § 4—7; *ib.* c. iii. § 3; c. xi. § 9—11.

4. We are often obliged to judge by analogy, the particulars of which are generally very imperfect, and come vastly short of a complete induction.

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. xii. § 9; c. xvi. § 12.

5. The various avocations of life, an indolent temper, and wrong methods of pursuing knowledge, hinder our attaining what might otherwise come within our reach. *Ibid.* lib. iv. c. iii. § 30.

COROLLARY.

Since our knowledge is so limited, it must be of great use and importance to know the limits of it.

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. i. § 4—6. *Mason on Self-Knowledge*, p. 62. *Butler's Serm.* No. xv.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Nevertheless, we are not destitute of capacities and opportunities for coming to the knowledge of those things on which our happiness most evidently depends.

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. i. § 5; *ib.* lib. iv. c. xi. § 8. *Jonval's Lett. in Nat. displayed*, vol. i. p. 277—290.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The question, Whether there be any material world or not? will come in with greater advantage hereafter; yet were the negative to be granted, (which Bishop Berkley maintains,) the same difficulties with those above mentioned would occur, with a little alteration of phrase.

LECTURE XII.

PROPOSITION XI.

To inquire wherein PERSONAL IDENTITY consists.

SOLUTION.

1. Mr. Locke supposes it consists in a *continued consciousness of the same actions*; and thence infers, that, if the consciousness of one spirit were to be transferred to another, they would both make but one person; and that, if any spirit should lose all consciousness of its former actions, it would from that time become a different person. To confirm this, he pleads that, when it is evidently apparent that consciousness is lost, *i. e.* in case of phrenzy, when a man is beside himself, the sober man is not punished for the actions of the madman, nor the madman for the actions of the sober man: but I think this may be accounted for another way, without supposing that the law looks upon them as different persons.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxvii. § 9—27.

2. To this Dr. Watts very justly objects, that fancied memory might make two men, born in the most distant places and times, the same person; or real forgetfulness might make the same man different persons; *v. g.* Lee, the tragedian, when distracted, might be successively Alexander, Socrates, Tully, Virgil, Luther, Queen Elizabeth; and therefore Lee, when distracted, might justly be rewarded or punished for all the different actions which he ascribes to himself; and finally, several men might become the same person. This he thinks is contrary to the common forms of speech, and to true philosophy.

Watts's Ess. No. xii. § 7. p. 294—308.

3. He therefore concludes, That *the same person*, in an incomplete sense, is *the same intelligent substance or conscious mind*; but in a more complete sense, is *the same soul united to the same body*; or, in other words, that, while a spirit is united to a body, the same continued animal life, in union with the same spirit, generally attended with the same consciousness, goes to constitute the same person. If the question be started relating to a supposed resurrection, it is answered, That if the resurrection precedes the dissolution of the body, it does not alter the common forms of speaking; but if the body be dissolved, we may refer it to an after-inquiry how far and in what cases it may be said to be the same. Mr. Locke also acknowledges this to be most probable; so that the chief question between them is only about the application of the word *person* in a case that is never likely to happen, *i. e.* of transferred consciousness: yet, for this very reason, I think Dr. Watts's notion is to be preferred; and, to conclude, if God should utterly destroy the soul and body of any man whom we know, and afterwards create a new spirit, united to a new body, and in form resembling the other, and give to it the exact consciousness of the man whose body and soul was destroyed, and should reveal to us what he had done, we could not converse with this new produced man as the same man we formerly knew, or approve that as an equitable conduct, by which he should be rewarded or punished for the actions of the annihilated man. This abundantly shows the impropriety of Mr. Locke's manner of stating the question, and how much Dr. Watts's is to be preferred to it.

Watts's Ess. ib. p. 301—306, 308—313. *Locke's Ess. ib.* § 25. *Le Clerc's Ontology*, c. ii. § 7. *Butler's Analogy, diss.* i. p. 130—150. 8vo edit.: p. 305—309, 4to edit. of 1736.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Mr. Locke seems to have been led into this mistake, by considering what we commonly call *ourselves*, rather than what we call *the same person*, when speaking of *another*; (*Vide* Locke *ubi supra*, § 16;) yet it is plain we do not make consciousness the *only* rule even here, since no one is conscious of his having been born, nor of many other events and actions of his life, which nevertheless, upon the evidence of reason and testimony, without consciousness, he would not at all scruple to apply to himself.

SCHOLIUM 2.

If we have two ideas of *body*, in all respects the same, for instance, of a book or watch, we judge that they have the same archetype, if each of the ideas have the same relation to certain times and places; for we know that two bodies cannot be at the same time in the same place. As for the question, Whether two *spirits* may or not?—it depends upon the doctrine of the immateriality; and it is proper to defer the examination of it till we have proved that there is some immaterial spirit.

Essay on Personal Identity, published for Robson, 1769. *Defence of Mr. Locke's Opinion concerning Personal Identity, printed at Cambridge, and sold by Johnson*, 1769. *Reid's Intellectual Powers of Man*, p. 315—321. 332—337.

LECTURE XIII.

PROPOSITION XII

To inquire, Whether men think always without intermission?

COMPARISON OF ARGUMENTS.

SECT. I. FOR THE AFFIRMATIVE.

If there be a time when the soul does not think, the existence of it as a spirit is destroyed; and we can imagine nothing to remain unless it be something merely material. Now there is no apparent reason to think the soul thus exists by intervals; and, therefore, we must conclude it always thinks.

To this it is replied, That such a definition of the soul as implies continual actual thought, is begging the question in dispute. When *actual thought* is suspended, there may remain some secret *power of thinking*, resulting from the constitution of the soul, which will exert itself when the obstruction is removed. As a bow when bent has a disposition to straighten itself again, or a clock to strike, though the hammer be held back.

To this it is answered, We can have no idea of this power. If the power of thinking be not the very substance of the soul, there must be some unknown substance in which the power inheres; nor can we imagine how it awakes itself again to actual thought.

It is further objected, That the various degrees of intenseness of thought, which we all perceive, seem to prove that thought is not the essence of the soul; for then it must be uniform and constant.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xix.

But it may be replied, That the least degree of thought is thought, as the finest particle of matter is matter. On the whole, it must be granted, that, if it be hereafter proved, without this proposition, that the human soul is immaterial, there will be some considerable weight in the argument; if the contrary be proved, there will be very little.

Watts's Ess. No. v. § 1. p. 116—118. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. i. § 10—19. *Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, p. 335—340.

SECT. II. FOR THE NEGATIVE.

Arg. 1. If we think in our sleep, we think in vain; and it is not to be thought we are so constituted as that this should be necessary.

Answer. If all our forgotten thoughts are in vain, many of our waking thoughts are so; for how few can we perfectly recollect! We may as well argue against our existing at all without thought, as a useless thing. Besides, there is perhaps in sleep some continued sense of pleasure, which the wise Author of Nature might connect with so necessary a support of life as sleep is. To which we may further add, That the uninterrupted thought of every rational spirit, whether remembered or forgotten, may make a part of a scheme, in the general right and useful, though the advantage of it in some particular instances may not appear. As we may suppose with respect to those minerals or metals in the bowels of the earth, which are never in fact discovered.

Locke, ib. § 15. *Watts's Ess. ib.* § 3. p. 127, 128.

Arg. 2. Infants, who have but few ideas, sleep much; probably before, and to be sure after, their birth; but is it to be imagined they are all that while necessarily employed in thinking?

Ans. It is allowed they have few or no ideas by *reflection*; (for the thought of a learned Scottish anatomist, who pretends they are then forming the heart and lungs for their respective offices, seems too extravagant to be particularly examined;) but ideas of *sensation* they have early,—perhaps some strong sensations of the mother communicated to them before the birth; but when the soul is first united we know not.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 17, 21, 22. *Watts's Ess. ib.* p. 129—131.

Arg. 3. As we fall asleep we seem gradually to approach to a state of insensibility; it is therefore probable that at length we arrive at it.

Ans. If by insensibility be meant incogitation,

the phenomenon is denied. The same kind of argument may prove, that matter might be annihilated by continual division.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xix. § 3, 4.

Arg. 4. We do not remember that we think in many of our sleeping hours, therefore how can we know that we do?

Ans. Dreams may be entirely, or but imperfectly, or not at all, remembered, according to the various degrees in which the nerves are impressed by the motion given to the animal spirits in sleep. Besides, daily experience shows us, that occurrences of the day bring to mind dreams, which, in the morning, we had forgotten; and we have often a general remembrance that we have dreamed, though we know not of what; to which it may be added, That people sometimes, in their sleep, discover marks of great emotion, when, if asked in the morning what it was that disquieted them, they do not perhaps know; so that though it would be very ridiculous to argue, from universal experience, that we always think in our sleeping hours, this will be an unanswerable objection against any other argument; nor can it possibly prove that we ever cease from thinking, any more than breathing, which we also forget; or than forgetting the circumstances of our birth will prove we were never born.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. i. § 13, 14, 18. *Watts's Ess. ib.* § 2. p. 120—125.

Arg. 5. It might be expected that those operations of the soul should be most rational, in which it is most abstracted from the body; whereas, by what we remember of our dreams, we perceive the contrary.

Ans. It may be a law of the creation, that, during our union with the body, a certain disposition of the nerves, generally wanting in sleep, should be necessary to rational and connected thought; and that such a wild play of the animal spirits as arises from the obstruction of the nerves should cause roving imaginations, which therefore, by the way, it is no dishonour or detriment to forget.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 16. *Watts's Ess. ib.* § 3. p. 126, 127.

Arg. 6. If a man thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking man are two different persons.

Ans. If by *knowing* it be meant *remembering* it, (which it must mean if it be at all to the purpose,) they cannot be different persons, according to Mr. Locke's principles of identity, unless every instance of forgetfulness makes a man a new and different person; and then how many thousands and millions is every man! This objection would suppose two distinct incommunicable consciousnesses acting in the same body by intervals, as in sleeping and waking; which none ever maintained.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 12. c. xxvii. § 23. *Watts's Ess. ib.* p. 125, 126.

Arg. 7. If the soul always thinks, there must be some innate ideas, contrary to *Prop.* 5.

Ans. There must be some one idea at least or perception; but that it is this rather than that, does not arise from the original constitution of the soul, but from the circumstances in which the body to which it is united is placed; (thus it might have been the idea of *colour* as well as *heat*;) so that supposing the soul at the first moment of its union with the body to have the idea of *heat*, this would not prove heat to be an innate idea.—*Def.* 16.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 17, 20, 21. See on this subject, *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 330—346, and note *(a)* octavo edit.

SCHOLIUM.

It may not be amiss here to mention the argument which Mr. Baxter has drawn from the phenomena of dreams, to prove the existence of some immaterial spirits by which they are suggested; though the particular manner, in which that strange and seemingly inconclusive argument is managed, cannot here be largely represented, and need not be particularly confuted.

Baxter on the Soul, c. x. *passim.* oct. ed. vol. ii. § 1.

LECTURE XIV.

PROPOSITION XIII.

To take a more particular survey of the PASSIONS of the human mind, according to Dr. Watts's distribution of them. See *Prop.* 1. *Sol. gr.* 3.

SOLUTION.

An object may be considered as *rare* and uncommon, as *good* or *evil* in the *general*, or with respect to the various *kinds* of good or evil, and the particular *circumstances* that attend it.

1. If an object be in the general considered as *rare*, it excites *admiration*; sudden wonder is *surprise*; great wonder is *astonishment*. This passion has no opposite. If an object appear *good* in the general, it excites *love*; if *evil*, *hatred*.

These are primary passions; and those under the next head are derived from the two last of these.

2. As to the various *kinds* of good and evil; considering an object merely and absolutely as valuable, it excites *esteem*, which, in a very high degree, is *veneration*, and, in a supreme degree, is *adoration*. If it be considered as worthless, it excites *contempt*, especially if it be proposed as excellent. If it be considered as fit to receive good from us, it is the object of *benevolence* or good-will; if fit to receive evil, of *malevolence* or ill-will: but it is to be observed, that this passion centres only on sensible objects, *i. e.* on objects capable of per-

ception. If the object be considered as fit to do me good, or afford me any present pleasure, it produces *complacency*; if the contrary, *displacency*. Complacency in any very high degree towards an inferior, or on considerations not adequate to that degree of regard, is *fondness*; the opposite to which is *disgust* or loathing.

There may be benevolence where there is no complacency; but a high degree of complacency without benevolence is hardly conceivable.

3. As to the various *circumstances* in which the good or evil object is considered, it may be either *present* or *absent*.

(1.) Future good considered as possible excites *desire*, which is the great spring of action; if evil be considered as possible, it excites *aversion*.

(2.) If there be a probable prospect of obtaining absent good, it excites *hope*; if evil be likely to come upon us, it produces *fear*. The highest degree of hope is *confidence* or security; when little remains, there is *despondency*; and when hope is entirely banished, *despair* succeeds. Fear, joined with foresight, is *anxiety*; with careful contrivance to avoid it, is *solicitude*; mingled with surprise, and rising to a violent degree on a sudden, is *terror*; and a high degree of aversion attending the idea of any object we apprehend or reflect on, is *horror*.

(3.) Good obtained awakens *joy*; evil actually endured brings *sorrow*. Moderate joy is *gladness*; sudden and high joy is *exultation*; habitual joy is *cheerfulness*. Moderate sorrow is *trouble*; great sorrow is *distress* and anguish; habitual sorrow is *melancholy*. *Congratulation* is the sentiment and expression of joy arising from the happiness of another. *Pity* and compassion is sorrow arising from the distress of another. *Sympathy* comprehends both; *envy* is the contrary of both. *Jealousy* is a species of envy, arising from an apprehension of preference given to another person in the affections of one for whom we have a peculiar regard. *Shame* may be reckoned as a species of sorrow, attended frequently with blushing, arising from a consciousness, imputation, or apprehension of any thing that appears to be matter of disgrace in ourselves, or others we are concerned for, *i. e.* when likely to expose us or them to the contempt of others.

(4.) When any intelligent being designedly brings good upon us it excites *gratitude*; when evil, *anger*. With respect to our fellow creatures, gratitude is a mixture of complacency and benevolence; anger is displacency, with some degree of malevolence. When anger rises to an excessive degree, it is *rage* and fury; when it is deeply rooted, it is *rancour* and spite; when arising on trifling occasions, and expressed in little tokens of resentment, it is *peevishness*.

When an affront is apprehended, beneath us or any other person to whom it is offered, it excites *indignation*; and when anger is attended with a desire of hurting another, it is called *malice*; and when this is in consequence of an apprehended injury, *revenge*.

Watts on the Passions, § 2. p. 4—9. ed. 2. *Fordyce's Mor. Philos.* b. i. § 2—4. *Pope's Essay Epist.* ii. ver. 93—204. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xx. *Hutcheson's Treatise on the Passions. Le Brun Of the Characters of the Passions.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Descartes divides the primary passions into six, viz. Admiration, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, and Sorrow; and though this is by no means an accurate distribution, yet his description of the passions contains many excellent passages.

Descartes de Pass. part ii. § 69. p. 81.

SCHOLIUM 2.

As pain is useful for preserving the animal body from those injuries which might prove fatal to it, so many of the passions, which are disagreeable in their present operations, are useful and even necessary, both to individuals and societies.

Watts on the Pass. p. 85—88. *Butler's Serm.* No. viii. p. 150—154. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. vii. § 4. *Foster's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 122—125, and 128.

LECTURE XV.

PROPOSITION XV.

To inquire into the original of our passions.

SOLUTION.

1. They may either arise from the motion of the body, impressions on the sense, or operations of the mind by which ideas are produced; as the sight of beauty, hearing of music, or understanding a proposition.

2. From ideas recollected by the memory which may be accompanied with some degree of pleasure or pain, which they at first gave. *Prop.* 8. *gr.* 7.

3. From the exercise of reason, which apprehends a probability of approaching good or evil.

Descartes de Pass. part ii. § 51. *Watts on the Pass.* § 3. p. 10—17.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The second and third source arise from the first; since there could have been no memory nor reasoning, without ideas presented to the mind as the ground work of its operations.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some think the passions may be raised by means

of the body, when no particular idea is presented to any one of the senses; that is, only from the temperature of the body; *v. g.* when we find ourselves cheerful or sad, and cannot assign any reason for it; which, if it be admitted, may, in the judgment of some, make it dubious whether the first idea in the human mind be (as Mr. Locke maintains) an idea of sensation: but it may perhaps be answered, We have a sense of the temperature of the body; and that we are seldom, in our waking hours, destitute of some sensible impressions, which are at different times painful or pleasant, in different degrees, according as our organs are disposed.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. i. § 23, 24.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The passions cannot be immediately excited or suppressed by our volitions, but consequentially they may; especially those arising from the third spring, by which some arising from the two former may be balanced. *Descartes de Pass.* § 45—47.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is queried, Why objects are often found to affect the passions less when they are grown familiar than they did before? To this may be answered, That admiration, in a great measure, proceeds from the novelty of objects. Perhaps, in other instances, it may be owing to some unknown connexion between making the *first* impression on the brain and the excitation of the passions; yet it is observable, that the degree in which we are impressed, is by no means proportionable to the novelty of objects alone; it depends much more upon the temperature of the body, and a variety of other particulars.

AXIOM VIII.

We find by experience, that our minds are so constituted, that some degree of passion or desire is necessary to action; so that an entire suspension of them would be attended with a stagnation of all our faculties.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. vii. § 3. *Descartes de Pass.* § 40. *Spectator*, vol. iv. No. 255.

COROLLARY.

It must be of the greatest importance, in order to influence men to a due course of action, to know how to awaken or moderate their passions by proper application to them; and those who act as if they desired entirely to eradicate the passions, are ignorant of the constitution of human nature, and can expect but little success in their attempts to work upon the mind.

Doddridge's Dedication of Ten Serm. p. 10.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Mr. Locke maintains that *desire* is always a state of uneasiness; but it is certain that, in many cases, the uneasiness is abundantly overbalanced by a probable prospect of the immediate enjoyment of good; and if some degree of uneasiness be universally necessary to action, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to conceive how any active being can be perfectly happy.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxi. § 32—34. *Watts on Liberty*, p. 23—25. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. iv. p. 136, 137. *Watts's Essay on the Freedom of Will in God and his Creatures*, octavo; or his works, vol. vi. p. 382, 383.

SCHOLIUM 2.

We cannot mistake in judging of present pleasure or pain, as the incentives of desire or aversion; but in judging of future we often do.

Locke's Ess. ib. § 61—65.

LECTURE XVI.

DEFINITION XIX.

When a being is determined to the performance of any action, not by a view of the beneficial consequences that may attend it, but merely from a strong impulse leading to the action itself, that being is said to act by INSTINCT.

COROLLARY 1.

There are many remarkable instincts in mankind, which greatly tend both to the good of individuals and the species. Those which are called *Natural Appetites*, plainly come under this class; to which may be added *parental affection*, and some workings of compassion and gratitude; though it must be granted the force of all these is very different in different persons.

Baxter's Pract. Works, vol. i. p. 379. col. 2. *Andrey apud Mem. of Literat.* vol. i. p. 15. *Hutcheson's Inq.* p. 143—147, 195—199.

COROLLARY 2.

Brutes are governed by instinct in many of their actions, as was observed above, in *Prop.* 2. *gr.* 6. The reason upon which many of their actions depend, could not be discovered without a penetration far beyond what is to be found in the generality of men. See particular instances of this in the bee (*a*), in the ant (*b*), in the wasp (*c*), in the raven (*d*), in the *formica leo* (*e*), in the *gallinæ sylvestres* (*f*), in the *bohaques* (*g*), in the fox (*h*), in the beaver (*i*), in the Turkey-hen (*k*), in the common hen (*l*), besides many others (*m*).

(*a*) *Ray's Wisdom of God*, p. 132, 133. 2d edit. p. 122—124. *Nat. Disp* vol. i. p. 168—178, 182—184, 194—202. *the Guardian*, vol. ii. No. 156, 157. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* xi. 30.

(*b*) *Nat. Displ.* part i. p. 126—148.

(*d*) *Albert. Magnus, apud Grad. Harm.* part ii. p. 67, *note in the margin.*

(*e*) *Nat. Displ.* part i. p. 234—240.

(*f*) *Derham's Phys. Theol.* p. 229.

(*g*) *Derham, ib.* p. 242. (*h*) *Derham, ib.* p. 204.

(*i*) *Nat. Displ.* part II. p. 105—114.

(*k*) *Nat. Displ. ib.* p. 20, 21.

(*l*) *Spect.* vol. II. No. 120.

(*m*) *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. ii. § 48—50. *Cambray sur l'Exist.* § 23. p. 46, 47. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. ii. p. 211—220. *Essay on Hunting*, p. 53, 54. *Pope's Ethic Epist.* iii. ver. 172—198.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

That instinct is not mere imitation, see proved by a remarkable story in

Galen, apud Ray's Wisd. of God, p. 349–353, 2d edit. p. 133—135.

It is probable that, in most instances, if not in all, the actions to which any being is determined by instinct, are accompanied with immediate pleasure.

LECTURE XVII.

DEFINITION XX.

A MENTAL HABIT is a facility of thinking or willing any action acquired by frequent acts.

PROPOSITION XV.

Mental habits do very much depend upon the memory.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Memory, furnishing us with ideas and relations, makes it easy for us to think upon any subject.

2. Furnishing us with motives, it makes it easy to will it.

3. When memory ceases, we see that mental habits are destroyed.

1, 2, and 3. 4. *Valet propositio. Def.* 20. *Clericî Pneum.* sect. i. c. iv. § 18—22.

COROLLARY 1.

Mental habits must very much depend on the body, since memory plainly does so. *Prop.* 8. *Sol. gr.* 4.

COROLLARY 2.

The facility with which the body obeys the command of the mind, is a thing different from mental habit, yet it may have some affinity to it, as bodily motion depends upon volition.

COROLLARY 3.

No habits can in strict propriety of speech be said to be *infused*; since it is impossible the first act of any kind should be the effect of habit, according to the definition; yet a disposition may be given to perform acts at first with as much readiness as if they had been learnt by long practice. Neither can any habit be properly said to be *hereditary*, yet there may be, and it is plain in fact that there are, certain hereditary dispositions towards contracting habits of one kind rather than another.

SCHOLIUM 1.

On these principles some account for the phenomenon which has frequently been observed, that a great degree of wit and judgment seldom meet in the same person; because wit is a habit of finding out the resemblance of ideas, and making an agreeable assemblage of them; whereas judgment is the habit of distinguishing accurately between those that have some resemblance, though they really differ. It is not to be wondered at, if two such different habits do not ordinarily occur in the same mind. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged highly probable, that habit is not the only thing that makes the difference between various persons in this respect, though it may serve very much to increase it.† See *Prop.* 3. *Schol.* 1.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xi. sect. 2.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Idiots reason very little, and make few propositions; whereas the madman reasons very much, and often justly, but upon very precarious and false principles. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xi. sect. 12, 13.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The force of habit, both mental and corporeal, is so great, that it is an evident part of wisdom to take care how habits are formed; and it is worth our while to use great labour to turn and fix them on the right side.

Tillotson's Serm. vol. i. No. 29 p. 301—304. *Dodsl. Precept.* vol. ii. p. 519—530.

DEFINITION XXI.

Those properties of any being are called PERFECTIONS, which directly tend to promote its happiness.

COROLLARY.

Only spirits are capable of perfection, since a capacity for happiness implies perfection, *i. e.* thought.

SCHOLIUM.

Nevertheless, in an inferior sense, or by analogy, insensible beings may be called perfect, *i. e.* as they are fitted to answer the purposes intended by them. *Watts's Ontol.* c. viii. p. 333—335.

* Great light has been thrown upon the properties and instincts of animals by many recent writers. See particularly Bulfon's Natural History, Pennant's Arctic Zoology and George Edwards's Works, to which several other productions might be added. Many of the Voyages and Travels that have lately been published are worthy of being particularly studied in this view. The information given by Captain Cook, and the other circumnavigators of the globe, must not be forgotten.

† For the different accounts which have been given of Wit, reference may be had to the Spectator, vol. i. No. 62. vol. ii. No. 253. Mr. Harris's Dialogues on Happiness, vol. ii. p. 170. Kames's Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. chap. xvi. p. 98—81.

LECTURE XVIII.

DEFINITION XXII.

That mind is said to be possessed of NATURAL LIBERTY, or liberty of choice, which is so constituted as that its volitions shall not be invincibly determined by any foreign cause or consideration whatever offered to it, but by its own sovereign pleasure.

COROLLARY 1.

If any instance occurs in which the mind can choose no otherwise than it does, it is not in that instance naturally free; though it chooses with the greatest delight, and executes its volitions without any restraint.

Watts on Liberty, p. 8, 9. *Collins on Liberty*, part ii. ed. 2. *Limborch's Theology*, lib. ii. c. xxiii. sect. 20.

COROLLARY 2.

Natural liberty, as before defined, includes what some have called *a liberty of contrariety*, as well as of *contradiction*; *i. e.* supposes the mind able to choose the contrary, as well as to defer its choice, if indeed these two expressions do not signify in fact the same thing, which in some connexions at least they may. *Hutcheson's Metaph.* p. 22.

DEFINITION XXIII.

EXTERNAL LIBERTY, or liberty of action, is opposed to a constraint laid on the executive powers; and consists in a power of rendering our volitions effectual.

COROLLARY.

There may be external where there is not natural liberty,—and *vice versa*. *Watts on Lib.* p. 4, 5.

SCHOLIUM.

The liberty of which Mr. Locke generally treats, is a liberty of action, not of choice; and that Collins expressly allows.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxi. § 7—13, 21—30, 71. *Collins on Lib.* p. 115—118.

DEFINITION XXIV.

PHILOSOPHICAL LIBERTY consists in a prevailing disposition to act according to the dictates of reason; *i. e.* in such a manner as shall, all things considered, most effectually promote our happiness. A disposition to act contrary to this is MENTAL SERVITUDE: and when the mind is equally disposed to follow reason, or act contrary to it, it is then said to be in a state of INDIFFERENCE.

Tillots. Serm. vol. ii. p. 617, 618. *Pers. Sat.* v. ver. 124—191. *Clarke's Serm.* vol. iii. No. 1. p. 5—13. ed. 12mo.

COROLLARY.

Philosophical liberty is a perfection of the mind, (see *Def.* 21.) since much of our happiness depends on our conduct; and by acting according to reason, much good may be obtained, and much evil avoided.

DEFINITION XXV.

A man is said to be MORALLY FREE, when there is no interposition of the will of a Superior Being, to prohibit or determine his actions in any particular under consideration. *Watts on Liberty*, p. 4.

COROLLARY.

As the same man may be subject to the control of various superiors, one of whom may allow what another prohibits, he may, as to the same action, be said to be or not to be morally free, according to the persons whose will is in question. Nevertheless, where there is one who has a much greater power and authority over him than any of the rest, it is proper to judge of his moral freedom by considering the will of such a superior person.

DEFINITION XXVI.

Complete liberty consists in the union of natural, external, moral, and philosophical liberty, without any struggle or difficulty.

Watts on Lib. p. 9—12. *Collliber's Inq.* p. 47—59. edit. 3.

COROLLARY 1.

Complete liberty, on the whole, is a perfection. See *Def.* 24. *Cor.*

COROLLARY 2.

Complete liberty seems to consist in a certain symmetry or subordination of the faculties; and, when applied to such beings as ourselves, supposes a serene understanding, moderate passions rising in proportion to the nature of objects, the will choosing to follow such regular impressions, and the executive powers readily and vigorously performing its dictates.

COROLLARY 3.

When we speak of complete liberty, it is not so proper to inquire whether the *will* be free, but rather whether the *man* be so. (See *Prop.* 1. *Schol.* 1.) Yet natural liberty evidently belongs to the *will*. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxi. § 14—19. *Watts's Ess.* No. xii. § 5.

SCHOLIUM.

What some call a *liberty of spontaneity*, consists merely in *choosing* to perform any particular action: nor does it at all enter into the question, whether we can choose or perform the contrary, but since this is nothing more than *willing*, it does not deserve the name of liberty.

For the Cartesian notion of it, see

Descartes Princ. i. § 37—39. *Watts on Lib.* p. 6.

LECTURE XIX.

PROPOSITION XVI.

The mind of man is possessed of natural liberty, *i. e.* liberty of choice.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. We are conscious to ourselves, that we have a power of choosing otherwise than we do, in a multitude of instances.

2. We universally agree that some actions deserve praise and others blame; and we sometimes condemn ourselves as conscious of the latter; for which there could be no foundation at all, if we were invincibly determined in every volition, and had it to say, we had done the best we possibly could.

3. The laws of all nations agree to punish some actions in a man who is master of his reason; for which they would not punish one whom they knew to be distracted.

4. When equal objects are proposed to our choice, we sometimes determine to choose one of them rather than another, without being able to assign any reason for such a preference.

1, 2, 3, 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Grove of Hum. Lib. § 13—16. *Watts on Liberty*, § 3. p. 28—39. *Religion of Nature*, p. 63, 64. edit. 4to. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 85—89.

COROLLARY.

The will is not determined (as some have asserted) by the last dictate, or rather assent, of the understanding, nor the greatest apparent good, nor a prevailing uneasiness; which last seems to coincide with the former.

Watts on Lib. p. 17—23, 25—27. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxi. § 35, 36. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 97—100. *Clarke and Leibnitz*, p. 403—415.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, that we are formed with a necessary desire of happiness, and consequently cannot choose any thing but what in present circumstances appears most conducive to it; and experience is appealed to as confirming the assertion, since we are always in fact most inclined to what we choose.

Answer. This must be acknowledged a considerable difficulty.

It is granted that what we choose must have some appearance of good; but the mind appears in fact, as well as from the reasoning in the proposition, to have a power of preferring a smaller present to a greater absent and future good, though at the same time it condemns itself of folly in such a choice; which it could never do if what it chose always appeared to be the greatest good, since then in every choice it would act according to the necessary impulse and constitution of its nature; and though we allow that there is always a greater inclination to what we choose than what we refuse, yet till this inclination be proved invincible, the proposition may hold good.

Turretine, vol. i. *Loc.* x. *Qu.* ii. § 7, 15, 16. *Collins on Lib.* p. 40—44. *Burnet on the Art.* p. 117, 118. *Watts on Lib.* p. 70—74. *Grove on Lib.* § 18, 19. *Grove's Mor. Philos.* vol. i. p. 205—214. *Maclaurin's Newtonian Philos.* p. 81—84. *Clarke and Leibnitz, Append.* No. 3. *Cato's Letters*, vol. iv. No. 3.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To the argument from self-accusation Collins replies, That it is only the sense of having acted against some rules, which on reflection we apprehend it would have been better for us to have followed, though it did not appear so when we did the action; but how then could conscience condemn us, not only in our after-reflections, but in the act itself? or how could we condemn ourselves for having done foolishly in choosing what did appear to us the greatest good, and could not but so appear?

Collins ib. p. 105, 106. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. iv. p. 93—148. *præs.* § 3—7, and § 21.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is objected to the argument, *gr.* 3. that punishments are often inflicted where it is granted there is no liberty at all,—as on lunatics, drunkards, and brutes.

Ans. It may be debated how far it is proper to call the severities used with them in some cases punishments, or how far they may be destitute of all natural liberty; but as for Collins's argument, That were man a free creature, rewards and punishments would signify nothing, because it would lie in his own breast to slight them,—it is most evidently weak; for nevertheless they would be a probable means of answering their end; and that they are not always effectual is evident in fact.

Collins ib. p. 86—88, 91—98.

LECTURE XX.

SCHOLIUM 4.

To the fourth argument (which is generally called *choice, ἐν ἀδιαφορᾳ*) it is answered by the opposers of natural liberty, That no such case can occur that two objects should appear entirely equal: and if there did, then a choice would be impossible; for that would imply an effect without a cause, or a balance turning when the weights are equal; but this is evidently taking the question for granted;

for it will not be allowed that *willing* is a necessary effect, which must imply a compelling efficient cause; or the mind like a balance to be moved with weights; and as to the fact in question, a cause which we *cannot assign* is to us *no* cause, and yet in many such cases we determine.

Collins ib. p. 44—52, 57—59. *Watts on Lib.* p. 68—70. *Clarke and Leibnitz*, p. 38. § 1. p. 93—95, 121—123, 169, 173—177, 291. *Append.* No. iv. ix. p. 165. § 14, 15. p. 281—287. *Cicero de Fato*, § 24, 25. *Jackson on Liberty*, p. 193—196.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is further pleaded that such a liberty would be an imperfection to the human soul; because it would suppose in some instances to act without reason.

Ans. Our scheme of liberty supposes a power of choosing rationally in all instances; of seeing and preferring a greater good; and choosing of two objects equally good, one, where there is reason for taking *one*, though not for taking *this* rather than *that*; whereas to deny this is plainly to limit the mind in its power of choice and capacity for happiness in some instances;—yet, I think (though we allow that some particular pleasure may arise from the consciousness of having used this natural liberty aright, when it might have been abused) it must be granted, that a power of choosing worse rather than better is not necessary to the happiness of any being:—but is mankind in such a perfect state, that we are under a necessity of maintaining that it could not have been greater or happier than it is?

Collins ib. p. 62—83. *Watts ib.* p. 70—74. *Colliber's Inquiry*, p. 50, 51. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxi. § 48—52. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 119—121.

SCHOLIUM 6.

The sentiments of many considerable moderns may be seen in *Collins on Lib.* p. 14—31; and those of several ancients in

Collins ib. p. 59—62. *Jackson on Lib.* p. 82—91. 98—113. *Lucas's Inquiry*, vol. i. p. 163—185, 130—135. *Hutch. Metaph. Syn.* c. iv. p. 22, 23, compared with p. 57.

SCHOLIUM 7.

What Mr. Locke's notion of liberty on the whole was, is much debated. The truth of the matter seems to be, that he changes his idea of it; sometimes meaning external liberty, of which he generally speaks, (see *Def.* 23. *Schol.*) sometimes philosophical, (as in the place quoted above, lib. ii. c. xxi. § 49.) and sometimes he seems to recur to the notion of natural liberty again, especially when he says in so many words, that freedom consists in not being under a necessary determination of our will in any particular action (§ 51) and in a power of suspension (§ 52); by which last manner of stating it, he seems not to throw any light upon the question; since all the difficulty attending a possibility of determining to act one way or another, will attend a possibility of determining to act or not to act.

Locke's Fam. Epist. p. 474, &c. *præsert.* p. 480.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Those who believe the being and perfections of God, and a state of retribution, in which he will reward and punish mankind according to the diversity of their actions, will find it difficult to reconcile the justice of punishment with the necessity of crimes punished; and they that believe all that the Scripture says on the one hand of the eternity of future punishments, and on the other of God's compassion to sinners, and his solemn assurance that he desires not their death, will find the difficulty greatly increased; but as many of the words here used are not yet strictly defined, nor the evidence of the propositions stated, it may suffice briefly to have suggested the thought.

Cato's Letters, vol. iv. No. 110. *Jackson's Reply, passim. Hartley on Man*, vol. i. p. 500—511.*

LECTURE XXI.

PROPOSITION XVII.

The philosophical liberty of the mind is much impaired, and we are obnoxious to a lamentable degree of servitude. *Def.* 24.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The understanding is often so far influenced by the passions, as to be unwilling to enter on reasonings which may seem to lead to a conclusion contrary to our interest.

2. The passions and prejudices of our minds insensibly mingle themselves with the whole process of reasoning when it is undertaken, leading into many embarrassments and inconsistencies, obscuring truth and gilding error; so that frequently the judgment is formed upon a very unfair hearing, agreeably to the bias the mind is under, and con-

* Since the preceding Lectures were written, the question concerning Liberty and Necessity has again received a most copious and acute discussion. See Jonathan Edwards's Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will;—The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated, by Dr. Priestley;—A free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley;—Observations in Defence of the Liberty of Man, as a Moral Agent, by the Rev. John Palmer.—Dr. Priestley's Letter to Mr. Palmer, in Defence of his Illustrations;—Mr. Palmer's Appendix to his Observations;—Dr. Priestley's Second Letter to Mr. Palmer;—Mr. Jacob Bryant's Address to Dr. Priestley, upon his Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated;—Dr. Priestley's Letter to Mr. Bryant;—Dawes's Free Inquiry into the Merits of a Controversy between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley;—The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity briefly invalidated;—Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man, p. 267—368;—The Notes to the new edition of Hartley on Man;—Belsham's Essays, Philosophical, Historical, and Literary, vol. i. p. 1—15;—Essays, Philosophical and Literary, by Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh;—and Inquiry concerning Political Justice, vol. i. p. 283—317.

trary to the evidence that might have been obtained.

3. We often find it difficult to excite our passions at the command of reason, and to fix them on objects which appear to our understanding most worthy of regard: on the contrary, they are often excited by such objects as the understanding has been by irresistible evidence compelled to disapprove; and thereby we are led to commit actions which, while we do them, we condemn ourselves for.

4. Bodily constitution and appetite have sometimes almost a constraining power to hinder the execution of the wisest volitions. Yet it must be acknowledged, this impulse is not invincible; we may stop ourselves in the career, and enter upon a contrary course: so that, upon the whole, the way to happiness is rather difficult than impossible. See *Prop.* 15. *Schol.* 3. and *Prop.* 16.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxi. § 47, 56—59.

COROLLARY.

It is plain from these phenomena, of which experience may convince us too surely, that the symmetry of the soul, and subordination of its faculties, mentioned *Def.* 26. *Cor.* 2, in which complete liberty consists, is in a great measure violated in the human soul; but whether it were originally in the same state, cannot be determined till we have examined other previous propositions.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxi. § 53—55. *Seed's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 339—344.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is greatly debated, how far the will has in our present state any influence on the judgment, in assenting to any proposition in question. Some maintain that it cannot have any influence at all; but I think experience proves the contrary: and though there must be some show of argument to determine the judgment, yet it seems to be the consequence of that natural liberty, asserted *Prop.* 16. that the mind can divert itself from examining proofs which are likely to establish a disagreeable proposition; and by labouring to confirm and embellish arguments on the favourite side of the question, can bring itself to assent to what it wishes to find true, though vastly superior evidence on the contrary side were fairly within its reach. Yet it must be acknowledged, that this remark only takes place in propositions which have some certain limited degree of evidence, since there are some cases in which the truth will invincibly force itself upon the understanding, and no artifice can be sufficient to evade it.

Collins on Lib. p. 33—36. *Clarke's Pneumat.* lib. i. c. iii. § 14. *Watts on Lib.* p. 13—16. *Locke's Ess.* lib. iv. c. xx. § 6, 12—16. *Clarke and Leibn.* p. 103—115.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Many actions of brutes seem to discover some degree of liberty, but how far they are possessed of it seems impossible for us to determine, since all the principal proofs of the natural liberty of the human mind arise from what passes within ourselves, and what we learn by discoursing with other men, and not merely from what we observe in their most rational or capricious actions.

Reynault's Philos. Concern. vol. iii. p. 82—87.

LECTURE XXII.

PROPOSITION XVIII.

There are many particulars in which the knowledge we have of our own minds is very imperfect, and we are, as it were, a mystery to ourselves.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. We know not what our soul is, otherwise than by its operations; but are not able to determine what that constitution is whence those operations proceed, or what particular and distinct idea is to be affixed to the word *principle*; if we may call it, as many do, an intelligent or conscious principle.—See *Def.* 3. *Cor.* 2. *Def.* 5. *Schol.* 1. *Def.* 9.

2. We know not how the soul is united to the body, or what connexion there is between impressions made upon the organs of sensation and the ideas arising in our minds, or between the volitions of our minds and the consequent motions of our bodies.—*Prop.* 1. *Schol.* 2.

3. We know not certainly how ideas are laid up in the memory; it is not demonstrably evident that there are traces in the brain correspondent to those ideas (*Prop.* 8.), but if it were, how recollection is performed, and in many cases why one idea is recollected rather than another, is not possible for us to say.—*Prop.* 8. *Schol.* 3.

4. It still remains in some degree an uncertain question, Whether we think always, or only by intervals.—*Prop.* 12. *Dem.*

5. It is extremely difficult to remove all the objections against liberty of choice, especially against that which is stated *Prop.* 16. *Schol.* 1.

6. The question wherein personal identity consists, how plain soever it may have appeared to some, has been differently determined by different persons of great learning and abilities, and is, after all, attended with some perplexities, perhaps chiefly arising from what is mentioned above, *gr.* 1.

Vid. Prop. 11.

7. The phenomenon of dreams does also contain some very unaccountable things. How ideas are then suggested to the mind, in the reception of which we are entirely passive, how dialogues are formed, and how the moral principles of action seem to be suspended, even while we continue to

reason (though often after a wild and inconclusive manner) upon circumstances and events in which we imagine ourselves to be engaged. *Vid. Prop.* 3. *gr.* 5. *Baxter on the Soul*, vol. ii. § 1. 8vo edit.

8. The phenomenon of phrenzy is likewise very unaccountable, and how the state of the nerves and juices of the body at that time should so strangely affect our rational powers, and make us creatures so very different from ourselves.—*Prop.* 3. *gr.* 6.

1—8. 9. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

The like may in some degree be said of the imperfection of the knowledge we have concerning our own bodies: in which, though great improvements and discoveries have been made, some very important questions still remain undecided, *v. g.* By what mechanism animal secretion, respiration, and muscular motion are performed'—whence the systole and diastole of the heart arises'—what is the use of the spleen and the *cæcum*'—not to mention the *rationale* of many distempers, about which many celebrated physicians are much divided, and almost the whole doctrine of the nerves.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The phenomena mentioned in the proposition and the preceding scholium, serve to illustrate *Prop.* 10. and add a very important article to it.

COROLLARY 1.

It becomes us to maintain a deep and constant sense of the ignorance and weakness of our own minds, when we always carry about, in the very constitution of them and our bodies, such affecting demonstrations of it.

COROLLARY 2.

Since such a modest sense of our weakness and ignorance will have a great tendency to promote the honour and happiness of our lives, by teaching us to avoid many instances of arrogance and self-conceit, which expose men both to enmity and contempt; therefore Pneumatology, which leads us into this humbling view, is a noble and useful study.—(Compare *Prop.* 3. *Cor. Prop.* 10 and 17.)*

COROLLARY 3.

If we should hereafter prove the existence of any being vastly superior to us, and especially of a being possessed of infinite perfections, it must be expected that there will be many things relating to him, which it is not possible for us fully to explain or comprehend; and our inquiries concerning such a being ought to be pursued with great modesty and humility.

Butler's Serm. p. 303—305. *Spectator*, vol. viii. No. 590. *Jonval's Letter, apud Nat. Displ.* vol. i. part 2. p. 293, &c.

PART II.

OF THE BEING OF A GOD, AND HIS NATURAL PERFECTIONS.

LECTURE XXIII.

AXIOM IX.

It is impossible that any thing should of itself arise into being, or that it should be produced without some producing cause, existing in order of time, as well as of nature, prior to the thing so produced; or, in other words, which must not be *considered* before the effect, in order to understand it thoroughly, but must also be supposed to have *existed* before it.

DEFINITION XXVII.

That is said to be a SELF-EXISTENT, or NECESSARILY EXISTENT, BEING, which does not owe its existence to any other being whatsoever, either as its cause or its support, but would exist, or be what it is, were there no other being in the whole compass of Nature but itself.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 17. 18. *Burnet. ib.* vol. i. p. 7, 8.

SCHOLIUM.

It seems safer, in this momentous argument on which we are now entering, to acquiesce in this general and simple idea of self-existence, gradually deducing from thence other ideas connected with

* Though it is the only design of the author to point out new references and authors, he cannot forbear recommending the study of those two excellences to the attention of academical youths. When it is considered how extensive a subject many questions in Natural Art, and what different conclusions have been drawn even by men of the profoundest knowledge, and the deepest reflection, there is a modest confidence which is well becoming young students to observe, till time shall have given them the opportunity of wider inquiry and deeper observation. They ought to avoid and have their minds disengaged from all prejudices, which have originally crept into arguments, whether themselves or our ears or eyes admit, without sufficiently examining that judgment of reasoning and that close exactness of examination, which are always to be the most favourable to the acquisition of truth.

it, than to state it, as Dr. Clarke has done, "That which cannot so much as be imagined not to exist, or that which has necessity for the cause of its existence;" since, if there be any self-existent being at all, it seems not proper to ascribe its existence to any cause whatsoever.

Law's Inq. p. 147—150. *Abernethy's Serm.* vol. i. p. 191—193, Dubl. edit. p. 203—205, Lond.

COROLLARY 1.

If any self-existent being does now exist, it has existed from all eternity; for if it ever began to exist, it must (by the 9th *Axiom*) have owed its existence to some prior being as its cause,—which is plainly contradictory to the notion of self-existence stated above.

COROLLARY 2.

If there be, or ever has been, any self-existent being, it is also *everlasting*, *i. e.* it will never cease to be; for dissolution must arise from something external or internal; but nothing external can dissolve that which depends upon no other being for its support; and no imaginable reason can be assigned why there should be any internal cause of dissolution in that being which has (by *Cor.* 1.) existed from eternity, or which was indeed in any single past moment self-existent and independent; which is so plain, that, whoever may have denied the existence of a self-existent being, none have ever asserted that there was such a being, and that his existence is now extinguished and lost; or that there is some self-existent being, which, though now subsisting, will at length be destroyed, or dissolved of itself; yet it must be owned that a late writer, who seems determined to carry scepticism to the greatest excess, has presumed to call this matter into question. *Hume's Philos. Essays*, p. 253.

COROLLARY 3.

If there be any self-existent being, it is also *immutable*; for since a being is the same with all its properties taken together, (*Def.* 3. *Cor.* 1.) if any property were taken away from it, a part of the being would perish, which is inconsistent with its being necessary (*Cor.* 2.); or if any properties were added, the being itself would not be eternal, and therefore not necessarily existent. *Cor.* 1.

Cranz. Log. vol. i. p. 126. *Abern.* vol. i. p. 196—200, Dub. edit. p. 209—213, Lond.

COROLLARY 4.

There is no medium between a self-existent and derived being; or, in other words, whatever exists at all is either self-existent or derived.

COROLLARY 5.

The existence of every derived being may at length be traced up, either mediately or immediately, to what is self-existent; which, in order to its producing it, must, according to the *Axiom*, have existed before it. *Cor.* 1. *Axiom* 9.

COROLLARY 6.

From the Corollary above it will follow, that whatever is eternal is self-existent.

COROLLARY 7.

To maintain a *series* or succession of derived beings from eternity, is most absurd: for every series supposes some first; and to suppose that first to be derived, is self-contradictory, (as above, *Cor.* 5.) with this further absurdity, that the greater the series, the greater support it will need, as a chain consisting of many links will need a greater support than one consisting but of a few such links; and should a *circle* of causes be supposed, instead of solving, it will, if possible, increase the absurdity, since this would suppose every cause in the circle to have produced itself, and all the other causes too.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 11—14. *Woolast. Rel. of Nat.* p. 65—68.

DEFINITION XXVIII.

That is said to be *simply infinite* in its kind which has no bounds, or than which nothing in its kind can be conceived greater; but if it be conceived as bounded in some respects, and unbounded in others, then it is said to be only infinite *secundum quid*, as a line infinitely produced one way from a given point: but this is a very improper sense of the word.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xvii. § 1—3. *Watts's Ontology*, c. xvii.

COROLLARY.

Whatever is self-existent has all its properties infinite (see *Def.* 27.); for if it be necessary in any time or place, (if it be its nature to exist in time and place,) it must be necessary at all times and in all places; and since, whatever its other properties are, to set bounds to them is to assert its non-existence beyond those bounds, whether of power, wisdom, &c. it seems extremely probable, not to say certain, that what hinders its existence beyond those bounds might hinder its existence entirely; but it could not be a self-existent being, if its existence might have been hindered, or could be destroyed.

Clarke, p. 158, 159, 162, 163, 165, 166, 169—176.

SCHOLIUM 1.

On much the same principles, Mr. Grove directly infers, That a being necessarily existent must be infinitely perfect. Some perfections it must have, or it could not be any thing at all; and for the same reason that it has any one perfection, and in any one degree, it must be possessed of all possible perfections, and in all possible degrees; but this is a point of so great importance, that we choose rather to infer it from other mediums of argument, than to rest the whole stress of it upon such a deduction, especially as upon the principles of *Def.* 21. *Cor.* this argument can have no

place till it be proved that whatever is self-existent is percipient, or endued with thought.

Grove's Posth. Works, vol. iv. p. 7. *Howe's Living Temple*, part i. c. iv. § 2, 3.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is disputed whether our idea of infinite be a *negative* or *positive* idea. Some have pleaded, That *bounds* imply a negation of continued existence beyond them; and consequently by removing this negation we form a positive idea.

Cambray sur l'Exist. p. 379—383. *Boyse's Translation*, p. 145—151. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. xvii. § 13, 16—19.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It may also be queried, Whether our idea of infinite be a *simple* or *compound* idea?—Yet I think it may more properly be said to be a simple idea, as no addition of finites can make up an infinite. It will be difficult to find out any idea more simple.

PROPOSITION XIX

Something has existed from eternity.

DEMONSTRATION

Ax. 1. 1. It is evident that something does actually exist; *v. g.* we know that we ourselves do.

2. If something has not existed from eternity, the things which now are must have risen absolutely from nothing, and without any producing cause, contrary to *Ax.* 9.

1, 2. 3. We are certain something has existed from eternity.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 8, 9. *Abern. Serm.* vol. i. p. 184—187, Dubl. edit.; p. 195—198, Lond.

SCHOLIUM.

It must be acknowledged extremely difficult to conceive of any thing having existed from eternity; yet since there are such evident proofs of it, we learn that a thing may be true, the manner of which is entirely inconceivable to our limited minds, or against which some objections may lie which to us are unanswerable.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 9—11.

PROPOSITION XX

There has from eternity existed some self-existent or necessary Being.

DEMONSTRATION

Prop. 19. 1. There has from eternity existed something, either self-existent or derived. See *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 4.

Def. 27. 2. If there were not so evident an absurdity as there seems to be, in supposing a derived being eternal, yet its existence (even granting its eternity, and much more evidently supposing it not to be so) may be traced up to a self-existent Being, which as self-existent is eternal.

1, 2. 3. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM.

The proposition follows directly from *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 6. but we choose to keep it in its present form; that if any should think there may be an eternal necessary emanation from a self-existent principle, as many have maintained, the foregoing proposition might rest on a foundation not to be affected by such an apprehension.

Introd. to the Ancient Univ. Hist. p. 5. 8vo edit.

LECTURE XXIV.

PROPOSITION XXI.

The system of things, which we call *the material world*, did not exist from eternity in its present form; but had a beginning.

DEMONSTRATION

Arg. 1. We may not only conceive of many possible alterations which might be made in the form of it, but we see it incessantly changing; whereas an eternal Being, for as much as it is self-existent, is always the same. *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 8.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 22, 23.

Arg. 2. We have no credible history of transactions more remote than six thousand years from the present time; for, as to the pretence that some nations have made to histories of greater antiquity, as the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Chinese, &c. they are evidently convicted of falsehood at large in

Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. p. 15—106. *Millar's Propag. of Christ.* vol. i. p. 100—112. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 58—60. *Jenkins of Christianity*, vol. ii. pref. p. 4—11. *Allix's Reflections*, vol. i. p. 95—120. *Winder's Hist. of Knowledge*, vol. ii. *passim*. *Lucret.* lib. v. ver. 325—330.*

Arg. 3. We can trace the invention of the most useful arts and sciences; which had probably been carried further, and invented sooner, had the world been eternal.

Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vii. viii. *Lucret.* lib. v. ver. 331—339. *Nichols's Conf.* vol. i. p. 76—87. 12mo; p. 45—51. 8vo. *Cheyne's Princ.* c. ii. § 24. p. 63—68. *Burnet's Theory*, vol. i. p. 54—59.

Arg. 4. The origin of the most considerable nations of the earth may be traced; *i. e.* the time when they first inhabited the countries where they now dwell: and it appears that most of the western nations came from the east.

* The Hindoos make great pretensions to a very high antiquity and credit has been given to their assertions. But the extravagance of their chronology has been shown by the best of all judges, Sir William Jones, as may be seen in his Dissertation on the subject, published in the second volume of the Asiatic Researches.

Newton's Chron. passim. Patrick on Genesis c. x. *Wells's Geog. of the Old Test.* vol. i. c. iii. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 60, 61. *Perizon. Cumberl. de aerug. Gent. et Bochart's Phaleg. passim. Bryant's Mythology, passim. Michaelis's Spicilegium Geog. Heb. pass.*

SCHOLIUM.

If it be said that deluges, pestilences, conflagrations, &c. destroy men with their inventions, it may be answered, (1.) If the world were eternal, there must have been an immense number of these devastations; and it is amazing (if there be, as this hypothesis supposes, no superior Being that presides over them) that they should not have destroyed the whole human race. (2.) If any had survived, the most useful arts would have been preserved.

Lucret. lib. v. ver. 339—352. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 61, margin. *Religion of Nature*, p. 91, 92.

LECTURE XXV.

Arg. 5. The projectile force of the planets is continually diminishing, by the resistance of the fluid through which they pass, *i. e.* the rays of light; which are every where diffused through all parts of their orbits in so vast a quantity, that multitudes of them fall on bodies too small to be discerned by the naked eye, as appears by microscopical observation. Now, if we allow this diminution in the projectile force in one year or age to be ever so small, there must be a finite time in which it will be utterly destroyed; and consequently, had the present system of things been eternal (since on this supposition the same laws of Nature must have prevailed) the planets would long ago have fallen into the sun.

Watts's Ess. No. x. § 1. p. 242—245. *Cheyne's Princ.* c. ii. § 20. p. 53—56.

Arg. 6. The sun is continually losing some of its light; and consequently must, long ere this time, have been reduced to utter darkness, if the world had been eternal. If it be said, That every ray of light, after a certain elongation, falls back into the sun,—we answer, Some of them must, in their return, strike on the planets, falling on their dark hemisphere, by which means they would be absorbed, and the decay would be real, though more gradual, according to the reasoning above. If it be answered, That there may be some kind of fuel provided, as suppose comets, by which the sun is fed,—we reply, That fuel is or is not exactly adjusted to the expense of his flame; if it is not exactly adjusted, if too little, the consequence urged above will at length, though still more slowly, follow; if too much, the sun growing continually hotter, the Earth and other planets must have been burnt up, and so an argument against its eternity will arise to another form, from the ever-growing heat of the sun; but if the adjustment be exact, it will be such a proof of design and government in the works of Nature, as would be so greatly serviceable in another view, that any friend of religion might willingly spare this argument against the world's eternity, when there are so many others unanswerably strong, and it may be observed, that a similar train of reasoning may take place as to some following particulars.

Cheyne's Princ. c. i. § 42. p. 95—98; c. ii. § 19. p. 51, 52.

Arg. 7. Since it is probable that the fixed stars and the sun attract each other,—had they been eternal, they must long ere this have met in the centre of gravity common to the whole universe; and nearly akin to this is the argument which may be drawn from the effect of the nearest access of the Earth to Mars, or any other superior planet; in consequence of which it might be supposed to be drawn by such attraction a little from its orbit; the eccentricity of which would by this means be continually increased, till the Earth were utterly destroyed. The like argument may be applied to the other planets, and especially to Saturn: but the thought is in general so much the same that it has not been judged necessary to insist upon it.

Cheyne's Princ. c. i. § 22. p. 58—60.

Arg. 8. Sir William Petty has attempted to prove that the number of mankind doubles in 300 years, but though the exactness of his computation should be doubted, if there be any periodical and constant increase at all, it will prove the world not to be eternal; as from a limited distance of time it must ere now have been overrun with human inhabitants. Some have indeed maintained a decrease since the Augustan Age;—but if it could be proved that mankind do actually decrease periodically, or that the increase is exactly balanced, this argument will stand on the same footing with *Arg.* 6. As for plagues, by which some suppose the balance to be made, if we may judge by what we know of their history, the diminution of mankind by them bears but a very small proportion to its increase, as computed by Petty.*

Nich. Conf. vol. i. p. 62—76, 8vo edit. p. 36—44. *Cheyne's Princ.* c. ii. § 25. p. 68—72. *Pers. Lett.* vol. ii. p. 148—158. *Reflec. on Polyg. Diss.* vii.

Arg. 9. Many substances are continually petrifying and ossifying, so that, had the world been eternal, the whole earth would have been but one

* As to the controversy concerning the Decrease of Mankind since the Augustan Age, see the learned and ingenious discussion in Hume's Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations, and Wallace's Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind.

stone, or the petrifaction must have ceased of itself; but if it be said, That these stones dissolve, and so there may be a kind of circulation,—it is answered, That stones grow in one year, which do not dissolve in many centuries.

The argument from the waste of fluids by the growth of animal and vegetable bodies, is much the same as this, so far as there is any solidity in it; but it may be queried, Whether the dissolution of those bodies, and separation of their consistent fluids in a series of years, may not answer this?

Nich. Conf. vol. i. p. 51—55; 8vo, p. 30—32. *Clare on Fluids*, p. 271, 272.

Arg. 10. Hills are continually subsiding, which will in some finite time reduce the world to a level. If it be objected, That this is balanced by earthquakes, &c. which raise mountains,—it is answered, The number of these so raised is comparatively small, and they being hollow, would soon be washed away.

Nich. Conf. vol. i. p. 55—62; 8vo, p. 32—36. *Ray's Three Disc.* No. iii. p. 344—364. *Mountf. Trav.* p. 377, 378. *Burn. Theory*, vol. i. p. 51—53.

Arg. 11. According to the best calculations which have been made, comets appear on an average at least in 30 years; but whether this account be exact or not, if their return be periodical, there would, within an imaginable time, have been more than a thousand millions cutting the earth's orbit in various directions; in consequence of which the earth must have been exposed to such danger, either of being drawn into the sun or separated from it, that, without a particular Providence, which this hypothesis opposes, its destruction must have happened long since.

Arg. 12. If the world be eternal, it is hard to account for the tradition of its beginning, which has almost every where prevailed, though under different forms, among both polite and barbarous nations.

Hale's Orig. of Man, § 2. c. xii. § 3. c. i. *Grot. de Ver.* lib. i. § 16. p. 26—40. *Burnet's Arch.* lib. ii. c. i. p. 273—285.

LECTURE XXVI.

COROLLARY 1.

There must have been some great and excellent Being, superior to this whole material system, by which it was reduced into that beautiful order, in which it now appears.

COROLLARY 2.

Hence we may infer the vanity and falsehood of Spinoza's doctrine, who asserts that the whole and every part of the material world is a self-existent being; for he expressly says, that one being or substance could not be produced by another; and that all things could be in no other order and manner than they are, *i. e.* that all things in their present form are necessary, and therefore eternal. *Def.* 27. and *Cor.* 1, 3.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 26—29. *Camb. on Exist.* p. 202—207. part ii. c. 2. *Toland's Pantheisticon.* p. 5—8. 54. 55. *apud. Sykes's Connect.* c. iv. p. 64—83. *Orph. Carm. ap. Apul. Op. (de Mundo)* p. 109. *Ramsay's App. to Phil. Princ.* vol. i. p. 197, &c. *Campbell's Necess. of Rev.* p. 368.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Those arguments which Redi, Malphigius, and several modern philosophers, have advanced against the doctrine of equivocal generation, either of animals or plants, have often been urged as conclusive against the eternity of the world: and if they will prove that every animal or plant of the present generation was not only contained in its immediate parent, but together with that parent in the remoter generation, and so on perpetually, it might indeed prove that, how small soever the bodies now grown up might be at any given time, there is a certain distance of generation, at which the organized body containing them and all intermediate generations, each bigger than the embryo in question was at that time, must have been bigger than even the whole mass of the earth. But it may be answered, That allowing no animal or plant to rise into visible form but from pre-existing parents of the same kind, it may nevertheless in its first stamina be formed anew, from some fluid before making an unorganized part of the adult parent; and in that case there will be no peculiar force in this argument, as lying against the eternity of the world; for that which arises from the exquisite workmanship of an animal body, and the absurdity of supposing it produced from any fluid or solid merely by mechanical laws, properly belongs to another question.

Redi de Gen. Insect. pass. Nieuwent. Rel. Phil. vol. i. c. xxi. § 9. *Bentley at Boyle's Lect.* Serm. iv. p. 127. *ad fin. Cheyne's Princ.* c. ii. § 23. p. 60—63. *Ray's Wisd. of God*, p. 298—326. *Varen Geog.* vol. i. p. 226. Engl.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Neither do we argue from the probability that the Torrid Zone would have taken fire; which is examined in *Ray's Three Disc.* p. 381—388.

SCHOLIUM 3.

We likewise wave those arguments which are taken from the supposed absurdity and impossibility of the world's having been actually eternal, or having existed through an infinite succession,

because the same objection seems to lie against every thing which is said to be eternal, and the argument turns on the supposition, that an infinite is made up of a number of finites.

Burnet on the Art. p. 19, 20. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 35—37.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Some of the ancients, who speak of the eternity of the world, do not seem to intend it in the sense in which Spinoza asserts it. The arguments are designed to prove, either that something must be eternal, which is all that those of Ocellus Lucanus amount to; or that the world is a necessary eternal effect, flowing from the energy of the divine nature, which Aristotle seems to have thought; or that it was an eternal voluntary emanation from a supreme and infinitely perfect Cause, which was the opinion of Plato's followers. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that some of them were properly Pantheists, in the same sense in which the term may be applied to the present followers of Spinoza. Compare *Cor.* 2.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 29—35. *Nichols's Conf.* vol. i. p. 22—36; 8vo. vol. i. p. 12—20.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

If any objection should be brought against the seventh argument, from the supposed infinite number of celestial bodies, which would occasion an equal attraction every way, we must defer the examination of that till we have proved that matter is not infinite; to which we shall quickly proceed.

LECTURE XXVII.

DEFINITION XXIX.

That is said to be an ESSENTIAL QUALITY which cannot cease, unless the being itself should be supposed to be destroyed. *Watts's Log.* p. 17, 18.

PROPOSITION XXII.

Motion is not essential to matter.

DEMONSTRATION I.

1. It is evident that when we have abstracted the idea of motion from any particle of matter, there will still remain the idea of extended solid substance, i. e. it will still be matter. See *Def.* 4 and 29.

2. If motion be essential to matter, then a motion must either be an equal tendency every way, or a prevailing tendency one way.

3. An equal tendency every way would certainly produce rest.

4. A prevailing tendency one way rather than another, must arise from some external cause; and if these motions were various, from causes that act in various manners, and not from the necessary nature of body or matter itself.

1 and 2. 3. 4. 5. Motion is not essential to matter. *Q. E. D.*

Toland's Lett. to Serena. No. 5. p. 186—202. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 24, 25.

DEMONSTRATION II.

Another proof may be drawn from the *vis inertiæ*, which Baxter has proved to be essential to matter, and which is directly contrary to necessary motion. This argument is stated at large in *Baxter on the Soul*, and as it cannot conveniently be contracted here, we choose to refer to the author himself.

Baxter on the Soul, vol. i. p. 1—78.

COROLLARY.

Since it appears that matter does move, (still supposing the reality of the material world,) it is evident there must be some first mover, *i. e.* some superior immaterial being, from whom its motion is derived.

SCHOLIUM.

The argument which Toland brings, in the passage cited above, to prove motion essential to matter, amounts to little more than the universal gravitation observed to prevail in it; but this may be sufficiently accounted for, by supposing it always impressed upon it by the Creator, and that it might, at his pleasure, be suspended, though no single particle of the whole material world should be now exempted from the influence.

PROPOSITION XXIII.

Matter is not self-existent or necessary.

DEMONSTRATION.

Def. 4. 1. Tangibility, solidity, or resistance, is essential to matter.

1. 2. If all space were full of matter, how fine soever the particles were, there must be on every side an invincible resistance to the motion of any one of those particles.

3. But we plainly see that there is motion in the corporeal world.

2. 3. 4. There is, therefore, a vacuum; as will be further illustrated in the scholium.

Def. 28. *Cor.* 5. But if matter were self-existent or necessary, there must be a universal plenum.

6. Matter is liable to continual changes in its place, contexture, situation, &c. which is inconsistent with its being self-existent. *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 3.

1, 5, and 6. 7. Matter is not self-existent. *Q. E. D.*

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 503, 504, 2d. 26. *Cudworth's Intell. Syst.* p. 258—261. edit. 3. *Bent. at Boyle's Lect.* § 6. p. 211—213. *Howe's Liv. Temp.* part. ii. c. 2. § 5. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. ii. § 3. *pass.* p. 345—351. 356—359. 373—384.

* A concise and elegant view of the dubious [illegible] phenomena on this subject may be seen [illegible] Philosophy.

COROLLARY.

There must be some immaterial self-existent Being, by whom matter was at first created, supposing it now really to exist.—See *Prop.* 22. *Cor. Def.* 27. *Cor.* 5.

SCHOLIUM.

A vacuum may further be proved from the different specific gravity of bodies, compared with the vibrations of pendulums of unequal bulk and equal length in equal times: *v. g.* one of ten pounds vibrates just as fast as another of one pound whose rod is of the same length; it has, therefore, just ten times the momentum or force of motion, *i. e.* ten times the gravity; for here it is gravity that gives it the force; or, in other words, the gravity is as the quantity of matter: when, therefore, the gravity under the same bulk is unequal, it proves there is more matter in one mass than in the other, and consequently pores (at least) in the lighter, though the heavier were to be supposed entirely solid; and the experiment of the feather and guinea descending together in the exhausted receiver, establishes the argument on the same principles.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 503, 504.

LECTURE XXVIII.

AXIOM X.

If any being be the producing cause of another being, not merely occasionally, but by its own power, it is very reasonable to suppose that it was more excellent or perfect than its production, or at least equally so.

COROLLARY.

Seeing a thinking substance as such is more excellent than a substance destitute of thought, it is not to be imagined that spirit should be produced by a being which is not possessed of thought.

PROPOSITION XXIV.

It is in the nature of things utterly inconceivable and incredible, that thought should necessarily arise from matter.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If thought could proceed from matter, it must either arise from the general nature of it, or must be peculiar to matter in some certain configuration and agitation.

2. Thought cannot arise from the nature of matter in general; for then every particle of matter would have thought, which is evidently false and ridiculous to affirm.

3. Any supposed alteration in the figure of the particles of matter, *v. g.* from squares to cubes, or cones, &c. has no apparent influence on the production of thought.

4. Motion in general, added to matter, cannot produce thought; for then almost all matter known to us, being actually, though not necessarily, in motion, and some of it in a wonderful swift agitation, must be cogitative, contrary to fact.

5. The change of its motion, *v. g.* from a straight line to any kind of curve, or *vice versa*, or its collision against other particles of matter, seems to have no tendency to produce thought.

1—5. 6. *Valet propositio.*

Abern. Serm. vol. i. p. 107—117. *Bentley at Boyle's Lect.* Serm. ii. p. 15—26; 8vo edit. p. 52—60. *Clarke*, ib. p. 52—57. *Locke's Ess.* l. iv. c. x. § 10.

COROLLARY.

Since we are sure there is such a thing as thought, (*Ax.* 2.) this is another argument independent on *Prop.* 23. *Cor.* to prove that there is some immaterial being. See *Ax.* 9.

Bentley ib. p. 29—36; 8vo edit. p. 68—74.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is to no purpose to object, That there may be some unknown connexion between certain modifications of matter and thought, from which thought may necessarily result, or that it may be produced from some unknown properties of matter, though not from those which are known; seeing many things are utterly incredible, which cannot be proved to be absolutely impossible.

SCHOLIUM 2.

If it be further objected, That it is as inconceivable that matter should arise from thought, as thought from matter,—it may be answered, That we are sure in fact, that, if there be any material world, matter is moved by thought, though we know not how it is done, and that it was actually produced by some immaterial being (*Prop.* 23. *Cor.*); but it cannot be proved in fact that thought is necessarily produced by matter, or that any thinking being has been mechanically produced from matter itself; though we allow that, according to the constitution of some superior being, thought is occasioned by it, *i. e.* that there is a certain wonderful harmony between impressions made on the material parts of our frame and thought; and that thinking beings are produced by a superior cause on certain concurrences in the material world.*

Sherlock, Chur. vol. ii. p. 236. *Bart. on the Soul*, vol. ii. p. 350, note.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It may not be improper here to collect the proof we have had of the existence of an immaterial being, which arises partly from the motion of mat-

* It is scarcely necessary to say how much the [illegible] of this learned author [illegible] by several [illegible] arguments, or proof-sentences [illegible] See particularly Preacher's Discourses on Matter and Spirit, and Cooper's Essays. Outline of our [illegible] Mr W. Bertram, in the second volume of his Essays, p. 1—30

ter. *Prop.* 22. *Cor.* and its existence, *Prop.* 23. *Cor.* and also from the existence of thought, which mere matter could not produce, *Prop.* 24. *Cor.* compared with *Ax.* 10. *Cor.*

PROPOSITION XXV

We are not ourselves necessary or self-existent beings.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. It is evident we are lately born into this world; and there is no proof of our existence before.

2. We evidently appear to be dependent on every thing about us.

3. The capacity and sentiments of our minds, as well as the powers of our bodies and our external circumstances, are almost continually changing.

Def. 27. *Cor.* 1, 3. 4. But every self-existent being is eternal, independent, and immutable.

1, 2, 3, 4. 5. We are not self-existent. *Q. E. D.*

Camb. sur l'Exist. p. 185—188.

COROLLARY 1.

There is some self-existent Being, from whom we mediately or immediately derive our existence, and to whom ultimately we owe all the faculties of our nature, and all the enjoyments of our lives.—*Def.* 27. *Cor.* 5.

COROLLARY 2.

There is great reason to believe that this Being is naturally much more excellent than we.

COROLLARY 3.

It is evident that, as we are already under great obligations to this Being, so we have a constant dependence upon him for every future period and circumstance of our existence.

COROLLARY 4.

It must be of the greatest importance for us most attentively to inquire after him, and to study his nature and properties, that we may, if possible, secure an interest in his favour.

Camb. sur l'Exist. p. 188, 189.

PROPOSITION XXVI.

That self-existent Being, from whom our existence was ultimately derived, (*Prop.* 25. *Cor.* 1.) is a Spirit.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Originally and primarily to produce a being is an action.

Grad. 1. *Def.* 10. *Cor.* 2. 2. That must be a Spirit, whereby any being whatsoever is originally and primarily produced.

Prop. 25. *Cor.* 1. 3. Our spirits were produced by some self-existent Being.

Ax. 10. *Cor.* 4. To suppose a thinking being produced by an unthinking cause, would be more evidently absurd than to suppose an unthinking being so produced.

2, 3, 4. 5. That self-existent Being, from whom our existence was ultimately derived, is a Spirit.—*Q. E. D.*

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 49—52. *Abernethy.* vol. i. Serm. iv.

SCHOLIUM.

Though it seems more proper to state the evidence of this important proposition thus largely, it is in effect contained in *Prop.* 25. *Cor.* 2. since nothing that is not a spirit can be more excellent than our minds.

LECTURE XXIX.

DEFINITION XXX.

That self-existent spiritual Being, by whom we and the material world about us were originally formed, we call GOD.

Vanini Amphitheatrum Providentiæ, p. 8—10. *apud Collib. Inq.* p. 243, 244. *Shaft. Char.* vol. ii. p. 10, 11.

COROLLARY.

It appears from this definition that our idea of God is very complex, and is made up of many ideas arising both from sensation and reflection.

Locke's Ess. lib. ii. c. xxiii. § 33—36.

PROPOSITION XXVII.

There is a God.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Prop. 23. *Cor.* 1. The matter of which this world or system consists, was originally created by a self-existent immaterial Being.

Prop. 22. *Cor.* 2. This matter was first put into motion by some superior, *i. e.* self-existent, Being. See *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 5.

Prop. 21. *Cor.* 1. 3. This material world was reduced into the beautiful form wherein it now appears, by some Being superior to it.

4. There is no reason to assert, nor has it ever, that we know of, been maintained by any, that the Being by whom the matter of our world was at first produced, was a different one from that by whom it was first moved and brought into the order in which it now appears.*

Prop. 25. *Cor.* 1 and 2. 5. Our spirits were also derived from some self-existent Spirit of superior excellence and perfection.

6. There is no apparent reason to believe that the Spirit by whom our spirits were originally produced, is a being different from that by whom this material world about us was created and formed.

1—6. 7. There is some self-existent Spiritual

* It may be observed here, that the Gnostics maintained the Demiurgus, or Maker of this world, to be different from the Supreme Being; but them they held matter itself to be eternal and coæqual. See Mosheim's Commentarii de Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum, p. 64, and his Institutiones Majores Secul. prim. Pars Secunda, § 5 6 8

Being, by whom we and this material world were formed; *i. e.* there is a God.—*Def.* 30. *Q. E. D.*

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. x. § 1—6.*

COROLLARY 1.

God is a Being more excellent than the material world, or than we, or than any other spirit, which may hereafter appear to be derived from him. See *Ax.* 10.

COROLLARY 2.

There is something so great and excellent in self-existence, joined with a degree of other perfections, superior to those which we can discover in any derived being whatsoever, that it seems most safe and reasonable, in all our further inquiries into the nature of God, to ascribe to him what appears to us most noble and excellent, and to separate from our ideas of him whatever is defective or contemptible; *i. e.* in other words, to conceive of him as a Being of infinite perfection; but of this more fully hereafter. See *Def.* 28. *Cor.* and *Schol.* 1.

Howe's Liv. Temp. part. i. c. iv.

DEMONSTRATION II

The being of a God proved from universal consent.

1. Almost all men, of every place and age, have acknowledged a God,—learned or unlearned, polite or barbarous, pious or wicked, fearful or courageous; and nations that have differed most in their genius and customs, have generally agreed in this important point.

2. This opinion must arise from prejudice or from right reason.

1. 3. It is exceedingly difficult, or rather impossible, to find any prejudice common to all who have embraced this opinion. Fear could not affect the courageous, nor the invention of politic princes, princes themselves, or barbarous nations; blind credulity would not affect the most philosophic inquirers, nor religious hopes men of impious characters; and as for the authority of one person affirming it, how could the notion have been so universally propagated, or merely on this authority so universally believed? If education infused it through succeeding generations, why has it been so much more uniform than any thing else which is supposed to be so transmitted?

4. It does not appear that particular prejudices can be assigned to suit the case of all particular persons.

3, 4. 5. This opinion does not appear to arise from prejudice.

2, 5. 6. It seems founded on right reason; *i. e.* there is a God. *Q. E. D.*

Wilkins on Nat. Rel. p. 41—49. p. 52—61. *Tillots. Works*, vol. i. p. 14—17. *Locke's Ess.* lib. i. c. iv. § 8, 9. *Loubiere's Siam*, part 3. c. xxii. xxiii. p. 130—132. *Burn. on the Art.* p. 17, 18. *Gastrel of Nat. Relig.* p. 26—38. *Ridgley's Divin.* vol. i. p. 12—14. *Millar's Prop. of Christ.* vol. ii. p. 161.†

SCHOLIUM.

The different notions that men have maintained of the Deity, and the opinion of many concerning a plurality of gods, is urged as an objection against the argument stated above; but it may be answered, That their difference in other things makes their agreement in this great principle so much the more remarkable; and it is certain there is not such an agreement in any false notion of the Deity, or plurality of gods, as there is in his existence in general; to which we may add, that the wrong notions particular persons have entertained concerning him, may often be accounted for by the variety of their genius, condition, education, &c.

Wilkins on Nat. Rel. p. 43—45. *Burn. on the Art.* p. 18, 19. *Tillots. Works*, v. i. p. 15, 16.

LECTURE XXX.

DEMONSTRATION III

In which the being of a God is proved from a brief survey of the Works of Nature.

LEMMA

This system of things, which we call the visible world, is full of beauty, harmony, and order.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE LEMMA

1. This appears by a survey of the heavenly bodies; in which we may distinctly consider their magnitude, number, due situation, that they may not interfere with one another, and may lay a foundation for certain astronomical discoveries, which would otherwise have been impossible, had there been a perfect similarity in situation and size. Especially in our system, we may remark the sun, that glorious fountain of light and vital influence, by which most of the other beauties of the creation around us are discovered, and the various planets with which he is surrounded; in which we may more particularly observe the correspondence between their distance from the central body about which they revolve, and the times in which their revolutions are performed, *i. e.* that the squares of their periodical times are as the cubes of their distances; the supply of moons to most of the distant planets, with the addition of a ring to Saturn; the agreement both of primary and secondary planets in a spherical figure; as well as the agreeable

* For other proofs of the being of a God, recourse may be had to Squire's Irreligion Indefensible.—Priestley's Institutes, his Letters to Philosophical Unbelievers, part the first,—and Bryant's Treatise on the Authenticity of the Scriptures, part the first

† How far the universal consent of the being of God is a fact may now particularly be traced from the number of late Voyages and Travels to all parts of the world, and to men in all the degrees of society

variety that is observable in their size, and other phenomena relating to them.

Derham's Astr. Theology, pass. Nieuwent. Rel. Phil. vol. iii. *Ray of Creat.* p. 72—78. *Nat. Disp.* vol. iv. *Baxt. Matho. Abern.* vol. i. Serm. i.

2. The proposition appears from a view of the globe of the earth, in which, not to urge the gravitation of bodies on or near its surface towards its centre, which is common to our whole system at least, if not to the whole material world, and is the great cement of it, we may more distinctly consider its diurnal and annual motion; the atmosphere with which it is surrounded; its constituent parts, as it is a terraqueous globe, and composed of bodies of very different kinds, lodged upon or beneath its surface.

Bentley at Boyle's Lect. p. 310—314. *Nieuw. Rel. Phil.* vol. ii. cont. 17. p. 367—413. *Derham's Phys. Theol.* p. 4—18. *Keil's Astron. Lect.* xxi. *sub init.* 298, 299.

3. The vegetable productions with which the Earth is furnished, so various, beautiful, and useful.

Nat. Disp. vol. i. Dial. 14, 15. part 2. p. 158—248. *Ray's Wisd. of God*, p. 116—132. *Derham's Phys. Theol.* p. 404—424. *Denne's Serm. on Veget.*

4. The animal inhabitants of it; in which we can never sufficiently admire the organs of sensation, especially the eye and ear, the organs of respiration, of motion, those for receiving and digesting the aliment, and those intended for generation and the nourishment of the *fœtus*. In the inferior animals, it is wonderful to observe how their different organs are fitted for those different circumstances in life for which they are intended, and especially to the elements in which they are chiefly to live. To this head may be referred what was before said of their various instincts, *Def.* 18. *Cor.* 2. to which we may further add the limitation of their instincts, as well as animal sensations, within such degrees as the convenience of the animal requires.—*Vid. Ess. on Man*, part 1. But above all, in human creatures we may justly admire the faculties of the mind, as well as the structure of the body,—both which have been largely considered elsewhere.

Monro's Compar. Anat. pass. Derham's Phys. Theol. pass.

5. On the whole, it may be observed, that the more philosophy is improved and inquiries pursued, the more is the harmony and regularity of the works of nature illustrated, and the more evidently does it appear, that objections formerly made against them were owing to the ignorance of those that advanced them.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 55, 58, 103—106. *Nat. Disp.* vol. i. p. 13—15

6. As these things are wonderful when considered apart, so when the whole is considered as a system, and in reference to man, for whose use this Earth and what it contains seems principally to have been designed, many comparative beauties arise, which in a separate view, could not have been discovered.

Shaft. Char. vol. ii. p. 285—290.

SCHOLIUM 1.

These arguments are set in so strong and beautiful a light in the works of Ray, Derham, Nieuwentyt, Bonet, Baxter in his Matho, and in De la Pluche's Nature Displayed, especially in the first and fourth volumes, that they deserve a most attentive perusal at leisure.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

As to those objections which are brought from the noxious qualities of some vegetables, animals, or exhalations, from the limitation of our senses, from the helpless circumstances in which human infants are born, as well as from our being subject to diseases and death; besides those arising from the asperities of the surface of our globe, and the inclination of the axis of the earth to the plane of the ecliptic,—they are most of them so evidently weak, and capable of being retorted as beauties rather than defects; and they are all so well considered and confuted in the following references, that we shall not more distinctly examine them here.

Lucret. lib. v. ver. 196—235. *Blackm. on the Creat.* p. 78—92. *Bentley at Boyle's Lect.* Serm. iii. p. 10—17. 8vo edit. 5. p. 94—104. *Ibid.* Serm. viii. p. 22—40, 8vo edit. p. 83—90. *Shaft. Char.* vol. ii. p. 298—309. *Ray on the Creat.* p. 249—255. *Keil's Exam. of Burn. Theory, pass. Pope's Ess. on Man*, epistle i. ver. 165—198. *Wilkins's World in the Moon. Collib. Inq.* p. 92—94. *Polign. Anti-Lucret. pass. Clarke on the Origin of Evil*, p. 160. *ad fin. prax.* p. 160—202. 233—264. *Reimarus on Nat. Relig. pass.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

The noble powers and properties of the human mind are well worthy of being mentioned here, as a production incomparably more glorious than any thing in the vegetable or brutal creation. It may something assist our thoughts here, to consider how the face of nature is embellished and improved by the arts which mankind have introduced into life, and how much entertainment is given mankind by producing them as the effect of their own art and labour, beyond what they could find in them merely as the product of nature.

Derham's Phys. Theol. p. 226, and 61—65. *Locke on Government. Abernethy's Sermons on the Being and Attributes of God.*

* The many curious volumes which have recently been published in the different parts of Natural History may be read to great use, though they are not, in general, applied by the authors of them to the purposes of religion.

LECTURE XXXI.

PROPOSITION XXVII.—DEMONSTRATION III

Proof of the being of a God from the Works of Nature.

Prop. 21. 1. Seeing the world was made, it is universally allowed that it must have been produced by chance or design.

2. Chance is entirely an unmeaning expression, unless we ascribe that to it which is produced by mechanical laws, without the contrivance and purpose of the thinking being, whose agency may be the means of producing it.

Watts's Ontol. p. 332. *Bentley at Boyle's Lect.* Serm. v. p. 9—12; 8vo edit. p. 147—153; 5th edit. p. 170—174.

2. 3. It may generally be expected, that whatever is thus produced should be very confused and imperfect, especially when the effect is very complex.

Lem. 4. This world, though a very complex system, is full of beauty, harmony, and order, incomparably superior to any work which we see produced by the design of the most curious artist.

3, 4. 5. It is most incredible that it should be produced by chance.

1, 5. 6. It was produced by the design or counsel of some intelligent agent.

Prop. 20. *Cor.* 7. If any derived being were supposed the immediate former of the world, he must ultimately owe his wisdom and power to some original and self-existent being.

6, 7. 8. The frame of the world proves that there is a God. *Q. E. D.*

Lucret. lib. v. ver. 417—449. *Camb. sur l'Exist.* p. 4—6. § 5—8. *Bent. ib.* Serm. v. p. 12; and fine 8vo edit. p. 153—177. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 29—34. *Collib. Inq.* p. 74—84. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 79—85; 8vo edit. vol. i. p. 72—92.

DEMONSTRATION IV.

A Deity proved from the marks of divine interposition, which appear in the support and government of the world.

LEMMA.

The author of Matho has illustrated this topic of demonstration with incomparable strength and beauty; but some of his arguments are of such a nature as to be more properly mentioned in another place.

1. This appears in the continuance of the centripetal and projectile force of the planets, as a mutual balance to each other; neither of which appears necessary in itself, though a failure of either would be attended with a general ruin; and this thought appears with a force greatly increased, when we consider the various composition of that four-fold motion, by which a secondary planet revolves about its primary, while both revolve about the Sun.

Baxt. Matho, vol. ii. *Conf.* vii. p. 4—18. *Coll. Inq.* p. 119, 120; edit. 3. p. 143, 144. *Baxt. on the Soul*, § 2. No. 6. p. 46, 47, 4to; vol. i. 8vo edit. p. 101—106.

2. In preventing the alteration of the obliquity of the earth's axis, or its receiving any other detriment from the approach of comets, or any other cause; and likewise in preventing the inclination of the Moon's orbit from becoming greater, or the Moon itself from being brought nearer to, or carried further from, the Earth; any of which alterations would be attended with fatal consequences, especially the two last of them, which might be most easily affected by a comet's approach.

Matho, vol. ii. § 118, 119. p. 143, &c. § 110. p. 91, &c. *Collib. ib.* p. 144.

3. In regulating the winds, so as may be for the preservation and benefit of the Earth; though we are not able to assign any certain laws by which it is effected.

Clarke's Rohault, part i. c. xii. § 41. Note. *Collib. Inq.* p. 144.

4. In the due proportion which is observed between males and females in the several species of animals, and especially in mankind.

Nieuwent. ib. vol. i. p. 351—363. *Derh. Phys. Theol.* p. 175, 176. Note.

5. In preserving the balance of the several species of animals, so that none should overrun the earth, and none be lost.

Collib. ib. p. 123; edit. 3. p. 147. *Derham's Phys. Theol.* p. 168—179. *Nat. Disp.* vol. i. part i. p. 44—46.

6. In keeping the species of animals and vegetables the same through succeeding ages, and preventing their being corrupted by undue mixtures.

Collib. ib. p. 122, 123; edit. 3. p. 148, 149.

7. In keeping the faces, voices, and handwriting so wonderfully distinct as they appear to be.

Weems's Works, vol. iv. part ii. p. 12, 13. *Derh. ib.* p. 308—310. *Ray's Wisd.* p. 283—286.

8. The regularity and steadiness with which the world is governed by the same laws in the most distant ages, is a further noble argument of the divine interposition; and is perhaps in nothing more conspicuous than in this, that the instincts of animals are still the same. *Shaft.* vol. ii. p. 337.

9. If in any instance these laws have been interrupted, and effects have been produced beyond the common course of nature: as these instances do not appear to have been so frequent as to overthrow

the argument, *gr.* 8. so they afford a further argument of a Being superior to this system of things, and prove that he attends to the affairs of his creatures.

Limb. Theol. lib. i. c. ii. § 17, 19, 25. *Crellius de Deo*, p. 23, in his Works, vol. iv.

1—9. 10. It appears that the world is under the government of some Being of great power, and exquisite contrivance, art, and conduct; who is himself either necessarily existent, or derived from some other who is so.

LECTURE XXXII.

PROPOSITION XXVIII.

To give a view of those other arguments in proof of a Deity, which seem not of equal force with the former, and yet are urged by persons of considerable note.

SOLUTION.

1. Cartesius argues that there must be a God, because necessary existence is contained in the idea of a God, as three angles are in the idea of a triangle; so that though essence and existence are in other things distinct, yet when considered with regard to the Deity, they are the same.

To this it is answered, That there is a difference between the notional truth of propositions, and the real truth of ideas. In plainer terms, the fallacy lies in the ambiguity of those words, *God is a necessary existent Being:* If the meaning of them be, *q. d.* "By the word GOD, I understand a Being that is supposed to be self-existent," they will be allowed; but then they prove not his real existence: but if they signify, "It is most certain there is such a Being," the sense is changed, and the proposition may still be disputed.

Cartes. Princ. lib. i. § 14—16. *Camb. Exist.* p. 197—199. *Voyage to the World of Cart.* p. 159—164. *Collib. Inq.* p. 130—132; edit. 2. p. 156—159.

2. Cartesius further argues, "The greater the objective perfection of any idea is, the more perfect must its cause be; but we have the idea of a Being infinitely perfect, therefore there must be some infinitely perfect Being to cause and produce it."

But this seems still to take for granted the thing to be proved, *i. e.* the objective reality of the idea, or the reality of the object supposed to be represented by it; and it may be pleaded, that without any such archetype at all, an idea of an infinitely perfect Being might be produced by the operation of our minds upon ideas arising from inferior objects, seeing we do not comprehend infinity, but only deny the bounds of an object which we suppose infinite.

Cartes. ib. § 17, 18, 22. *Camb. ib.* p. 189—191. *Voyage to the World of Cart.* p. 166—169. *Collib. Inq.* p. 132, 133. edit; 3. p. 159, 160. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 20—22. p. 19—21; 6th edit. *Locke's Ess.* lib. iv. c. x. §. 7.

3. Epicurus, and many others, particularly Lord Shaftesbury, have argued, that the idea of God is universal as being innate, and therefore that his existence is certain. Epicurus therefore supposes it natural to admit it; and those who believe man to be God's work, argue from his having stamped this character of himself upon all his human creatures; but the foundation of this argument has been removed in *Prop.* 8. *gr.* 5. and the references.

Coll. Inq. p. 128—130. edit. 3. 154—156. *Shaftesb. Letter to a Clergyman.*

4. Tillotson argues to this effect: "The idea of a God is possible, seeing it involves no contradiction to suppose a Being of all possible perfections, therefore it is necessary; for if there be no God now, there never can be a God, seeing eternity is a part of our idea of him; so that on this supposition the existence of a God is impossible, contrary to the hypothesis." But this argument, which seems nearly equal to the first in a plainer dress, may be sufficiently answered by the known distinction between an *hypothetical* and an *actual* possibility; *v. g.* It may be said to be *hypothetically* possible that the first man should have been created with wings; but since he was in fact created without wings, it is not *actually* possible; and this seems to be an instance parallel to the other.

Tillots. Works, vol. i. p. 19. *Collib. Inq.* p. 133, 134; edit. 3. 161, 162.

DEFINITION XXXI.

Those arguments which are brought from the existence of some of the attributes of God to prove the existence of a God, are called proofs A PRIORI: those taken from the phenomena observable in the works of nature, are called proofs A POSTERIORI.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The question, Whether there be any proof of the being of a God *a priori?* depends upon the reality of space and duration, and their being the properties of some substance; which will be examined hereafter.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The proof of the *attributes* of a God *a priori*, is the arguing them from self-existence, showing them to have a necessary connexion with it: and in this sense some have denied there can be any proof *a priori;* because nothing can be prior to a self-existent Being, and because all our proofs of the attributes of such a Being are ultimately drawn from the consideration of some Being derived from

him; but this objection is evidently founded on a mistake of the sense in which these words are used by the most accurate writers.

SCHOLIUM 3.

On the whole, it may be proper to distinguish the various ways of proving the being and attributes of God thus:—

1. *Both* are proved *a priori*, when from the real existence of space and duration we infer the existence of a self-existent Being, whose properties they are, and from necessity of existence prove his wisdom, power, goodness, &c.*

2. *Both* are proved *a posteriori*, when we argue from a survey of the system of nature, that there must be a wise, powerful, and benevolent Author.

3. The proof is *mixed*, when from the observed existence of any one derived being, whether material or immaterial, more or less perfect, we argue the existence of a self-existent Being, and thus infer his attributes from a necessary connexion with self-existence, as in the first case.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 494—498, and p. 501, 502. *Waterland's Diss. on the Arg. a priori, apud Law's Inq. ad fin. præs.* 51—54, 56—60.

LECTURE XXXIII.

PROPOSITION XXIX.

To take a survey of the chief sects of ATHEISTS amongst the ancient Grecian Philosophers.

SOLUTION.

SECT. 1. They all agreed in asserting that there was nothing but *matter* in the universe; but differ as to the question, whether it was animate or inanimate.

SECT. 2. Those who held matter to be *animated*, were in general called ὑλοζοικοι; who (as they darkly expressed it) maintained that matter had some natural perception, but no animal sensation, or reflection, in itself considered; but that this imperfect life occasioned that organization from whence sensation and reflection afterwards arose.

SECT. 3. Of these, some held only *one life*, which they called a *plastic nature;* and these were called the Stoical Atheists, because the Stoics held such a nature, though they supposed it the instrument of the Deity: others thought that every particle of matter was endued with life, and these were called the *Stratonici*, from Strato Lampsacenus: and Hobbes seems to have been of this opinion.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 57. marg.

SECT. 4. Those Atheists who held matter to be *inanimate* were called ατομικοι. Of these, some attempted to solve the phenomena of nature, by having recourse to the unmeaning language of *qualities* and *forms*, as the Anaximandrians, who thought they were produced by infinite active force, upon immense matter, acting without design: others, by the figure and motion which they supposed to be essential to those atoms: these were the *Democritici;* whose philosophy differed but very little from the Epicureans, who evidently borrowed many of their notions from Democritus.

SECT. 5. Diagoras and Theodorus among the ancients, as Vaninus among the moderns, are reckoned martyrs for Atheism.

Collier or Bayle in Nom. Buddæi Hist. Phil. c. iv. § 43—46, *et* 48. *Cudworth's System*, l. i. c. iii. *præs.* § 34—36, 105, 134—136. *Cyrus's Trav.* vol. ii. p. 27, 28, 31, 32. *Fenel. Phil. Lives*, p. 110, and 253, 254. *Hale's Orig. of Man*, § 4. c. iv. p. 340—342. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 17—25. fol.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Sir William Temple is said to have been an Atheist of a kind different from any of these, and to have thought the present system of things necessary and eternal; consequently his notion has been confuted, by all the arguments brought to prove the world in its present form not to have been eternal, and that matter is not self-existent, nor motion essential to it, or thought producible from it alone.

Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. ii. p. 670, 8vo.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The Chinese have been represented by some as a nation of Atheists; and Burnet declares that Confucius and his followers, of whom Sir William Temple was a great admirer, are to be reckoned amongst those who were Atheists themselves, and left religion to the people. But Couplet (in his *Declaratio Proemialis*, p. 38.) has largely endeavoured to prove, that though their modern writers, *i. e.* those from about the tenth century of Christianity, have entertained and propagated Atheistical notions among the philosophers of that nation, Confucius and their earlier teachers were notwithstanding votaries to pure religion; but it is very observable, that Confucius (if the writings which Couplet and his brethren, the Jesuit missionaries, have published as his, do really contain a just representation of what he taught) says little of those branches of duty which immediately relate to God; which leaves too much room for suspicion: though he does indeed speak of spirits surrounding men

* Amidst the various attempts to prove the being of a God *a priori*, one of the most curious, and which seems to approach the nearest to a demonstration, is a short tract, written by the Rev. Moses Lowman of Clapham. The piece is now become very scarce, and indeed is almost forgotten. We mention it, that, in case it should be met with in any catalogue or sale of books, its value may be known. A Mr Knight, a Dissenting Minister at Chertsey, in Surrey, wrote a book on the same subject, a little more than forty years ago. See also the second edition of Dr. Price's Review of the principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals.

when they sacrifice, in such a manner, as to agree very well with the heathen notion of good demons; which perhaps differs not much from the Christian doctrine of angels (*Conf. Morals*, l. ii. p. 20—32). Yet I have not been able to find any part of his work in which he speaks expressly of God, but that very remarkable passage (l. ii. p. 88—90) in which he says so many sublime things of *Him who is supremely holy*, must (when the whole of it is taken together) be understood of his *Wise Man*, and in that view is so impious and profane, as to leave a great deal of room to imagine that Barnet was not mistaken in the judgment he formed concerning him; nor will what he says of *the Great Spirit of Heaven and Earth* be sufficient wholly to remove the suspicion, as it is most probable that it coincides with the notion of a plastic power, which some of the Grecian Atheists held.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Besides the objections against design in the universe, (*Prop.* 27. *Lem.* to *Dem.* 3. *Schol.* 2.) other objections against a Deity have been urged, the chief of which amounts to this, That there is something in his nature, operations, and conduct, which we cannot fully comprehend. But if this argument be allowed as conclusive, we might be brought even to doubt of our own existence. See *Prop.* 18. *Cor.* 3.

Many other arguments or excuses brought for Atheism do not deserve a particular place here, as will appear by consulting the passages here referred to.

Cudworth's Syst. Book 1. c. iv. § 5—22. *Gastrel of Nat. Rel.* p. 187—212.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It seems reasonable to conclude, that the fear of punishment from a Divine Being, and a desire of seeming wiser than others, have been the chief causes of Atheism, and perhaps the absurd notions which some have entertained of the Deity, and the unworthy manner in which those who profess to believe in Him have acted, may be reckoned among the most fatal occasions of it.

Gastr. ib. p. 240—248. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. ii. p. 84, 85. *Works*, vol. i. p. 221, 222.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It may not be improper here to hint at the strange conduct of Tully in his celebrated book *De Natura Deorum*, who only slightly touches on the opinion of Anaxagoras, that all things were produced by one Infinite Mind, and gives no reason to that opinion, not so much as spends one page or section in discussing it, though he assigns proper advocates to defend at large the Stoical and Epicurean principles as well as the Academical; and after all, leaves his reader under the impression of the Epicurean objections against Providence; only coldly telling us, that they were not on the whole, in his opinion, so probable as the contrary doctrine. It is observable, that the most religious passage in all Tully's works is only a fragment preserved by Lactantius.

Middleton's Life of Cic. vol. iii. 8vo. p. 320, 321.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Having thus established the proof of the existence of God, we now proceed to the following propositions to consider the chief of his perfections.

LECTURE XXXIV.

PROPOSITION XXV.

God is eternal, i. e. he has existed, and will ever exist.

DEMONSTRATION.

Def. 27. *Cor.* 1. 1. Whatever is self existent is eternal.

Def. 30. 2. God is self existent.

1, 2. 3. God is eternal. *Q. E. D.*

Wilkins's Nat. Rel. p. 120—123. *Abern.* vol. i. p. 182—191.

COROLLARY.

God is immutable. Vid. *Def.* 27. *Cor.* 3.

Wilkins's ib. p. 115—117. *Collin. Inq.* p. 46, 57; edit. 3. p. 66, 67. *Abern.* p. 198—200.

SCHOLIUM.

It must be acknowledged there is something to us incomprehensible in the Divine Eternity, in whatever view we attempt to conceive of it. A successive eternity is what the mind can form no consistent idea of; for it seems that, if there had been a fifth, a tenth, or hundredth, there must have been some first; and there can be nothing absolutely infinite, to which a continual addition is making. On the other hand, it is impossible for us to conceive of an eternity so instantaneous as to exclude all past and future, and to be but one point of duration: this would make that space of time, to which millions of years are as nothing, but a small part of an hour or a minute, and is in effect declaring that God is now creating the world, and also now destroying it, supposing it ever to be destroyed. Indeed, if all that were meant by an instantaneous eternity when applied to God were this—That all things, whether past or future, are as open to his view as those things which exist in the present moment—this would be intelligible, but would not remove the difficulty of a successive eternity: and to reply (as some have done) that this eternity is not to be considered as duration at all, but as necessary existence, to which neither succession nor instantaneousness have any relation at all, more

than colour to sound, leaves the question, I think, under the same darkness as before.

Nevertheless, it is to be remembered, that this difficulty does not arise from the doctrine of the Deity alone, but is common to every scheme that supposes any thing eternal, as something must certainly be (*Prop.* 19.); and it would follow from supposing one atom to be so, besides all the other absurdities arising from the denial of an intelligent self existent cause.

Clarke's Serm. vol. i. p. 81, 82. 8vo. *Collib. Inq.* p. 204—211; edit. 3. p. 245—253. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 69, 70. *Watts's Hymns*, l. ii. No. 17 and 67; see also his *Ontology*, c. iv. p. 12—17. *Abern.* vol. i. p. 201—207. *Soame Jenyns's Disquisitions*, No. 4.

PROPOSITION XXXI.

God is omnipotent; *i. e.* no effect can be assigned so great, but he is able to produce it.

DEMONSTRATION.

Def. 30. 1. The very act of creating any being out of nothing, implies a power so great, that we can imagine nothing impossible to a Being who can perform it by his own power.

Prop. 27. *Dem.* 3. 2. The amazing greatness and variety of the works of nature, serve still more sensibly to illustrate the power of the Creator.

3. We see nothing which betrays any marks of impotency or weakness in the Deity.

1, 2, 3. 4. We have no reason to believe that any *internal* defect limits the Divine Power.

5. If there were any other Being capable of controlling him in the execution of his volitions, this Being must be superior to him, and might (for any thing that appears) have prevented or destroyed his being as well as his operations; which would be inconsistent with the idea of God (*Def.* 30.) as a self existent Being.

5, 6. There is no *external* power to limit the operations of the Divine Being.

4, 6. 7. His power is unlimited, and consequently can produce any effect, be it ever so great. *Q. E. D.*

Wollast. of Nat. Rel. p. 145, 146, p. 127—129. 8vo edit. *Clarke's Serm.* vol. i. p. 119, 120, 206—216. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 106, 107, 67—69. *Living Temple*, vol. i. 8vo edit. p. 207—215. *Abern.* vol. i. No. 8.

COROLLARY.

If God be omnipotent, then nothing can be necessary to the production of any being in any supposed circumstance of time or place, but that God should will its existence in this circumstance.

Jen. Pneum. Prop. 30. *Ralphson de Spatio reali*, p. 67. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 23; Note. *Living Temple*, p. 50, 51.

LECTURE XXXV.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Another argument to prove that God is infinite in power is drawn from *Def.* 28. *Cor.*; for it is certain he has some degree of power. A third from *Prop.* 27. *Dem.* 1. *Cor.* 2. since it is evident that to conceive of God as omnipotent, is much more honourable than to conceive of him as a Being of limited power.

SCHOLIUM 2.

If it be objected to the fifth step of the preceding demonstration, That a power merely equal to that of God's might be sufficient to control him in the execution of his volitions, and that we have not yet proved there is no being equal to him,—it may be replied, that in some cases to control the acts of another must argue some superiority; *v. g.* if *A.* will that a creature should exist, and *B.* that it should not exist; if it does not exist, then *B.* in that instance triumphs over *A.* and appears superior to him; but if this answer should not be judged satisfactory, then it must be remembered, that we have shown that God's power is not limited by any internal defect, and that no external limiting power has yet been proved; and if it should hereafter be proved, by any argument not depending upon his omnipotence, that there is but one such self existent being as we call God, then this proposition will be demonstrated in all its extent.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It must be owned that we have no conceptions of a creating power otherwise than by its effects: nevertheless, that will not prove that there is no such thing: a blind man might as well argue against the existence of light.

Collib. Inq. p. 60—64; edit. 3. 70—75.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is no limitation of the Divine Power, to assert that God is not able to do what implies a contradiction; for that is in effect to do nothing at all: and consequently, a pretended power of doing it, is no power at all.

Col. Inq. p. 180, 181; edit. 3. p. 217, 218. *Crouz. Log.* vol. i. p. 403, 404. *Clarke's Serm.* vol. i. p. 216—219. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 101. *Living Temple*, 8vo edit. vol. i. p. 330—343.

LECTURE XXXVI.

PROPOSITION XXXII.

All the creatures of God, whether they be corporeal or incorporeal, sensible or spiritual, owe

their efficacy for producing any effect to the agency of a Divine Power in and upon them, at the very time when such effect is produced.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Def. 27. 1. Whatever is derived from another, does not necessarily exist in the first moment of its being.

2. Whatever does not necessarily exist in the first moment of its existence, cannot necessarily exist in the second, or in any following moment; but must owe its continued existence to the will of the Being by whom it was at first produced: for by supposing its existence to continue when that will ceased, we should suppose it to be without the cause of its being. *Q. E. D.*

1, 2. 3. All the creatures of God do every moment depend upon God for the continuance of their existence.

Cudlib. Inq. p. 64, 65; edit. 3. p. 75. 76. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 65. *Burnet on Art.* p. 30. *Watts's Ess.* I. ix. § 2. p. 201—208, 213. *Ib.* No. xi. p. 267, 268. *Cheyne's Princ.* part. i. § 9. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 225—227. *Sherlock on Providence*, 9th edit. p. 19, 20.

4. The power of action implies something more than continued existence.

3, 4. 5. Whatever is created by God depends continually upon him for the continuance of its active powers.

6. If from any constitution of nature whatsoever, there could necessarily arise any act of power independent on the concurrent volition of God, it is difficult to say where that independent power would stop; and for aught appears, that Being might be omnipotent.

7. The wisest and greatest philosophers have not been able to trace any connexion between solidity and gravitation, or motion and thought; therefore a perpetual omnipotent agency seems to be the most probable way of accounting for those otherwise unaccountable phenomena.

Barter's Mathe. vol. i. *Conf.* iv. § 44—49. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. § 2. *pras.* p. 94—101; and note, p. 101—108, 128—139. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 309.

5, 6, and 7. 8. *Valet propositio.*

Virg. En. vi. ver. 724, &c. *Queen on the Sp.* p. 138—140. p. 77. p. 465, 466. *Camb. Exist.* p. 111. *Clarke's* xvii. *Serm.* No. 7. p. 171. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 15. *B.* p. 27. *A.* p. 183. *A.* p. 100. *B. South's Serm.* vol. iii. p. 461. *Reynolds's Works*, p. 7. *Jenk. Reasonab. of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 484. *Marc. Anton.* I. v. c. 40. *Aberm.* vol. i. *Serm.* vii. p. 240—244; Lond. edit. p. 225—229. *Price's Four Dissertations.* No. 1. *Dr. Stebbing's Discourse on Providence.*

DEMONSTRATION II.

To those who allow the universality of Divine Providence on principles independent on this proposition, which many do, another argument has been proposed which will stand thus:

1. God must will that any creature should, or should not, exist, with any given power, in any given moment; for not to will that it should so exist, would on the present supposition be in effect willing that it should not.

2. If he will that it should not so exist, it will not: otherwise God would not be omnipotent, contrary to *Prop.* 31.

1, 2, 3. 4. Therefore its existence in such circumstances, *i. e.* its efficacy for producing any effect in question, is owing to the divine volition, *i. e.* to the agency of God in and upon it.* *Q. E. D.*

LECTURE XXXVII.

COROLLARY 1.

What we generally call *second causes*, are not causes in the strict propriety of speech; and what we call the *laws of nature*, are only certain rules and methods by which God generally proceeds in those of his actions which fall under our cognizance. Nevertheless, creatures may in an inferior sense be called causes, as certain events commonly follow certain changes in their condition and will.

Boyle's Inquiry into Nat. apud Ray's Wisdom of God, p. 53, 54. *Seed's Serm.* No. 5. vol. ii. p. 127, &c. *Cheyne's Princ.* part i. § 4. p. 4—6. *Nat. Disp.* vol. iv. p. 50—52. *Ramsay's Princ.* vol. i. p. 251—255. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 179—181. *Watts's Ontology*, p. 329 and 365. *Clarke at Boyle's Lectures*, part ii. p. 222. 6th edit.

COROLLARY 2.

It evidently appears that the providence, *i. e.* the notice and care, of God extends itself to all events, even the smallest as well as the greatest. Vid. *Prop.* 27. *Dem.* 4.

Rel. of Nat. p. 95—98. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. ii. p. 162—166. *Baxt. on the Soul*, p. 182, 183.

COROLLARY 3.

We hence learn, into what we are to resolve the

* N. B. I lay but little stress upon this second demonstration, though it once appeared plausible to me; perhaps the supposition of Divine Providence extending to the smallest as well as greatest events, is a proposition, as God is the Author of all things, and the Lover of those creatures, that he has formed to be the continual receptacles of their enjoyments, that it requires the whole weight of God to counterbalance that evidence which appears for the event. There may be a medium between absolutely willing either that it should or should not exist, which is inconsistent with the supposition

power which our minds have of moving our bodies, *viz.* into a divine volition in such and such instances to produce motions in our bodies, correspondent to the volitions of our minds. To this agree the ease and swiftness with which those motions are performed on the act of our will, and the constancy of other involuntary, but always needful motions, which cannot be solved by any mechanical laws. *Prop.* 1. *Sch.* 2.

Clarke and Leibnitz, No. 5. App. *Clerici Pneum.* § 1. c. vi. § 12—16. *Camb. Exist.* § 46, 47. *Matho*, vol. i. *Conf.* 6. § 79. *Seed's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 150.

COROLLARY 4.

The wonderful instances of instinct in brutes may most probably be accounted for this way: God, by some unknown impression upon them, moving them to and assisting them in such actions, as on the whole are most convenient: though the *rationale* depends on principles, which they cannot know. *Def.* 19. *Cor.* 2.

Spect. vol. ii. No. 120. *sub fin.* No. 121. *sub init.* *Camb. Exist.* § 23. p. 46—48. *Nat. Disp.* vol. i. p. 285, 286; edit. 2. p. 197, 198. *Matho*, vol. i. *Conf.* vi. § 82, 83. *Origen adv. Cels.* l. iv. p. 217. *Seed's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 148, &c.

COROLLARY 5.

Hence we infer the absurdity of the doctrine of a *plastic nature*, which some have thus described:—"It is an incorporeal created substance, endued with a vegetative life, but not with sensation or thought; penetrating the whole created universe, being co-extended with it; and, under God, moving matter, so as to produce the phenomena, which cannot be solved by mechanical laws: active for ends unknown to itself, not being expressly conscious of its actions, and yet having an obscure idea of the action to be entered upon."

As the idea itself is most obscure, and indeed inconsistent, so the foundation of it is evidently weak. It is intended by this, to avoid the inconvenience of subjecting God to the trouble of some changes in the created world, and the meanness of others: but it appears from this proposition, that even upon this hypothesis he would still be the Author of them; besides, that to Omnipotence nothing is troublesome, nor those things mean, when considered as a part of a system, which *alone* might appear to be so.

Cudw. Int. Syst. book i. c. i. p. 149—172. *prax.* 178—181. *More's Imm. of the Soul*, l. iii. c. 12. *His Philosophical Works*, p. 212—215. *Ray's Wisd. of God*, p. 51, 52. *Cheyne's Princ.* part i. c. i. § 3. p. 3, 4.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is objected, That if God be thus the Author of all our ideas, and of all our motions, then also of all our volitions, which would be inconsistent with that liberty of choice asserted, *Prop.* 16.

Ans. On the principles laid down above, the will is not properly an effect of any necessary efficient cause; but rather a tendency towards the production of an effect, so far as we apprehend it to be in our power (*Prop.* 1. *gr.* 4.); and for any thing which appears in the objection, or is asserted in the proposition, when all the requisites to volition are supposed, it lies in our own breasts to determine one way or another; and though God, upon such a determination of ours, adds efficacy to the volition, even when it is most foolish and pernicious, that does not properly make him the Author of the action (vid. *Def.* 10.); and they who suppose a stock of power lodged in the hand of the creature by virtue of its original constitution, (God at the same time knowing in every particular how it will be used,) will labour under the same difficulty in this respect with us; nay, their hypothesis at last will be found equivalent to ours; and if we allow that universal presence and inspection of God, which all who are not Atheists admit, it will be nearly as difficult to account for his not interposing to prevent such actions, as for his adding efficacy to them in a natural way.

Camb. Exist. § 67. *Howe on Prescience*, § 6, 7. *Op.* vol. ii. p. 500—503. *Watts's Diss. on Trin.* No. 5. p. 142, 143. *His Works*, vol. vi. p. 604, 605. *Mandev. Free Thoughts*, p. 108, 109. *Bart. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 207—210. *Collib. Inq.* p. 195—198; edit. 3. p. 235—238.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That if God produces all our ideas by his own impression on the mind, then a material world was not necessary, and consequently it would be unbecoming the nature and character of God to produce it. Vid. *Prop.* 31. *Cor.*

Ans. 1. The denial of any material world at all, according to Berkley's and Collier's scheme, would remove the foundation of this objection: nevertheless, for reasons which will afterwards be mentioned, we do not choose to have recourse to that solution: but add,

2. Allowing the creation of a material world to be to us utterly unaccountable on this supposition, we cannot therefore certainly say that it was in vain; and as for its not being absolutely necessary, it will not easily be granted that any thing that God does is so.

3. If we grant that God has a power of producing

any idea in our minds without an external archetype, of which dreams seem to be an evident proof, and which is so certainly included in Omnipotence that few deny it, then it will be as hard to account for the creation of the material world as if we admit the proposition to be true.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is further objected, That it is a dishonour to the Divine Being, to suppose him immediately concerned in the most mean and trifling events; and that it would be exceedingly ridiculous, were our discourse commonly to be formed upon the principles of this proposition.

Ans. We before (*Cor.* 5.) observed the usefulness and beauty of many things *on the whole*, which, when considered *in themselves*, may appear mean and vile; (of which the discharge of the fæces from animal bodies is a remarkable instance;) and we may further add, that there is no occasion at all for introducing a change in our common forms of speech, seeing there is a sense in which those things may be said to be the actions of the creatures, which are done by the intermedintion of their volition, though not by an active force of their own, at that time independent on the concurrent volition of God (*Cor.* 1.); so that, upon the whole, they may be sufficiently distinguished from those which are, with full propriety and in the highest sense, called the actions of God.

Cranz. Log. vol. i. p. 436—440, 442. *Watts's Ess.* No. 3. c. iii. § 10—15, p. 87—90.

LECTURE XXXIX.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is further objected, That it would be a dishonour to the Divine Being, that, whereas a common workman can make a machine which shall go on for some time without his interposition, God should not be able to produce what can operate without his perpetual agency.

To this it is answered, 1. All human arts are but the means of altering some circumstances in the form and disposition of matter, which before existed under certain laws, entirely independent on the will of the artist; but it is the peculiar glory of God to have a whole world of creatures in a perpetual dependence on himself.

2. That when we asserta perpetual divine agency, we readily acknowledge that matters are so contrived as not to need a divine interposition in a different manner from that in which it had been constantly exerted. And it is most evident, that an unremitting energy, displayed in such circumstances, greatly exalts our idea of God, instead of depressing it; and therefore, by the way, is so much the more likely to be true. Vid. *Prop.* 27. *Cor.* 2.

3. We may add, that this argument tends to prove, contrary to the opinion of most that have advanced it, that God might make a creature which should subsist without his supporting presence and agency.

Burn. on Art. p. 35. *Watts's Ess.* No. iv. § 2. p. 201—208. *Calch. Inq.* p. 197, 198. edit. 3. p. 235—238. *Clarke and Leibnitz.* p. 3—7. § 4. p. 13—17. § 4. p. 27—31. § 6—9. p. 43—47. § 6—9. p. 361—365.

PROPOSITION XXXII.

God is a Being of perfect KNOWLEDGE; i. e. he knows in the most certain and perfect manner whatever can be the object of knowledge, i. e. whatever does not imply a contradiction.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Def. 30. *Prop.* 27. 1. God is a Spirit, i. e. a thinking Being.

1. 2. God must have some degree of knowledge.

2. *Def.* 28. *Cor.* 3. There is no reason for setting bounds to his knowledge, *i. e.* he knows all things in the most perfect manner. *Q. E. D.*

DEMONSTRATION II.

Def. 30. *Prop.* 27. *Cor.* 32. 1. God has made all the creatures, and continually actuates and supports them.

1. 2. He must know all that relates to them.

3. He must by consciousness know himself.

2, 3. 4. He must know all things. *Q. E. D.*

SCHOLIUM.

To this it may be objected, that there may be some other self-existent creator; and that this being with his creatures may be unknown to God; and it is allowed, that the argument of this second demonstration cannot appear in its full evidence till we have proved the unity of the Godhead: nevertheless, the second step alone would be sufficient to prove that he knew all things that belong to us; which is that in which we are chiefly concerned.

DEMONSTRATION III.

1. Knowledge is an attribute of so great importance, that without it, whatever conceptions we could form of the Deity, would be very low and imperfect.

Prop. 27. *Cor.* 2. 2. It is reasonable to conceive of God in the most honourable manner.

1, 2. 3. It is reasonable to conceive of God as a Being of great knowledge; and to remove from our idea of him, as much as possible, all degrees of error, ignorance, and uncertainty.

4. There is no apparent reason for limiting his knowledge, so as to exclude from it any thing which can be the object of intelligence to us or any other being.

3, 4—5. It is reasonable to conclude that he is a Being of perfect knowledge. *Q. E. D.*

Clarke's Post. Serm. vol. i. p. 248—252. No. 11. *Wilk. Nat. Rel.* p. 124—128. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 599, 600, 602, 603, 609—611. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 102, 103. *Abernethy*, vol. i. No. 9. p. 290—306.

SCHOLIUM.

That God is a Being of boundless knowledge as well as power, was the opinion of the wisest heathens; as appears from the custom of swearing, as well as from many passages quoted from their writers in the references above.

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it appears that God knows all the secrets of the heart, and therefore is most able to judge of the real characters of men.

COROLLARY 2.

It appears that any hypocrisy, when we are dealing with him, or addressing him, is very great folly, though it may be most artfully disguised.

LECTURE XL.

DEFINITION XXXII.

A SPIRIT is said to be PRESENT IN ANY PLACE, when it is capable of perceiving and immediately operating upon the body which fills that place, or on spirits united to such bodies, *i. e.* spirits perceiving and acting by them.

PROPOSITION XXXIV.

God is OMNIPRESENT, *i. e.* present in every place.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 33. 1. God perceives the changes of bodies in whatever place they are, and of all spirits united to them.

Prop. 31. 2. He is capable of operating upon them.

3. It is much more honourable to God, to conceive of him as present in all places, than as excluded from any.

1, 2, 3. *Def.* 32. and 28. *Cor.* 2. 4. God is omnipresent. *Q. E. D.*

Howe, ib. vol. i. p. 108—110. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 756, 757. *Collib. Inq.* p. 71, 72; edit. 3. p. 84, 85. *Abernethy*, vol. i. Serm. vii. *Spect.* vol. viii. No. 565, 571.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The first of these arguments only proves that God is where any of his creatures are; and it is only on supposition that there is *but one* God, that it will follow from hence that he is every where: but it is to be remembered, that the argument, *Def.* 28. *Cor.* if allowed, will prove, that what can by a necessity of its own nature act upon a body in *any* place, may by a necessity of its nature act upon bodies in *every* place; which will be so far a proof of God's omnipresence, independent on his unity; and if it be his property to fill space, he must for the same reason fill all space.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is a great question, Whether God be so present as to fill space? This depends upon another question, Whether it be the property of an immaterial Spirit to fill space? with reference to which I must confess, that when I conceive of spirit as diffused through any part of space, I immediately conceive of it as something *corporeal*; and consequently cannot conceive how it can be asserted of the Divine Being, by those who grant his immateriality, as most of the patrons of this doctrine do; but this will be more largely considered below.

Newt. Princip. p. 483. *Saur. Serm.* vol. ii. p. 60—64. *Watts's Exc.* No. vi. § 5. p. 165—169. *Rams. Phil. Princ.* Prop. viii. vol. i. p. 57—72.

DEFINITION XXXIII.

An event not come to pass is said to be CONTINGENT, which either may, or may not, be. What is already done, is said to *have been contingent*, if it might or might not have been.

COROLLARY 1.

Contingency is opposed to *necessity*, not to *certainty*; for that is said to be certain which will be, without considering whether it be necessary or not.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 100. p. 78. edit. 6.

COROLLARY 2.

There are in fact various things, which are in their nature contingent; for such are all the actions of free creatures, considered as free.—*Vid. Def.* 22. and *Prop.* 70.

Watt's Ont. c. iii. p. 331—333. *Hutcheson's Metaph.* part i. c. 4. § 2. p. 23—25.

PROPOSITION XXXV.

Future contingencies are known to God.

N. B. Though this be comprehended in *Prop.* 33. yet we shall here give a distinct demonstration of it, because it has been so much controverted, and so much of what follows depends upon it.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. So much depends upon future contingencies, that if they be unknown to God, almost every thing relating to those of his creatures which are free agents must be unknown to him too: so that our ideas of the divine knowledge and perfection will by this means be very much diminished.

2. Wise and sagacious men are capable of making very probable conjectures of future events, and therefore it seems dishonourable to deny that God has a power of forming an unerring judgment concerning them.

3. If God does not foreknow future contingencies,

he is daily growing more and more knowing, in a prodigious and incomputable degree beyond any of his creatures, which would be inconsistent with his immutability, and therefore contrary to *Prop.* 3. *Cor.* 1, 2, and 3—4. *Valet proposito.*

Hoar's Works, vol. i. p. 103, 104. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 99—102. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 605, 606. *Clarke's Posth. Serm.* vol. i. No. 11. p. 258—268. *Abern.* vol. i. Serm. ix. p. 313—324.

COROLLARY.

God always wills the same thing—for whatever appears to him eligible in any circumstances which actually are, must always have appeared eligible on the foresight of those circumstances, i. e. he must always have willed it; supposing, what we shall hereafter endeavour to prove, that his will is always agreeable to reason, and never changed without it.

LECTURE XLI

SCHOLIUM 1.

If it should hereafter be proved, on the one hand, that God has foretold the evil actions of his creatures; and on the other, that he could not have made them necessary, then it will appear that this proposition is true in fact, whatever plausible objections may be raised against it.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The principal objection to the proposition is, That certainly to foreknow contingencies is a contradiction, since nothing can be the object of knowledge but what exists in itself or in its necessary cause; and, consequently, to deny their being known to God is no more limiting his knowledge, than it limits his power to own he is not able to do what is self-contradictory.

To this we answer, That the *certainty* of an event does not imply *necessity*, (*Def.* 33. *Cor.* 1.) and consequently, that there may be a foundation for certain foresight, where the event itself is contingent; or, in other words, the thing will not be because God foresees it, but God foresees it because it will certainly be. It may be added, that not to be able to do a contradiction, is in effect no limitation of the power of God, because a power to effect a contradiction is indeed no power at all. *Prop.* 31. *Schol.* but not to know what the will of a free creature will determine is indeed a limitation of knowledge, or, in other words, a difficulty with which the divine understanding, all the proposition be denied, is puzzled and confounded.

It must be acknowledged, that the method by which God foresees these contingencies is unknown; for I think it not safe to say, as some do, that the mind is so constituted, that it does always in fact, though not necessarily, determine itself according to the preponderancy of the motive offered to it; which, if it were granted, would not be a certain foundation of prescience, since if this scheme could be reconciled with the doctrine of liberty, as stated *Prop.* 16. yet it would subject the Divine Being to a possibility of error in every particular, and in all the schemes depending upon each. We are sure, by *Prop.* 33. that God knows all things that actually are, whereas our own knowledge is limited to a very narrow sphere; and therefore, since we are sure the divine understanding does in that instance entirely exceed our comprehension, why may we not as well allow that it may exceed it in the manner of foreknowing future contingencies; or where is it we may more reasonably suppose the human mind to be puzzled, than when it would attempt to explain the method of divine knowledge?

Collins's Def. p. 67, 68. *ap. Op.* vol. iv. *Collyns, Exp.* p. 91, edit. 3. p. 106—109. *Coach at Hogh's Lect.* p. 103—104. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 102, 103. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 606—608. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 104—106. vol. ii. p. 503, 504. *More's Enchir.* lib. iii. c. ii. § 2. *Letters Pers.* vol. i. No. 36. *Jackson on Human Liberty*, p. 30—76.

SCHOLIUM 3.

To the second step it is answered, God may indeed form very probable conjectures, vastly beyond the reach of any human sagacity, though he cannot certainly foreknow the event.

To this the principal reply is, That to suppose God always in doubt, and ever liable to be mistaken, seems inconsistent with the perfections of his nature, and is a less honourable way of conceiving of him; especially if we consider, that as an event lies more and more distant, the possibility of an error in each intermediate circumstance will so much affect the rest, that in a little time there may be upon complicated schemes almost a total darkness; but should it ever appear that he has actually and positively without any hesitation foretold future contingent events, and that he has even put the evidence of his true divinity upon such predictions, that would abundantly confirm the second argument: nor would the hypothesis of a constant though not necessary determination of the will according to motives (*Schol.* 1.) be sufficient to vindicate such a conduct; since still there was in every instance at least a possibility of mistake.

SCHOLIUM 4.

To step the third it is objected, That such a change as is there supposed is not inconsistent with the immutability of the Divine Being, seeing his nature and attributes are still the same, though his ideas are supposed to be different at different times;

but it is answered. This is only a partial immutability; whereas the arguments that prove the immutability of God in general will not admit of such a change in the divine views and purposes, as must be involved in the ignorance of future contingent events.

Collib. Inq. p. 56, 57; ed. 3. 66, 67. *Ridgley's Div.* vol. i. p. 62.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

It seems strange, that many who grant the universal foreknowledge of what will actually be, should deny what they call *scientia media*, or hypothetical prescience, *i. e.* the knowledge of what would follow upon some certain suppositions, which are not fact; *v. g.* how King George would have acted, if he had been Emperor of Germany; or the Emperor, if he had been King of Great Britain; or how any child who died in infancy would have behaved, if he had grown up to manhood. To object, that this would suppose the Divine Mind filled with a variety of vain speculations, is very inconclusive; for it is difficult to say how God could in any instance select any scheme as best, if he had not a view of others with which it might be compared.

Le Blanc's Thes. p. 454—458. *Juvenal's Sat.* x. ver. 350—354.

LECTURE XLII.

DEFINITION XXXIV

That being is said to be SPECULATIVELY WISE, who is able rightly to determine and judge of the relation of means to their respective ends, and the value and importance of those ends with respect to the person by whom they are pursued; and that being is said to be PRACTICALLY WISE, who determines his own choice in a manner agreeable to such right views, so as that his own greatest happiness may be most effectually promoted, if it be not yet perfect,—and maintained, if it be.

COROLLARY 1.

A being of great sagacity, who in some instances chooses excellent ends and right means, yet neglects the greatest of all, may be said to have a partial practical, as well as speculative, wisdom, yet must on the whole be accounted foolish.

COROLLARY 2.

Speculative wisdom is a part of knowledge.

PROPOSITION XXXVI

God is possessed of the highest degree both of speculative and practical wisdom.

DEMONSTRATION

Prop. 27. *Lem.* to *Dem.* 3. and *Dem.* 4. 5. We can conceive no more exquisite degrees of wisdom than are displayed in the formation and preservation of the world, where we evidently see a most astonishing subordination of means to ends, rising through numberless degrees, in which the most penetrating human understanding is soon swallowed up.

2. We see nothing upon which we can with certainty pronounce that it is on the whole foolish, because we know not what its connexion may be, and what end it may subserve.

Pope's Essay on Man.

1, 2. 3. So far as we can judge from fact, God is speculatively wise.

Def. 31. *Cor.* 2. *Prop.* 33. 4. Speculative wisdom being included in knowledge, which was before proved to belong to God, another argument arises independent on the former.

3 and 4. 5. God is possessed of the highest degree of speculative wisdom.

6. To choose and act, with an utter disregard to his own felicity, when known, (as by the preceding step he must know the most certain methods of maintaining it,) would be a character in a rational agent so unaccountable, and in so peculiar a manner unworthy of Deity, that nothing could be more dishonourable than to ascribe it to him.

5, 6. 7. *Valet propositio.*

Wilk. Nat. Rel. p. 128, 129. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 106, 107. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 617, 618. *Collib. Inq.* p. 65, 66, edit. 3. p. 77, 78. *Abern.* vol. i. Serm. x.

COROLLARY.

Philosophical liberty belongs to God in the most perfect degree; for that is indeed no other than the practical wisdom here defined, *Vid. Def.* 24; and that liberty of action belongs to him, appears from comparing *Def.* 23. with *Prop.* 31.

SCHOLIUM.

It may be objected, that it is dishonourable to the Divine Being, to suppose that one thing can be more congruous to his happiness than another. To this we reply, That we most readily acknowledge, that it would be very absurd (for reasons afterwards to be mentioned) to suppose that the Divine Felicity depended on the existence of his creatures, or on any action of theirs. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that the Divine Nature is such, that unspeakable delight must arise to himself from some methods of acting, which so perfect an understanding cannot but approve; and that, on the other hand, different methods of acting must appear to him the objects of aversion, as being in themselves absurd, contemptible, and mean; *v. g.* for him to do homage to any of his creatures, as more excellent than himself.

* The question, Whether future contingencies are known to God, unavoidably enters into the grand controversy concerning the Liberty or Necessity of the Human Will. Accordingly, it will be found to have been more or less discussed in the authors to whom we have referred, under the sixteenth proposition.

or to make a creature merely to torment it. It is so far from being dishonourable to God to suppose his happiness inseparably connected with certain methods of acting rather than others, that we could think of nothing more reproachful, than to represent him as so arbitrary a being, that of all possible methods of acting which might be proposed to him, it would be as congruous to his nature and happiness to choose one as the other.

Fost. Serm. vol. i. No. 5.

LECTURE XLIII

PROPOSITION XXXVII

To inquire how far natural liberty belongs to God. *Vid. Def.* 21.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Whenever any thing is more congruous to the divine felicity than another, God certainly chooses it; nor can we suppose him to do otherwise, in that were inconsistent with his wisdom, and therefore contrary to *Prop.* 36.

2. Nevertheless, when of many things which might be proposed any one is equally congruous to his felicity with the rest, in this he has a natural freedom of choice; and it seems that many things are indeed of such a nature. Now that this liberty is to be ascribed to him, appears from its being found in the human mind, and its being a perfection in its degree.—*Prop.* 16. *Schol.* 5.

Watts on Liberty, § 4. Prop. 11. 12. 14. 15. *Tracts*, vol. iv. p. 41, 42, 44—48. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 389—391. *Grove on Wisd.* p. 24—26. 30—37.

SCHOLIUM.

It is objected, That it is a reflection upon infinite wisdom, to suppose that God does not always choose that one scheme which is of all others the best, *i. e.* the most congruous to his felicity.

It is replied, The objection goes upon the supposition that there is one fitter than the rest; which is begging the question. If it be inquired, Whether God could not contrive such a scheme? it is answered, That we must readily allow, that he might form a scheme, fitter than the best which any created understanding could contrive; but to say he could not form another equal to that, is speaking without proof: nor does it appear that it would be any honour to divine wisdom to maintain it, more than to say, that having made one human face exceeding beautiful, it should be impossible for him to make another, whose beauty should on the whole be equal to it, even though some of the features were different: and when God chooses one of those many things, than which nothing could be fitter and nothing better, he may, agreeably to the common forms of speech, be said to choose the fittest and the best. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge, that when we weak creatures speak of the Divine wisdom, we speak of what is to us an unsearchable thing.*

Price's Four Dissertations, edit. 1. p. 121, note.

PROPOSITION XXXVIII

God is infinitely happy.

DEMONSTRATION

Prop. 36. 1. His wisdom always enables him to know, and engages him to choose, what is most conducive to his happiness.

Prop. 21. 2. Being omnipotent, he is always able to do whatever he chooses, and above the possibility of being disturbed or hurt by any being whatsoever.

To suppose the Divine happiness dependent on any creature, would be most absurd; for then, before that creature was produced, he must have been unhappy; and as he had eternally existed before the production of that creature, he must have been eternally unhappy, *i. e.* of all other beings the most unhappy; which it would be most dishonourable and groundless to imagine.

1, 2, and 3. 4. God is infinitely happy. *Q. E. D. Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 586—588. *Serm.* 78. p. 516. 517. edit. 4. *Collib. Inq.* p. 57—59. edit. 3. p. 67—69.

SCHOLIUM.

It may be asked, Why does God act at all, if he be, as the proposition supposes, perfectly happy previously to action?

To this we may answer, That the Divine Being may find some unknown delight in those volitions by which he communicates being and happiness to his creatures; nor does this suppose any change in him, since it is reasonable to believe he always wills the same thing, (*Prop.* 35. *Cor.*) *viz.* That at such times, and in such circumstances, beings should exist; and being secure of the execution of his volitions, (*Prop.* 31. *Cor.*) whatever delight he can be supposed to have in the actual production and happiness of those beings, he must have had in the purpose of producing them; so that in this respect, things that are not are to him as if they were; and if it be said, that there is a change in him, when in consequence of his volition those creatures are produced, he being now their Creator, supporter, benefactor, &c. which he was not before, it is answered, This is no change in *him*; a change of relations necessarily arising from the very idea of a Creator, and being perfectly consistent with the highest conceivable immutability; else God is changing in numberless instances every moment, as the relations of his creatures change.

* A doctrine very agreeable to Scripture, the text of which is explained by Mr. Grove in his Practical Essay.

And if it were to be allowed, that we find some degree of *uneasiness* attending the desire necessary to produce action in *us*, which however seems not to be wholly the case, yet we could not thence argue that it must be so with regard to *all* created beings; much less can we assert it of God, in whose volitions and motives of action we must, after all, acknowledge there is something which we cannot fully explain. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 505.

LECTURE XLIV.

PROPOSITION XXXIX.

There is no self-existent being besides that, whose existence and attributes we have demonstrated above.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If there were any other self-existent being, besides that whose existence we have demonstrated, he must in all respects be equal to him; for otherwise it would be natural to suppose some derivation or dependency, inconsistent with self-existence, and consequently with the hypothesis.

2. To suppose such another being, is to limit the omnipotence of God; for (not to plead God's supposed incapacity to annihilate or change him; because it may be said, that admitting him to be self-existent, this would be a contradiction, and therefore an incapacity of effecting it no limitation of power; nor to insist upon his inability to control him on account of the supposed omnipotence of this other being, to which the same thought may be applied) it seems he would be unable to act without his consent, at least tacitly implied; and if their volitions should in any respect contradict each other, which in things indifferent they might at least very possibly do, the one would be a restraint upon the other, and so neither would be omnipotent.

1. 3. It would be impossible for God to conceal any of his counsels or purposes from the knowledge of such a being, which would in some degree derogate from his majesty; or if it were allowed, that he might conceal any thing from that other being,—that other being might, by a parity of reason, conceal some things from him, and consequently he would not be omniscient; nay, supposing this being to be infinite, the number and variety of things so concealed might surpass any expression or imagination of ours.

4. It is a much greater glory to be the highest of all beings, than to be only one of a number of equals; now this supremacy of God would be destroyed by the supposition of an equal, especially when it is considered, that no one can say how many they might be; for we might allow two millions as well as two.

2, 3, 4. 5. It would be much less honourable to God, to suppose any such other being as himself, than to suppose the contrary.

6. The unity of design, which seems to prevail in the works of nature, makes it reasonable to believe it had but one Author, and that he operated in an uncontrolled manner.*

7. There is no reason from the light of nature to conclude that there are any more deities than one, or indeed to *imagine* there are any more; since one almighty and all-wise Being can do as much as a thousand such beings can do; and if any revelation of it be pretended, it will be examined in its proper place.

Gr. 5. *Prop.* 27. *Cor.* 2. *gr.* 6 and 7. 8. It is reasonable to believe, there is no self-existent being, besides that One, whose existence and attributes we have already demonstrated. *Q. E. D.*

Wilkin's Nat. Rel. p. 113, 114. *Burnet on Art.* p. 23, 24. *Clerici Pneum.* § iii. c. v. § 2—4. *Locke's Fam. Lett.* p. 112—115. *Howe's Works*, vol. i. p. 72, 73. *Living Temple*, 8vo, vol. i. p. 226—228. *Grot. de Verit.* lib. i. c. iii. *Lactant. Instit.* lib. i. c. iii. *Abern.* vol. i. Serm. v. *præs.* p. 164—177. *Priestley's Inst.* vol. i. *Letters to Philosophical Unbelievers*, part i.

LECTURE XLV.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is readily acknowledged, that these arguments, as well as many by which the foregoing proposition has been proved, do not arise to full demonstration, yet they carry a very strong degree of probability, in which the mind must acquiesce till further proof can be offered from other principles.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Limborch objects, That this proof is built on the supposition that God is a Being of all possible perfections: we reply, It goes on the supposition, that we are to conceive of him in the most honourable manner that we can; and it seems enough, if we can prove that it is dishonourable to the Deity to suppose a plurality. *Locke's Lett.* p. 124—128.

SCHOLIUM 3.

To the argument *gr.* 6. it is objected,

1. That we cannot see how far the unity of design is preserved, unless we knew the whole system.

2. That so far as we can judge by the specimen

* Though Abernethy's Sermons are esteemed by many and deservedly, that he has in the second and third parts of his discourse denied the Unity of Design in the Works of Nature, and the force of many arguments drawn from thence, and has attempted to overthrow the [illegible] Mr. Locke [illegible] the first [illegible] and [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] the argument a priori.

we have, it seems that unity of design is not preserved, since there is a mixture of good and evil; which makes it probable that there must be at least two self-existent beings, the one evil, and the other good.

To the first of these we answer, That we must judge by analogy in this respect as in many others; and particularly, that the unity of the Divine Being stands thus far on the same footing with his wisdom, which can only be proved from a comprehensive view of the whole scheme, and must be left an uncertain thing by all created understandings, if the reasoning in the objection be admitted. As to the second, it will be more fully answered below; for the present it may be sufficient to observe, that the quantity of good being so much greater than of evil, there is no reason to believe two equal beings, one entirely benevolent, the other entirely malevolent; which yet must be the hypothesis, if the phenomena referred to could grow into an objection against the proposition.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Mr. Grove argues the truth of the proposition, from our having no revelation of more deities than one; whereas if there were more, every one of them would be the reasonable object of veneration from all other beings, even though no benefits were conferred, and consequently any one wise self-existent being would reveal to all his creatures the general knowledge of his associates, that they might pay them all due veneration; but we do not choose to insist upon this, because it depends upon those moral perfections of the Deity, which we have not yet demonstrated; and might be liable to some objection, even if those moral perfections were granted.

Grove's Post. Works, vol. IV. p. 27—29. see also p. 85.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It seems not improper here to mention some other arguments, which have been urged by writers of considerable note, which yet appear not to carry along with them equal conviction with the former.

Arg. 1. Clarke and Colliber argue from the nature of *self-existence*, which is *simple, uniform*, and *universal*; whereas all *variety* must arise from some external cause, be dependent on it, and proportionable to the efficacy of it; but to this it is objected, That if it were allowed that extension and duration were not as Dr. Clarke supposes properties of God, (which if they are, they are undoubtedly *distinct* properties) yet *wisdom* and *goodness*, which all allow in the Deity, may be considered as various things. How then shall we account for this variety in him? or if we say he is what the schoolmen called *purus actus*, what idea shall we fix to those hard words?

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 46. *Collib. Inq.* p. 26, 27; edit. 3. p. 30—32.

Arg. 2. Tillotson and Clarke both argue, that if there were another self-existent being, then the existence of God would not be necessary; by, that this would introduce Atheism; for no one of the supposed number would be necessary, *i. e.* there would be no God; for you might suppose any one of them not to exist, if the other would suffice to account for all the phenomena of nature. But I confess this argument seems to me to arise from the ambiguity of the word *necessary:* in one place, it signifies what is *hypothetically* necessary, *i. e.* necessary in order to solve some apparent phenomena; in the other, it signifies *underived*.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 16, 17, 150—161, 163, 164, 166, 167, 170. *Tillot.* vol. I. p. 491, 492.

Arg. 3. Wollaston argues, (as Mr. Locke has done in the preceding references,) That if two or more such beings as we have described be supposed, their natures must be supposed either the same or different; if different, they must be contrary, or various; if contrary, each must destroy the operations of the other; if various, one must have what the other wants; both, therefore, cannot be perfect: but if their nature be perfectly the same, then they would coincide, and indeed be but one, though called two. But this latter branch of the argument seems not to be self-evident: for aught appears, they might be *specifically*, though not *identically*, the same: and if it be self-evident, it supersedes all the former part of the argumentation, amounting indeed to nothing less than an assertion that the existence of two all-perfect Beings is a contradiction in terms. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 70, 71.

All these arguments, with those mentioned in the proposition, are stated and urged in

Camb. of Exist p. 236—246. § 61, 62.

SCHOLIUM 6.

If, upon the whole, that God, whose existence and attributes have been the subject of our former inquiries, were only a co-ordinate Deity, and the God of our own system, he would, nevertheless, be the supreme object of our reverence, gratitude, and obedience.

Howe's Works, vol. I. p. 100, 101. *Irving Temple*, part I. c. VI. § 6. vol. I. p. 326—329.

SCHOLIUM 7.

That several of the wiser heathens, notwithstanding the tales of their priests and their poets, believed the existence of one Supreme Deity, appears from many passages in their writings: and if the word GOD, wherever we find it used, were always to be considered as signifying a Being of all possible perfections, it would be difficult to prove that there ever was such a thing as polytheism in the heathen world. It is the opinion of the learned and ingenious Dr. Warburton, that the mysteries of the *greater initiation*, among the hea-

thens, was the discovery of the doctrine of the Divine Unity to the wiser part of the people: agreeably to which he supposes, that the song ascribed to Orpheus, preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius, was the very hymn used upon that occasion. That of Cleanthes (see *Cudworth's Int. Syst.* p. 432, 433, and *West's Pindar*) must be allowed in the strongest sense to speak this language; and is perhaps the finest piece of pure and unadulterated natural religion to be found in the whole heathen world.*

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. l. ii. § 4. p. 131—160. edit. 1. *Tillard's Reply to Warb.* c. iv. p. 248—272. *Ab. Taylor of Faith*, note, p. 12—17. *Sykes's Connect.* c. xiv. p. 361—383. *prax.* 364, 365. *Cud. Int. Syst.* c. iv. § 10—31. *prax.* § 19—28. p. 184—186. *Luct. Inst.* l. i. § 5.

LECTURE XLVI.

AXIOM XI.

Our idea of SPACE is a simple idea, which we get by observing the distance of one body from another.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xiii. § 2—4. *Collib. Inq.* p. 213; edit. 3. p. 256, 257.

DEFINITION XXXV.

The PLACE of a body, is its situation with respect to some other body, with which it is compared.

Watts's Ontology, p. 380. edit. 3.

COROLLARY 1.

According to the different surrounding bodies brought into comparison, any body under consideration, may be said to continue in the same place, or be removed from it.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xiii. § 7—9.

COROLLARY 2.

The universe has no place. *Locke*, ib. § 10.

PROPOSITION XL.

Space is a mere abstract idea; and does not signify any thing which has a real and positive existence without us.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Space is either something real and existing without us, or a mere abstract idea.

2. If space be something really existing without us, it is either a mode or a substance.

3. If space be a mode, it must be a mode of some substance, and this substance must be co-extended with space; and the great question will be, how space differs from the substance whose mode it is said to be, or how that can be said to be a mode which, if it exists at all, exists necessarily, and is so far from depending upon any support, that it is itself the support of accidents; such as length, breadth, capacity, &c.

3. 4. Space is not a mode.

5. If space be a substance, it must be God; for those who assert its reality maintain (as they needs must do) that it is self-existent, infinite, and immutable; and we have already proved (*Prop.* 39.) God to be the only self-existent, infinite, and immutable Being.

6. Space cannot be God, since mere space has neither wisdom nor power; and we have already proved God to be both omniscient and omnipotent. *Prop.* 31. 33.

5, 6. 7. Space is not a substance.

1, 2, 4, 7. 8. Space is a mere abstract idea, and does not signify any thing real and positive existing without us. *Q. E. D.*

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xiii. § 17, 18. *Collib. Inq.* p. 218; edit. 3. p. 261—263. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 39, 40. *Watts's Ess.* No. 1. 2—5. p. 3—18. ; 7. p. 23—25. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 74, 75.

SCHOLIUM 1.

By what operation of the mind Dr. Waterland apprehends the idea of space to be formed; and what he thinks the foundation of our mistaking it for something real, see in

Waterland ap. Law's Inq. p. 14—16. *Jacks. Exist.* p. 75, 76. *Law*, ib. p. 26, 27, 30—33.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To the proposition it is objected, That space is a simple idea, and therefore must have an *objective* reality.

To this some have answered, by denying that the idea of space is simple; since we necessarily conceive of it as having *partes extra partes*; but it is more justly replied, that bare *privation* is sufficient to suggest positive ideas, as darkness and silence, though they have nothing of an objective reality.

Jacks. on Exist. and Unity, p. 63—69. *Law's Inq.* p. 32, 34.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is said that space forces its actual existence upon us.

Ans. If its idea forces itself upon us, it is only as mere emptiness: nor can we certainly argue the real existence of a thing, merely from our not being able to avoid the idea of it, or to suppose it not to be.

Jackson, ib. p. 69—73. *Law*, ib. p. 44—46, and p. 8—12.

* Dr. Warburton's opinion is disputed by Dr. Leon Levison in a great work on the Question Resolved, vol. i. chap. 8. on the sentiments of the several sects of the ancient philosophers concerning the Deity, recourse may be had to Brucker and Enfield. An account of different Treatises of Memoirs relative to the same subject may be seen in the Monthly Review, vol. [illegible] p. 176 [illegible] p. 48, [illegible] p. 402, and in May's Review, vol. vi. p. 378—380, 428—432

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is further objected, That *nothing* has no properties, whereas we talk of the properties of space, and settle its dimensions as well as those of body.

We reply, as above, *Schol.* 2. That we sometimes talk of mere abstract ideas, as if they were real beings; and though a shadow be only a privation of light, yet we often speak of it as a positive thing.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 16, 17. *Watts's Ess.* I. 1. § 8. p. 25—28. and § 10. p. 31—39. *Jacks.* ib. p. 77—81. *Law's Inq.* p. 48—50.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is further argued, That space is necessarily infinite, and therefore real.

Ans. This takes the question for granted; for this infinity supposes its reality, else, wherever body is, space is excluded: nor do we allow that our idea of space is *infinite*, though it may be *ever growing:* the same argument would prove number to be infinite; which seems a great absurdity at first view.

Jacks. ib. p. 81—85. *Law's Inq.* p. 51—65.

SCHOLIUM 6.

If space were not real, it is said there could be no *motion*, because no space to move in.

Ans. A body might move on to infinity; for there would be nothing to stop it: and since motion is only a change of place, *i. e.* in the situation of bodies with respect to each other, (*Def.* 35.) there needs no such medium through which the change should be made.

Jacks. ib. p. 88—92. *Law*, ib. p. 65—88.

To this Mr. Jackson answers, That according to this account of motion, God could not move the whole material creation in a straight line. To which Mr. Law replies, with Leibnitz, That this would not be real motion, since it is neither going to, nor from, any thing, but is still in the centre of infinite space. If it be said it relates to the various parts of real space, the body going from one point of it to another,—it is answered, That this is evidently taking the whole question for granted; and that a motion in a mere void is as conceivable as a motion in a void space, supposed ever so real. After all, the whole seems to amount to little more than a controversy about the definition of *motion*.

Jackson, ib. p. 93—95. *Law*, ib. p. 68—70. *Clarke and Leibnitz*, p. 7. § 5. p. 79. § 4. p. 99. § 13. p. 103. § 43. p. 107. § 52. 53.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It is further objected, That supposing two bodies a yard asunder, and all intervening bodies annihilated, if space be nothing, they would be contiguous, since in that case there would be nothing between them.

Ans. To be *contiguous*, and to have *nothing between them*, are not synonymous terms. To be *contiguous* signifies to *touch* one another; which is not a necessary consequence of their having nothing between them.

Watts's Ess. No. 1. § 11. p. 39—43. *Jacks.* ib. p. 92. *Law*, ib. p. 50—53.

COROLLARY.

It is matter of humiliation, to think that there should be such weakness and darkness in the mind of man, that some of the greatest geniuses should dispute whether space be God, or whether it be *nothing*.

Watts, ib. No. 1. § 6. p. 20—23. *Rams. Phil. Princ. Prop.* 24. *Schol.* 2.

SCHOLIUM 8.

It seems that *time* is an abstract idea, as well as space: having gotten the idea of it from some things in a constant succession, we conceive it to flow uniformly on, and to take in all existences; thus it becomes a kind of common receptacle, as well as space: but many of the same arguments brought for and against the reality of space, may also be applied to that of time. Vid. *Ax.* 6, 7. *Def.* 17.

Law's Inq. p. 79, 80. *Jacks.* ib. p. 76. *Watts's Ontology*, ch. xii. *on Time*, and ch. iv. *on Duration. Soame Jenyns's Disquisitions, Dissertation* 4.

LECTURE XLVII.

AXIOM XII.

It is impossible for two bodies to be in the same place at the same time. Vid. *Def.* 3.

PROPOSITION XLI.

God is incorporeal or immaterial.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 23. 1. Materiality has already been proved incompatible with self-existence, therefore God, being self-existent, must be incorporeal.

Prop. 32. *Ax.* 12. 2. If God were corporeal, he could not be present in any part of the world where body is; yet we have proved his presence to be continually necessary for the support and motion of body.

1, 2. 3. God is incorporeal. *Q. E. D.*

Clarke's Serm. vol. i. p. 98. 8vo. *Taylor of Deism*, p. 250, 260.

COROLLARY.

God is invisible. *Abern. Serm.* vol. i. No. 4.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The chief objection which has been urged against the proposition is, That unless God were corporeal, we could not imagine that he should produce body,—since nothing can give what it has not. It is answered, That we grant nothing can produce an effect

more excellent than itself (*Ax.* 10.); but to be corporeal is not a greater excellency and perfection than to be incorporeal, but rather the contrary: nor would our conceptions of God's producing matter be at all helped by conceiving of him as material, unless that production were only making some alteration in the form and situation of some parts of himself, which is far from being the idea of creation; and indeed, on the whole, creation is a thing of which we can form no distinct idea, whether we suppose the Creator, on the one hand, or the creature on the other, corporeal or incorporeal.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some who allow the immateriality of the Divine Being contend, that though it is impossible one body should penetrate another, yet it is not impossible that an immaterial Being should penetrate body, for their natures will still be distinct; and the pre-eminence of the Divine Nature above all corporeal or derived natures is such, that there is not an equal reality in both, as there is in two particles of matter, which hinder them from coming into the same place.

Ans. Though we easily perceive what it is for a subtil fluid to penetrate a body rarer than itself, *v. g.* for water to fill the pores of a sponge, yet this does not help our ideas, when we apply penetration to an incorporeal substance; and it seems altogether as reasonable to suppose that an immaterial being moves bodies by contact, as that it does in a proper sense penetrate them. If that penetration mean no more, than that God can act in and upon every particle of matter where or however situated, this will be readily granted; but this seems not to be what is contended for by Mr. Colliber. On the whole, considering the immateriality of God, if any thing be asserted concerning his omnipresence, beyond what is expressed, *Def.* 32. it is to us mysterious and incomprehensible.

Collib. Inq. p. 218—221; edit. 3. p. 263—265.
Watts's Ont. c. xii. p. 377—379.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Notwithstanding what has been asserted in the former corollary, it may be allowed possible for God to manifest himself to his creatures, by presenting some material phenomenon to their senses, and thereby communicating ideas to them: yet in this case, it is only in a secondary and less proper sense that we may be said to see God, or hear his voice.

Burnet on Art. p. 25.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Some who have maintained that God is so present as actually to fill space, have differed in explaining the extent of that presence. Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Clarke argue, that infinite space is possessed by him; but Colliber denies it: and though he maintains that the Divine Being penetrates all space, yet, as he denies the infinity of real space, he also denies the infinite extension of the Divine Being, and by a parity of reason, the infinity of the other properties of his nature: and as many of his thoughts are uncommon, it will not be amiss to subjoin some account of the arguments on both sides.*

Newton's Princ. p. 483. *Collib. Inq.* p. 141, 142; edit. 3. p. 170, 171. *Mrs. Cockburne's Works*, vol. i. p. 100—102.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It appears, by the fore-mentioned references to Colliber, that he denies God to be *infinite*, in our sense of infinity; for to have no bounds, is to be in its own nature incapable of end, which is the explication he gives of *positive* and *absolute infinity*. (Vid. *Def.* 28.) How far he is consistent with himself in denying this, while he grants what he calls a *negative* infinity, may be afterwards considered. It is, however, apparent, that if he keeps to his own idea, in denying the infinity of God, he in effect asserts that there are certain bounds, beyond which the extension, power, knowledge, &c. of the Divine Being do not exist: and indeed in his late treatise, which he calls *The Knowledge of God*, he very evidently avows it, when he confesses that the Deity must have some figure; and intimates it may probably be spherical.

Collib. Knowledge of God, p. 22—24.

LECTURE XLVIII.

PROPOSITION XLI.

To propose and examine some of the most considerable arguments, brought to prove the absolute infinity of the Divine Being.

Watts's Ontology, chap. xvii.

LEMMA.

The solution will consist of two parts: in the first, we shall produce the arguments brought to prove that *something* is actually infinite: and in the second, shall consider the arguments to prove that infinity belongs to the Divine Being.

SOLUTION. PART I.

Arguments to prove that *something* is actually infinite.

Arg. 1. Some have argued from the nature of

* Collins, and D. Scripture, in a [illegible] Dr. Daniel Godwin [illegible] and [illegible] He was [illegible] by Scripture and [illegible] the Son of Man, [illegible] 8, 9. [illegible] and by Vossius, Dr. [illegible] and Stillingfleet. Dr. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

space, which (supposing it to be, as Mr. Colliber does, a real thing) is certainly infinite, and cannot be bounded so much as in thought. Colliber grants we can have no idea of the end of it, yet maintains there may be an end of universal space, as we know there is of particulars: and if it be asked, What bounds it? he answers, *Nothing*; but will not allow that it is therefore infinite: but it is plain he can conceive space only as the interstice between bodies; and how this is more real than the void which lies on the other side the remotest body, I cannot imagine; but if *Prop.* 40. be true, this can be no solid argument; for nothing would be more absurd than to ascribe infinity to *nothing*, or to a mere abstract idea.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xvii. § 4, 21. *Collib. Inq.* p. 150—153, edit. 3. p. 185—193.

Arg. 2. It is pleaded that the Divine Being is allowed to be eternal: now eternity, *i. e.* infinite duration, is as incomprehensible as any other kind of infinity.

Colliber answers, Eternity is not and cannot be an infinite duration, being limited on the one side by the present moment; and he adds, that *duration* does not belong to God. Yet still, if we consider him as a Being without a beginning, (which surely we must confess him or something to be,) I see not how it is possible to separate duration from our idea of him: and if we cannot, surely here is an infinite in one respect; indeed in that respect in which it is most difficult to conceive of it.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xvii. § 5, 20. *Collib. Inq.* p. 149, 150, 153, 154; edit. 3. p. 180—185.

Arg. 3. Another argument is taken from the infinite divisibility of matter, since it is certain division can never annihilate.

This Mr. Colliber is obliged to admit, but he pleads, that this infinite divisibility does not imply an infinite number of parts in every particle of matter, but rather the contrary; for else the subject must be of an infinite bulk. Some have replied, these parts may be infinitely small; but he denies that any thing can be so; and if they were, matter could not be infinitely divisible. If it be said that this infinite divisibility proves that there is an infinite distance between the smallest beings and nothing,—he says that creation proves the contrary. Nevertheless, it may be answered, that we maintain the Creator to be omnipotent, and that an almighty power may overcome that infinite distance; or rather, that when we talk of an infinite distance in this sense, we only mean a very great distance; so that nothing certain can be concluded from this argument.

Locke's Ess. l. ii. c. xvii. § 12. *Collib. Inquiry*, p. 161—165, edit. 3. p. 194—200.

Arg. 4. Others have pleaded that no limits can be set by our thoughts to the number and extent of *possibilities*, but more may be conceived to be produced, and still more without bounds; there must, therefore, be an actual infinity, in proportion to this possible one.

Colliber answers, This only proves that our imaginations may be perpetually going on in their operations; but that there is no reasoning from imagination to fact, without confounding possibilities and realities: and, indeed, it must be confessed, that all the utmost efforts of imagination will always be finite, though they be ever growing.

Howe's Works, vol. i. p. 63, 64, 67. *Liv. Temp.* part. i. c. iv. § 4. *Collib. Inq.* p. 176—179; edit. 3. p. 213—216.

LECTURE XLIX.

SOLUTION. PART 2.

Arguments to prove the Infinity of the Divine Being.

Arg. 1. Some have argued, that if God be limited, it must either be by himself, or by another; but no wise being would abridge himself,—and there could be no other being to limit God.

Colliber answers, That no cause can bestow absolute infinity upon its effect; and therefore there needs no cause of the finiteness of any created,—why then of an uncreated being? And further, the argument supposes it to be matter of choice with God, whether he would be finite or infinite, which it is unreasonable to suppose; and would indeed imply (what Plato and Cartesius are said to have maintained) that the Deity produced himself by a proper causality; whereas not to abridge itself, can never make any being infinite. Thus it may be said, that as God did not make himself wise, nor did another being make him wise, yet he is wise; so he may not limit himself, nor be limited by another, and yet he may be limited. If in answer to this it be urged, That as he is wise, so he is also unlimited by the necessity of his nature, which is all that can be replied, this argument thus founded will coincide with the next.

Scott's Christian Life, vol. ii. p. 193, 194, *or, apud Opera*, vol. i. p. 283. *Collib. Inquiry*, p. 143—147, edit. 3. p. 175—178.

Arg. 2. Others plead that infinity follows from self-existence; for a necessity that is not universal must depend on some external cause, (Vid. *Def.* 28. *Cor.*) which a self existent being does not.—To this Mr. Colliber replies,

1. That though necessary existence has no relation either to place or limit, any more than to

variety, yet as there is some sort of variety in God, (*Prop.* 39. *Schol.* 2.) so there may be limits.

2. That to be finite is not properly the effect of any cause, and therefore may consist with necessary existence.

That finiteness is in itself necessary; because every being has a complete and positive nature, whereas our idea of infinite is negative.

4. That how absolute soever the necessity of a supposed infinite being can be, that of a finite may be equally so. He adds, We must not argue too much from abstract ideas to things: that may be necessary in its own nature, which we may conceive as not existing, *v. g.* perfect wisdom; and that may not be necessary in its own nature, which we may not be able to conceive not to exist, *v. g.* space.

It seems that the third of these answers is inconsistent with the first; that any being should be the less complete, and the less positive, because it is infinite, I own I cannot conceive; though our idea of infinite should be allowed to be a negative idea.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 43. *Collib. Inquiry*, p. 168—174; edit. 3. p. 203—211. *Berry-street Sermons*, vol. i. p. 107. second edit. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. xvii. § 12—14.

Arg. 3. It is urged that creation is so great an act of power, that we can imagine nothing impossible to that Being who has performed it, but must therefore ascribe to him infinite power.

Colliber answers, The distance between being and not being may be said to be finite, because it has been passed over; and is indeed no other than between thinking and not thinking, moving and not moving: though they are irreconcilable with each other, there may be a possibility of passing from one to the other, without an infinite degree of power. Yet, he adds, nothing on this side a contradiction can be imagined less possible than a production from nothing, and therefore allows a proper omnipotence in God, which he takes to be infinite power: so that this argument seems to be given up. *Prop.* 31. *Schol.* 4.

Collib. Inq. p. 147—149; edit. 3. p. 178—180.

Arg. 4. It is more honourable to the Divine Being to conceive of him as infinite than finite.

To this Colliber answers, by endeavouring to prove, That to conceive of him as infinite, leads us into many absurd and dishonourable notions of him, which will be surveyed in the next proposition: yet he is forced after all to acknowledge a negative infinity, *i. e.* that there is nothing too great for the power of God; that nothing which can be the object of knowledge is unknown to him, and that no being can bound God, or even human imagination itself. Vid. *Prop.* 41. *Schol.* 5.

Collib. Inq. p. 180—183: edit. 3. p. 217—221.

SCHOLIUM 1.

I have not here mentioned the argument taken from the supposed innate idea of infinity, nor from the immensity of matter; both which appear to me so evidently inconclusive, as not to deserve so large a survey as the former.

Collib. Inq. p. 144, 145, 154—161; edit. 3. p. 174, 175, 200—203. *Camb. sur l'Exist.* p. 191—197. § 50, 51. *Bayle's Translation*, p. 135—137.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The argument from the fulness of being supposed in God, if it imports any thing at all, must coincide with some of the former arguments, especially the fourth.

Collib. ib. p. 175, 176; edit. 3. p. 212, 213. *Howe's Liv. Temp.* part i. c. iv. § 2. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. ii. p. 344, 345; *Works*, vol. i. p. 320.

LECTURE L.

PROPOSITION XLIII.

To review and consider the arguments which Mr. Colliber has urged against the Divine Infinity, and by which he has endeavoured to prove it a pernicious doctrine.

SOLUTION.

He asserts it to be attended with pernicious consequences, whether we consider the Deity *in himself, or with respect to us.*

PART 1.

With respect to the *Deity itself*, he maintains that it leads us into the following absurdities:—

1. To assert his inextension; for all extension naturally implies bounds, therefore the Platonists, asserting the infinity of God, said he was a *Mathematical Point*, thereby making him infinitely less than the least grain of sand; yet at the same time, they asserted him to be *all in all*, and *all in every part*; than which nothing can be more absurd.

To this it is answered, 1. That many maintain extension does not imply limits.

2. That a mathematical point being only an abstract idea, God cannot properly be represented by it.

3. That when it is said he is *all in all*, and *all in every part*, nothing more may be meant than this, that his almighty power can operate in every place, and is the support of all other beings; which Colliber himself allows.

But he replies, If we do not allow this way of speaking, we must go into the scheme of the *Nullibists*, and affirm that God is nowhere;—and what if it should be asserted, that it is not his property to be

present in any place by a diffusive presence'. It will be said that therefore he is not at all, but this pretended axiom will require proof.—*Prop.* 41. *Schol.* 2.

Collib. Inq. p. 184—187; edit. 3. p. 222—229.

2. From the doctrine of God's infinity arises that of *absolute simplicity*; else each attribute would be infinite, whereas it is said there can be but one infinite.

Ans. This objection arises from an absurd confounding the idea of attribute with that of being.—*Def.* 12. *Cor.* 1.

Collib. ib. p. 190, 191; edit. 3. p. 229—231.

3. From infinity is inferred absolute omnipotence, which includes a power of working contradictions; but it is sufficient to answer, that this is not properly a power, as has been observed above.—*Prop.* 31. *Sch.* 4. *Collib. ib.* p. 192; edit. 3. p. 231, 232.

4. From infinity follows absolute omniscience, which would establish the doctrine of decrees, inconsistent with liberty, and therefore with virtue.

Ans. We have endeavoured to show that the foreknowledge of God is not inconsistent with liberty.—*Prop.* 35. *Schol.* 2.

Collib. ib. p. 193, 194; edit. 3. p. 232—235.

5. Hence some have inferred, that God not only *does*, but *is*, all things. This is Spinoza's scheme, who argues that an Infinite Being must comprehend all particular finite beings; but it may be replied, That this argument arises from mistaking the word *infinite*, which implies, that the being to whom it is ascribed has no bounds; now God is not at all bounded by the existence of creatures, whose natures are entirely different from his own; and how, on Colliber's own scheme, can God be where the creatures are, without a confusion of his being with theirs, if the foundation of Spinoza's argument, even on his own principles, be just?

Collib. ib. p. 198—200; edit. 3. p. 238—241. *Hoadly's Works*, vol. i. p. 67—72. *Lucius Temple*, part i. c. iv. § 9. vol. i. p. 216—223. *Works of the Learned*, for 1738, Jan. Art. iv.

LECTURE LI.

SOLUTION.—PART SECOND.

With respect to *ourselves*, Mr. Colliber asserts,

1. That the doctrine of the divine infinity discourages our inquiries into the nature of God, because we must for ever despair of attaining to the knowledge of him.

Ans. On Colliber's own principles, we must acknowledge it to be impossible perfectly to know him; nor is it any wonder that it should be so.—*Vid. Prop.* 18. *Cor.* But supposing him to be infinite, we may know as much of him as if he were finite, though more will continue unknown.

Collib. Inq. p. 200; edit. 3. p. 241—243.

2. It is said this doctrine raises prejudices against his existence, because it makes it impossible to conceive clearly of him. To this we may reply,

1. There can be no scheme on which there will not be some difficulties: those of Atheism will be still greater than would follow from supposing an infinite Deity.

Gordon at Boyle's Lect. pass. pras. p. 79, 80. *Abadie Verit. de la Rel.* part. i. c. xvi. xvii. vol. i. p. 117—132.

2. If *one* finite being could be supposed necessary, why may not *any other* i. e. Why may not the doctrine of the finiteness of God be a shelter for Atheism, in one view, as well as that of his infinity in another?

Collib. Inq. p. 201—203; edit. 3. p. 243.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Mr. Colliber seems chiefly to have opposed the doctrine of the infinity of God, in order to establish his scheme of denying the divine decrees and foreknowledge, which must indeed suppose him a limited being.

SCHOLIUM 2.

On the most accurate survey and examination of these two last propositions, we may perhaps see reason to remark,

1. That many arguments which have been brought to prove the infinity of God are inconclusive.

2. That to suppose him finite, would not free the mind from all difficulties in conceiving of him, especially those which are the consequences of his eternity; but would plunge us into some new difficulties.

3. That though it be most honourable to the Divine Being to suppose him infinite, yet if we conceive of him only as superior to all other beings, and possessed of perfections beyond the investigation of our minds, there will be a foundation laid for religion and virtue, in the several branches in which we shall afterwards endeavour to open it.

APPENDIX.

CONCERNING DR. BERKLEY'S SCHEME, THAT THERE IS NO MATERIAL WORLD.

In considering this scheme, we shall,

I. Propose the scheme itself, and the arguments by which it is supported.

II. Examine the objections brought against it.

III. Consider how far our inquiries into natural philosophy are affected by it.

Sect. I. The scheme itself is not, that sensible objects have *no real existence*; or that all is but a waking dream: he disclaims both these: his principle is, that no sensible object exists *unperceived*; or more plainly, that *there is no material world*, and that primary, as well as secondary, qualities, do only exist in the mind perceiving them; so that if all minds were annihilated, all bodies would be annihilated too; and the difference between dreaming and perceiving, is only that the latter is more active, regular, and vivid than the former.

The arguments by which the Doctor supports this system are these:—

1. The existence of a material world cannot be demonstrated; because an almighty power can always produce such sensations without any archetype; and it is plain in dreams he does so.

Ans. This will not prove that he *has* done it. We assert not that matter is a necessary being; but its actual existence may nevertheless be proved, as well as that of a created mind.

2. It is an useless encumbrance; because a Divine influence is necessary to produce ideas from material archetypes.

Ans. The Divine power may be illustrated in such a harmony; and the actual support of bodies seems an act of great power, as well as the union of the soul and body, of great wisdom.

3. The supposition of it is very inconvenient, as it introduces disputes about the production and subsistence of bodies, the infinite divisibility of matter, the union of body and mind, &c.; but it may be replied, That if giving occasion to disputes could disprove the thing disputed about, we must also give up the existence of spiritual and immaterial beings.

4. It implies a contradiction. Sensible objects are the things we perceive by our senses; but we can perceive only our own ideas and sensations: now it is plainly repugnant, that any of our own sensations should exist unperceived, and therefore that sensible objects should so exist.

Ans. This is plainly taking the question for granted; yet he triumphs greatly in this argument, and says, The bare possibility of the existence of any extended movable substance, or in general any idea, or any thing like an idea, but in a thinking mind, is absurd; but this triumph is extremely ill-grounded, because if it were granted him that sensible objects are in fact only the things which our senses immediately perceive, *i. e.* that they are our own ideas, (which is, as we observed above, begging the question,) it will not follow from thence that it is impossible there should be, or should have been, any external archetypes of them.

Berkley's Princ. § 22.

5. The various appearances of the same object to different persons at the same time, prove that it exists only in a perceiving mind; else the same thing must have different magnitudes, colours, &c.

Ans. The various circumstances in which it is, seems to account for its different appearance; and if the object were material, it must be so.

6. The best philosophers have granted it as to *secondary* qualities; but the case is the same as to *primary*.—This is denied.

Sect. II. The objections against it are these:—

1. To deny the possibility of matter, is plainly limiting the power of God.

2. This hypothesis, which supposes us under a continual deception, reflects upon the Divine veracity.—He answers, The same objection will lie against supposing the earth to move about the sun.

3. The senses give us such an evidence, that if it is possible they may be true notices of what passes without us, we must certainly believe they are so.

4. Our ideas can have no parts; but the objects of them have parts: therefore the objects are something different from the ideas themselves.

5. Every thing real is banished out of the world. —This Berkley expressly denies.

6. Things on this supposition are continually annihilated and created anew. He answers, The

schoolmen allow a continual creation; but that is a weak reply. If Adam and Eve both slept, the sun for that time was annihilated: if it be said, It existed in the Divine Mind,—it may be answered, So it did from all eternity, and at that rate all creatures must be eternal.

7. It makes all the apparatus of nature, in the organization of plants and animals, vain.

Ans. Not vainer than upon the supposition of a continued Divine concurrence, asserted *Prop.* 32.; they are rules which God has laid down, according to which he directs his own operations.

8. This doctrine destroys all the evidence of the existence of other created spirits; some also add, of the Divine Existence; but I think not: yet it certainly weakens some proofs of it, especially that taken from the *vis inertiæ* of matter.

SECT. III. How far our inquiries into natural philosophy are affected by it.

1. It cuts off a great part of our present inquiries.

2. In a strict sense, it would change a great part of our language.

3. Nevertheless, it leaves room for the observation of the phenomena of nature, and the connexion between causes and effects, in many instances. On the whole, it is a scheme destitute of proof. The most we can assert is, that it is *possible*; and we are led every moment, whether we will or no, into an apprehension of the contrary. If we believe it to be true, we ought to act in every instance, and on every occasion, just as if it were false. We conclude with observing, That as some have denied all *material*, and others all *immaterial*, substances, each asserting one or the other *only* to be real, we may reasonably believe them both to be so.

Berkley's Princ. and *Dial. pass. Collier's Immat. World. Baxter on the Soul*, vol. ii. § 2. 8vo. *Lord Kaims's Ess. on the Princ. of Morality and Nat. Rel.* part ii. Ess. iii. p. 237—239.*

* A controversy concerning Berkley's hypothesis was carried on some years since in the Gentleman's Magazine. The answers to those who exerted the particular attention and candour to Dr. Reid and Dr. Beattie. See Dr. Reid's Inquiry, with the Human Mind. See also his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Essay ii. ch. 10, 11 p. 180—182; and Beattie on the Immutability of Truth, part ii. ch. ii. § 2. p. 169—191. 4to edit.

PART III.

OF THE NATURE OF MORAL VIRTUE IN GENERAL, AND THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

OF THE SEVERAL BRANCHES OF VIRTUE, AND THE NATURE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

LECTURE LII.

AXIOM XIII.

FROM the *essences* of things (the ideas of which immutably exist in the Divine Mind) arise certain DIFFERENCES, and from the circumstances in which they are placed, certain RELATIONS, inseparable from those essences or circumstances.

AXIOM XIV.

The actions of an intelligent being may *agree* or *disagree* with the *nature*, *circumstances*, and *relations* of things; or, in other words, they may with respect to them be FIT or UNFIT: *e. g.* Evil is as unfit to be returned for good, as a cubical case is unfit exactly to contain a globe.

DEFINITION XXXVI.

The *agreement* of the actions of any intelligent being with the nature, circumstances, and relation of things, is called the MORAL FITNESS, or the VIRTUE of that action; the *disagreement* is therefore the MORAL UNFITNESS, or VICE.

COROLLARY.

There is really and necessarily a moral fitness in some actions, and a moral unfitness in others. Vid. Ax. 14.

Wishart's Reform. Serm. p. 5, 6. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 174—179, 181. *Letters to Dr. Clarke*, p. 5—11. *Chand. Ref. Serm.* p. 5—7. 14—19. *Beason's Sermon*, No. II. p. 10—15. *Dr. Adams's Sermon on the Nature and Obligation of Virtue*, p. 3—6.*

* For a most elaborate and ample vindication of the doctrine of Moral Fitness and Unfitness, see Dr. Price's Review of the principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals.

SCHOLIUM.

To this some have objected the various opinions of learned men, and the difference in the laws of various nations concerning right and wrong.

We answer, That it does indeed from hence follow, that all the moral fitnesses of things are not self-evident; and we readily allow, that in some cases it may be very difficult to pronounce concerning them; and in others, the judgments of men may be so prejudiced by corrupt affections as to err, though the cases themselves are very clear. Nevertheless, there are some things so plain, that they were never denied to be more fit than their opposites: nor was it ever commanded or allowed by any known law, that every man might plunder or murder his fellow-citizens as he pleased; that no faith should be kept, or compacts performed, &c.

Locke's Ess. lib. i. c. iii. § 9—12. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 181—183. *Passeran's Phil. Inq. pass.**

AXIOM XV.

The actions of an intelligent being appear to have a BEAUTY or excellency, when they are morally fit; and a TURPITUDE and deformity, when they are morally unfit.

SCHOLIUM 1.

This answers the question, "What are moral fitnesses fit for?" Their mutual congruity and harmony is as fit to gain the approbation of an intelligent mind, as music to please an ear that is rightly formed.

Grove's Wisd. of God, p. 29; *vol.* iv. *of his Works*, p. 44. *Wishart's Ref. Serm.* p. 11—15. *Chand. Ref. Serm.* p. 27—31. *Bens. Serm.* No. ii. p. 48—50.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The apprehension of that beauty or deformity which arises in the mind by a kind of natural instinct, previously to any reasoning upon the remoter consequences of actions, has been with great propriety called by many elegant writers, the *Moral Sense*: but what is peculiar in some of their notions will be afterwards stated and examined.

Hutcheson on the Passions, p. 245—253.

DEFINITION XXXVII.

An intelligent agent is said to be OBLIGED IN REASON, to that which appears to him on an impartial inquiry most *honourable* and decent; and to be OBLIGED IN INTEREST, to that which on an impartial inquiry shall appear most conducive to his *happiness* on the whole.

Balguy's Law of Truth, p. 4—14; *in the vol. of his Tracts*, p. 372—380.

SCHOLIUM.

Though an obligation in reason and interest may seem distinct, yet they are, at least in a great measure, if not entirely, connected; for, on the one hand, the obligations of reason, honour, and decency cannot be broken through, without some *uneasiness* to a mind conscious of the violation of them; and, on the other, it is a reasonable, decent, and honourable thing to be influenced by a regard to our own happiness.

DEFINITION XXXVIII.

The MORAL RECTITUDE or VIRTUE of any being, consists in acting knowingly and designedly in a manner agreeable to the moral fitnesses of things; and VICE, in acting contrary to them, when they are or might have been known to him.

Balg. Inq. into the Foundation of Moral Goodness, part. i. p. 30, 31; *vol. of Tracts*, p. 67.

COROLLARY 1.

There is a beauty inseparable from virtue of character, and a deformity from vice.—Compare *Ax.* 15. and *Def.* 36.

Shaftesb. Char. vol. ii. p. 28—36.

COROLLARY 2.

Every intelligent being, capable of discerning this beauty and deformity, is in reason obliged to the practice of virtue in every instance.—Compare *Def.* 37.

Price's Rev. c. vi. *Burlamaguy's Elementa*, part. i. c. v. vi.; part. ii. c. vii.

COROLLARY 3.

The foundation of virtue and vice cannot depend upon the mere will of any being whatsoever.—Vid. *Ax.* 13, 14.

Letters to Dr. Clarke, p. 11—15. *Grove of Wisdom*, p. 23—26, 36—40; *vol.* iv. *of his Works*, c. iii. § 1, 2. *Mole's Sermon of Moral Virtue*, p. 21—24, 27.

LECTURE LIII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Nevertheless, as the circumstances of things vary, the fitness of actions will proportionably vary; and therefore the will of a superior may make some things fit, which otherwise would not be so; (*e. g.* a general's command to a soldier to march any particular way, or a magistrate appointing an execution, &c.) but while the same circumstances continue, the moral fitness of things will always be the same. *Mole on Moral Virtue*, p. 27, 28.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To what is said *Cor.* 3. some have objected, that this is setting up something different from and independent on the Divine Being, to be the rule of

* This objection is particularly considered and answered in Dr Beattie's Essay on the Immutability of Truth.

* The doctrine of the moral fitness of things, as maintained in Dr Price's work, before referred to.

his actions. But it is replied, That as nothing can be prior to God, so nothing distinct from his nature is here asserted to be a law or rule of action to him. We cannot suppose the Divine Mind ever to have been without ideas: (for then God would have been without knowledge, and without volitions, and consequently without action: all which are most inconsistent with what we have before proved concerning him:) now perfectly discerning every idea, (*Prop.* 33.) he must have perfectly discerned all their relations, and therefore, among the rest, the moral fitness of some, and unfitness of other, actions, in such and such supposed circumstances; so that, on the whole, it is no more injurious to the Divine Being to assert that he cannot alter his own sense of some moral fitnesses, than that he cannot change his nature, or destroy his being.

Limestr. Lect. vol. ii. p. 579—581.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have thought themselves, on the premises laid down above, authorized to say, That supposing God to change his mind concerning these things, the things themselves would nevertheless continue the same.

But it may be observed, with regard to such a manner of expression, That if we consider God as existing alone and prior to all creation, and by a change of *mind* mean only a change of *will*, then, to say the things themselves would nevertheless continue the same, is only saying that God would still continue to discern what is right, though his own actions were contrary to his judgment; which is a trifling proposition, as well as a blasphemous hypothesis. But if the supposition be, that his *ideas* are likewise changed, this would suppose the former ideas totally destroyed, seeing there would be no other mind in which they could exist; and then all the *relations* and *fitnesses* would be destroyed with them. But if we were to consider other minds as existing, and to suppose God either to change his ideas, or to act contrary to rectitude, while any one of his creatures retained this sense of it, it is granted that virtue would still be the same: but if it be hereafter proved, that God is a Being of perfect rectitude, (since we have already demonstrated his immutability,) it will follow, that all those suppositions are in effect no other than that God should cease to be God; and are so unreasonable and indecent, that they ought not to be made.

Letters to Dr. Clarke, p. 14, 15.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

If it should be hereafter proved to be the will of God, that all rational creatures should prosecute virtue; and also proved, that the will of God lays an obligation on his rational creatures,—then from hence it will evidently appear, that no man, capable of knowing God, is obliged to any thing by the moral fitness of things, to which he is not also obliged by the will of God.

SCHOLIUM 5.

If it be further inquired, Whether our obligations arising from the fitness of things be *antecedent* to those arising from the will of God, we answer,

1. If God will the universal virtue of all his rational creatures, he must will it from the first moment of their existence; and taking the matter in a general view, no obligation in order of time can be prior to that arising from his will, nor reach further, since universal virtue comprehends all moral fitnesses.

2. It must be acknowledged, that our sense of the fitness of some things may be prior to our discovery of the existence and nature of God; and that in proportion to the degree in which that sense is more or less strong, there will be a correspondent degree of obligation: nay, it is hard to say how any one could know that he *ought* to do a thing which he knew to be the will of God, unless he had some previous sense of obligation in reason or interest, on which such a conviction should be founded.

3. Nevertheless, as children apprehend the ideas of *things* sooner than they learn the names of *complex moral modes*, the easiest and best way of forming them to a sense of virtue will be, to give them an early sense of the being and perfections of God, according to their feeble capacities of apprehending them; representing it as his command, that they should do every thing they know to be good, and forbear every thing they know to be evil. But,

4. As to the order of our conception of things, when we come to examine them in riper years, if the rectitude of God should hereafter be proved to us on the one hand, and our obligation to obey him on the other,—then when we know any thing to be *fit*, we know it to be the will of God; and when we know it to be the will of God, we know it to be fit for us to do in present circumstances: and therefore we need not be very nice in adjusting on which of these things the greatest stress is to be laid; since we should then consider the will of God not merely as an arbitrary thing, but as the will of a wise and a righteous Being. And it is certain, that whatever might be conceived as fit from other abstract considerations, will appear yet more fit, when considered as the will of such a Being: so that a regard to the Divine authority, in doing a thing, can never diminish the degree of virtue in an action, but will always increase the sense of obligation to it. *Wright against Male.* p. 41—43.

SCHOLIUM 6.

On the whole it is proper to observe, that great

* At the time when Dr. Clarke's letters to Dodwell, Leibnitz, and others, on the existence of God, &c. were published, Dr. Wollaston was not acquainted with them; and he has since had no opportunity of seeing them, but in the manner he has here mentioned.

care should be taken, especially in popular discourses, that we do not make any false suppositions of God's being changed from what we know him immutably to be; that we do not represent him as under the restraint of something superior to himself; nor ourselves as under greater obligations to something else than we are under to God. It is much more proper to say, (if the rectitude of the Divine Being be proved,) that his unerring judgment is the rule of *his* actions, and his will, as directed by it, (however that will may be known,) the rule of *ours*; and the foundation of moral good and evil should be asserted, not to be *previous* to, or merely consequent upon, but inseparably *connected with*, the immutable will of God.

Wright against Mole, p. 27—30, 44—51. *Locke's Ess.* l. ii. c. xxviii. *Warb. Div. Leg.* vol. i. p. 36—53. *Bott's Answer to Warb.* p. 228, *ad fin. præs.* p. 232—239.

LECTURE LIV.

DEFINITION XXXIX.

Moral rectitude is generally called HOLINESS, when applied to God; VIRTUE, when applied to the creature. *Jos. Mede's Works*, p. 8, 9.*

SCHOLIUM.

Virtue is sometimes taken, in a more limited sense, for the duties we owe to *ourselves* and our *fellow-creatures*; and then *religion* is put to signify the duties we owe more immediately to *God*.

AXIOM XVI.

Where there is any moral turpitude in the actions of a rational being, it is (*cæteris paribus*) proportionable to the degree in which such a being understands the relations of things, and is free from temptation to act contrary to them.

PROPOSITION XLIV.

God is a Being of perfect HOLINESS, *i. e.* of the highest moral rectitude.

DEMONSTRATION

Prop. 33. 1. His infinite understanding must enable him to discern all the relations of things as they really are.

Prop. 31. 2. He is almighty, and therefore has nothing to fear.

Prop. 38. 3. He is perfectly happy, and therefore has nothing to hope.

2, 3. 4. He is infinitely removed from all temptation to act contrary to moral rectitude.

1, 4. *Ax.* 16. 5. It would be highly dishonourable to the Divine Being to suppose him, in any respect, to deviate from the exactest rectitude in his actions.

6. Without any temptation or advantage, to deviate from moral rectitude, must fill the mind of the Divine Being with uneasy reflections upon it. *Def.* 37. *Schol.*

6. 7. It would be inconsistent with the Divine felicity.

5, 7. 8. *Valet propositio.*

Lett. to Dr. Clarke, p. 15—28. *Scott's Christ. Life*, vol. ii. p. 361—364; *Works*, vol. i. p. 327. *Tillots. Works*, vol. ii. p. 662.

COROLLARY 1.

It is reasonable to believe that it is the will of God, that all created beings that are capable of virtue, should make it the great object of pursuit.

COROLLARY 2.

Since God is a Being of almighty power, and has the final happiness or misery of all creatures in his hands, every creature capable of virtue must be obliged in interest, as well as reason, to cultivate the practice of it (Vid. *Cor.* 1.); and thus it appears that virtue and self-love can only be perfectly reconciled by religion.—See Dr. Watts's pamphlet on the subject, or his Works, vol. iii. p. 715, &c.

COROLLARY 3.

Whatever shall hereafter be proved a branch of virtue, and does not imply some degree of weakness and dependence in the being by whom it is to be practised, is undoubtedly to be found in God.

COROLLARY 4.

If we see God in fact doing any thing, we may assure ourselves that it is agreeable to the reason of things that it should be done, though we cannot show how it agrees; and though there may be some objections to it, which, in consequence of the imperfection of our views, we are not able to answer.

Butl. Anal. part. i. c. vii.

SCHOLIUM.

It may perhaps be queried, Whether this rectitude of the Divine Being be *necessary? i. e.* Whether God can do what is morally unfit?

Ans. God has a natural power to do what is most unfit for him to do, if we consider merely the action itself, *e. g.* to put a period to the existence of the most excellent creature, &c.; but considering all the circumstances of an evil action, which cannot but be known to him, he cannot so oppose and contradict himself as to do it; for it is as impossible for a free agent of perfect immutable rectitude, to act contrary to reason, *i. e.* to destroy its own rectitude, as for necessary existence to destroy its own being; and if the rectitude of God were not immutable, then he might be changed from a most benevolent to a most malevolent being,—from the most faithful to a most perfidious being; which surely is as inconsistent with self-existence as a change from

* Joseph Mede, in the passage referred to, did not mean philosophically to define the moral rectitude of God,—but to describe, in general, his singular greatness and holiness.

knowledge to ignorance, or from power to weakness. Nevertheless, God may freely choose this or that action, out of many others equally good and fit.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 115—119. p. 110—114. 6th edit. *Grove on Wisd.* p. 30—33. *Works*, vol. iv. p. 46—49. *Male's Found. of Virt.* p. 24. *Wright against Male*, p. 8, 9, 22—25.

LECTURE LV.

DEFINITION XL

That being may be said to be perfectly GOOD or BENEVOLENT, who promotes the happiness of others so far as it is fit to be promoted.

PROPOSITION XLV

God is perfectly good.

DEMONSTRATION

1. We see a great deal of happiness in the creation, of which God is the Author; and, generally speaking, those things which contain displays of Art and Wisdom, are calculated to promote the happiness of his creatures; under which head we are to rank the benevolent instincts which he has implanted in the human mind.

2. We see no mixture of evil from whence good may not proceed; and are sure that, in many instances, good does actually proceed from those things which have the appearance of evil.

3. The greatest part of those evils which we here observe, arise from the abuse of human liberty, and therefore are not directly to be charged upon God. *Prop.* 16.

1, 2, 3. 4. If we judge by the phenomena of nature, i. e. by the divine works of Creation and Providence obvious to us, it seems that God is a good Being.

5. God is so great, as to have no need of seeking his own happiness in the causeless misery of his creatures; nor is it a conceivable thing how he should take any pleasure in it, or how he could be happy with a supposed malignant disposition.

6. Benevolence is the great glory of a rational being; and without it, no other perfection can appear amiable and honourable.

Cor. 1 and 3. *Prop.* 38. and *Cor.* 6. *Prop.* 27. *Dem.* 1. *Cor.* 2. 7. We have reason to believe that God is perfectly good. *Q. E. D.*

Will. Natural Rel. p. 136—139. p. 119—122. edit. 7. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 113. *Collib. Inq.* p. 68—71. edit. 3. p. 81—84. *Clarke's Post. Works*, vol. i. p. 321—327, 337—341. 8vo. *Boys on Div. Benev.* p. 20—29. *Abern. Serm.* vol. ii. No. 2.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

The great objection to this, is the mixture of evil in the world, natural evil, i. e. pain, and moral evil, i. e. vice (vid. *Def.* 38.): and it is questioned, how far the existence and prevalence of it in so great a degree can be reconcilable with what has been said of the Divine goodness, since God has already been proved an Almighty Being.

Ans. 1. We cannot possibly judge as to the proportion there is between the quantity of happiness and misery in the creation, merely from what we observe in this part of it, which is our own abode. There may perhaps be regions incomparably more extensive and populous, in which neither natural nor moral evil are known, at least by experience.

2. It is possible there is no evil of any kind, from which a degree of good may not proceed, more than sufficient to counterbalance it.

3. When moral evil has been introduced, which (as was observed above, *gr.* 3.) might be by the abuse of liberty in free creatures, then penal evil is on the whole good, and well suited to a state of discipline, which may possibly in those circumstances be intended as a proper introduction to a state of enjoyment.

4. The scheme of things which we now see may perhaps be continually growing better and better; not to say, that for aught certainly appears by the light of nature, the time may come when all natural and moral evil may cease.

Rel. of Nat. p. 71, 72. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 37—39, 90, 91. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. ii. p. 245—249; *Works*, vol. i. p. 283. *Balg. on Div. Rect.* p. 31—33, 38—40; *Tracts*, p. 241—243, 249—251. *Leibnitz Theod.* vol. i. p. 83—85. *Mandeville's Free Thoughts*, p. 99—102. *Maim. More Nevoch.* part iii. c. xii. *Travels of Cyrus*, p. 248—258. 12mo. *Hallet on Script.* vol. ii. p. 310—318. *Abern. Serm.* vol. ii. No. 3. *S. Clarke on the Orig. of Nat. Evil, pass.* p. 60—77, et p. 160, *ad fin.* *Bonet's Contemplation of Nature.*

LECTURE LVI.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It will still be demanded, Why was moral evil permitted? To this it is generally answered, That it was the result of natural liberty; and it was fit, that among all the other classes and orders of being, some should be formed possessed of this, as it conduces to the harmony of the universe, and to the beautiful variety of beings in it.

Yet still it is replied, Why did not God prevent this abuse of liberty? One would not willingly say

that he is not able to do it, without violating the nature of his creatures; nor is it possible that any should prove this. It is commonly said, That he permitted it in order to extract from thence greater good; but it may be further queried, Could he not have produced that greater good without such a means? Could he not have secured among all his creatures universal good and universal happiness, in full consistency with the liberty he had given them? I acknowledge I see no way of answering this question, but by saying, He had indeed a natural power of doing it, but that he saw it better not to do it, though the reasons upon which it appeared preferable to him are entirely unknown to us.

Pope's Ethic Epist. No. i. ver. 43—60, and 123—172. *Foster's Serm.* vol. ii. No. i. *Clarke on the Orig. of Mor. Evil. præs.* p. 122—140, and p. 182—198.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have thought it more for the honour of the Divine Being, to say that the nature of things is such, that the happiness of the whole system will be more effectually promoted by the misery of some part of it; and therefore, that perfect benevolence would induce the Creator to choose such a mixed scheme, rather than another in which there should have been unmixed virtue and happiness.—But granting that there is no evil, from which an equal or greater degree of good may not proceed, (*Schol.* 1. *gr.* 2.) yet it may justly be asked, What is here meant by *the nature of things?* or how can it possibly be imagined or believed, that a greater sum of happiness should arise from the mixture of evil, than Omnipotence could have produced some other way? or how can the view or experience of misery be necessary to give a virtuous being a more exquisite relish of happiness?†

SCHOLIUM 4.

If we still remain dissatisfied with the reply given to the objection, *Schol.* 1. it seems that the chief reason is, that we are apt to go on the mistaken principle, that God must needs raise the happiness of the universe to the highest possible degree: but we are to remember, on the one hand, that God is a being of infinite power (*Prop.* 31.); and on the other, that to be *created* implies to be *limited* in point of *happiness* as well as of *power*; and to be possessed of some limited degree of happiness, necessarily implies a possibility of receiving some higher degrees of it from an almighty power; so that it can never be said that God has done his utmost for the happiness of any particular creature, or of the universe in general: and this is so far from being a reflection on him, that it is indeed his glory. Whatever the number of creatures be, it might have been multiplied to and beyond any given degree; there might have been as many beings of the highest order of all, as there are of them and all the subordinate classes; and whatever were supposed to have been done, there would still have been room for the inquiry, Why was not more done? And if the answer is not to be resolved into mere sovereign pleasure, as perhaps it may, then it must be referred into some reason unknown to us; for the reason cannot be, that the happiness of the whole would have been less, which in this case it is a contradiction to assert.

Bayle on Venerat. p. 88, 89. *Bayes on Divine Benev.* p. 65—70. *Fenelon's Phil. Works*, vol. ii. p. 70—82. *præs.* § 9, 10. p. 72—76. *Leibnitz Theod.* vol. ii. p. 251, &c.

SCHOLIUM 5.

To this way of stating the Divine Goodness, as pursuing the happiness of the creation so far as it is fit to be pursued, it is objected, that nothing can be fit, but what tends to produce happiness; and that no being can be perfectly good, unless he does all the good he can possibly do; but this last principle cannot, for the reason above mentioned, be allowed, when we speak of an Almighty Agent.

On the whole, it must be owned to be a considerable difficulty. Nevertheless, we are sure there is a mixture of evil in the world; and it becomes us seriously to consider, Whether it be more honourable to God, or decent in us to say, that he could have prevented it, though for some wise but unknown reason he did not choose to do it; or to say, he could not have prevented it, without choosing a scheme, in consequence of which his creation might have been less happy than it now is.

Balg. on Div. Rect. p. 23—30; *Tracts*, p. 241—248. *Bayes on Div. Benev.* p. 29—33. *Grove on Wisdom*, p. 31—80; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 72—100.

LECTURE LVII.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It may not be improper here to take some notice of the celebrated controversy between Mr. Balguy, Mr. Bayes, and Mr. Grove, concerning the *Spring of the Divine Actions*. Balguy refers them all to *Rectitude*, Bayes to *Benevolence*, and Grove to *Wisdom*. There is something which well deserves an attentive perusal in their writings on this subject.

* To the writers here referred to may be added Boyle's "Contemplation of Nature." Among the works which exaggerate the evil of mankind, in order to promote atheistical purposes, may be reckoned the "Système de la Nature," ascribed to Mirabeau the father. On the question, Why did not God prevent the abuse of liberty? no one is more sceptically copious than Bayle, in several articles of his Historical Dictionary, and particularly under the heads of Manichæans and Paulicians.

† For the writers who maintain that both the natural and moral evil existing in the world are essential parts of the best possible system, recourse may be had to Hartley, Priestley, Cooper, and Godwin. Some Jesuits may in part be mentioned in this note.

of which we shall give a short abstract in the following scholia, so far as they relate to the present question.*

Balguy maintains, that God always does that which is right and fit, and that all his moral attributes, viz. justice, truth, faithfulness, mercy, patience, &c. are but so many different modifications of rectitude. He thinks it most agreeable to the Divine simplicity, and most honourable to God, to conceive of him as always influenced by this uniform principle; and that this manner of conceiving of him would prevent much confusion in our ideas, which arises from considering his different attributes as having different interests and claims.

Div. Rect. p. 3—8; *Tracts*, p. 212—217.

He grants that the *communication of good is one* great and right end of the Creator; but maintains that it is not the *only* end: he ultimately aims at *his own glory*, *i. e.* the complacential approbation of his own actions, arising from a consciousness of having inviolably preserved a due decorum, order, and beauty in his works: and if ever the happiness of any particular creature, or of the whole system, interfere with this, (as he thinks it sometimes may,) it must so far give way to it.

Div. Rect. p. 20—25. *Tracts*, p. 219—222.

This leads him into some reflections on the nature of *beauty* and *order*, in which he maintains that they are real and absolute in themselves, and are not merely relative to our faculties; otherwise, why this wonderful apparatus, this profusion of art and skill in the universe? He contends that Dr. Hutcheson grants this, when he places all beauty in *uniformity amidst variety*. Now, whatever is beautiful in the universe, the Creator must see it, and have a perfect view of all that is amiable and delightful in it. He concludes this part of his discourse with observing, that to suppose all the beauty, order, and harmony of the universe subservient to the happiness of living creatures, is hardly to be reconciled with the appearance of things; so that, on the whole, the increase of *happiness*, and love of *order*, being both agreeable to the rectitude and perfection of the Divine Nature, are joint ends, blended together both in the works of creation and providence.

Div. Rect. p. 16—23. *Tracts*, p. 223—230.

SCHOLIUM 7.

To this Mr. Bayes objects, That to consider God first in general as doing all that is right, and then to reduce his particular moral attributes, as branches of this universal rectitude of his nature, is going further about than is necessary, and leaves particular attributes entangled in just the same difficulty as before; but if it were otherwise, he says, that as nothing can be *fit* but what tends to promote happiness, the best idea we can entertain of the rectitude of God, is a disposition in him to promote the general happiness of the universe; and that we may as well consider all the other moral attributes as comprehended in this, and different modifications of it, as to consider them united in Balguy's view of rectitude; but with this advantage, that here we shall have something certain to depend upon; whereas it must throw the mind into perpetual perplexity, if (for aught we know) God may have some ends in his actions and dispensations entirely different from, and perhaps opposite to, the happiness of his creatures.

Bayes on Divine Benevolence, p. 7—19.

As for the ideas of *order* and *beauty*, he seems to query, Whether those objects which appear beautiful to us, may appear so to the Divine Mind? He thinks, that the only glory which God can propose as the end of his actions, is the approbation of his own benevolent mind, as acting always in such a manner as shall be most for the happiness of the creation. He urges several objections against Balguy's notion of beauty, which it is not necessary to contract here, lest we deviate too much from the principal question.

Bayes, ib. p. 33—44. *Relig. of Nat.* p. 116—119.

On the whole, he concludes that the Divine Benevolence is not to be stated as "an unbounded inclination to communicate the highest degree of happiness," which is a contradiction, as it would be to suppose the greatest possible triangle actually described (compare *Schol.* 4.); but "as a kind affection towards his creatures, inclining him to confer upon that universe which he has made (and which he might have created or not, or have created with inferior or superior capacities for happiness) the greatest happiness of which it is capable:" but if it be asked, Why it was not made capable of more? he supposes that must be referred into the will and pleasure of God. *Bayes*, ib. p. 70, 71.

LECTURE LVIII

SCHOLIUM 8.

Mr. Grove refers all into the *wisdom* of God, which he says is "the knowledge that God has of what is fitting or unfit to be chosen in every imaginable circumstance;" and taking it for granted that he is under no wrong bias, concludes that he always chooses according to this fitness. He adds, that nothing can be fit to be chosen by any being,

* [illegible] further [illegible] Mr. Bayes [illegible] Dr. Hutcheson [illegible] Mr. Grove [illegible] Dr. Price [illegible]

but what has some reference to *happiness*, either that of the agent or some other; and that *beauty* and *order* are nothing any further than as they tend to communicate pleasure to percipient beings: therefore the end of God in the creation must be *happiness:* as to the degree and manner of attaining it, suited to the faculties, dependences, and freedom of his rational creatures. On the whole, he supposes it must be apparently fit that no reasonable creature should be made miserable before he deserves it. He further adds, that he should be made for happiness; but that he should be obliged, as reasonable and free, to choose reason as his guide to it; and if he will not be persuaded to take the right way, it is fit he should be left to the ill consequences of his own wrong choice. All this, therefore, he supposes God must will.

Grove on Wisd. p. 1—7; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 7—13. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 116.

As Bayes and others have maintained that benevolence is a *kind inclination* or affection in God, Grove endeavours to prove that, properly speaking, there is no inclination in him; and maintains, that to suppose such an inclination as depends not on the previous act of the divine understanding, will be in effect imputing to him a blind and irrational propensity; and that nothing could be more dishonourable to the Divine Being than universally to assign this reason for his conduct in any instance, "That he was inclined, or had a mind to do it:"—but he further maintained it, as probable at least, that there are no inclinations in God at all distinct from his actual volitions; but that the actings of the Divine Will are immediately and inseparably connected with those of his understanding: to suppose the contrary, he thinks, would in effect be supposing that reason would not be sufficient to determine the Divine Mind. If any determination be said to have proceeded from such inclination, that coincides entirely with the former exploded hypothesis of blind inclination; but if it be said, the action proceeded partly from reason and partly from inclination, he asserts, that it may as well be supposed to proceed entirely from reason.

Grove, ib. p. 14—23; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 22—31. *Balg. Dis. Rect.* p. 9, 10; *Tracts*, p. 217, 218.

Hence Mr. Grove infers, in the process of his discourse, several things relating to the divine liberty, the origin of evil, the divine happiness, and the duties of natural religion, which have been, or will be, referred to, so far as there appears any thing peculiarly remarkable in them.

SCHOLIUM 9.

From the survey we have taken of this controversy, it may be natural to make the following remarks:—

1. That each of these ingenious writers discovers a pious temper, a concern for the honour of the Divine Being, and the advancement of virtue in the world.

2. That they all acknowledge, that God does always what is right and good: nay, that when one thing is on the whole more fit than another, he invariably chooses it.

3. That both Mr. Grove and Mr. Balguy acknowledge the *communication of happiness* to be a noble and excellent end, which the Deity in some measure has always in view; and which he prosecutes, so far as to bring happiness at least within the reach of all his rational creatures; never inflicting any evil upon them out of caprice, or without some just and important reason.

4. That there is very little difference between the foundation of Grove's discourse and that of Balguy's; *wisdom* in the former being so stated, that to be always governed by it, coincides with the notion of *rectitude* maintained by the latter.

5. That Mr. Bayes himself does not assert that it would have been impossible for God to have produced a greater sum of happiness; and by granting the contrary, seems to overturn the foundation of those arguments, by which he attempts to prove that God has made the creation as happy as its present capacity would admit.

6. It seems that a virtuous mind may be as easy, in considering God as a Being of universal *rectitude*, as if we were to consider him as a Being of unbounded *benevolence:* nay, it seems, that in some respects the former will have the advantage; as it is impossible for us confidently to say what will be for the greatest happiness of the whole; but, on the other hand, we may naturally conclude, that rectitude will on the whole incline God to treat the virtuous man in a more favourable manner than the wicked.

7. That the scheme of universal benevolence in the highest sense, seems evidently to imply *fatality:* for if all the sin and misery of the creatures were necessary to produce the greatest possible sum of happiness, and if the perfection of the Divine Nature determined him to produce this greatest sum, then sin and misery would be necessary; whereby the doctrine of liberty is destroyed, and such a seeming reflection thrown on the Divine Character, as few would be able to digest.

8. It seems, therefore, on the whole, best to keep to that in which we all agree and freely acknowledge,—there are depths in the divine counsels unfathomable to us; so that, though we may justly believe God has his reasons for suffering evil to be produced, we cannot certainly determine what those reasons are; and when we go about particularly to explain them, we find it difficult, according to the different schemes we embrace, on the one hand, to vindicate his goodness,—or on the other, his omnipotence.

LECTURE LIX.

PROPOSITION XLVI.

GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. This would follow merely from his being a Spirit, endued with perfections vastly superior to our own. Vid. *Prop.* 27. *Cor.* and *Prop.* 18. *Cor.* 1.

2. There may be (for any thing we certainly know) attributes and perfections in God, of which we have not the least idea.

3. In those perfections of the Divine Nature, of which we have some idea, there are many things to us inexplicable, and with which, the more deeply and attentively we think of them, the more we find our thoughts swallowed up; *v. g.* his self-existence, his eternity, his omnipresence, whether it be conceived of as diffusive or not diffusive; his producing effects by mere volition, the creation of matter, or even of spirit; his omniscience, where his knowledge of what is past from the creation of the world, (how long soever you suppose it to have been,) bears no given proportion to the knowledge of what is yet to come, if any creature be supposed immortal: especially, his knowledge of future contingencies; how, being perfectly happy, and consequently having nothing to wish or desire, he was excited to act; how, being perfectly good and omnipotent, he permitted evil to enter into the world; besides many other particulars touched upon in the preceding lectures.

1, 2, and 3. 4. God is incomprehensible. *Q. E. D.* *Abern. Serm.* vol. ii. No. 6, 7.

COROLLARY 1.

We have reason to believe, that as the perfections of God are infinite, if there be any orders of intelligent creatures superior to us, these perfections must also be incomprehensible to them.

Tillots. Serm. vol. ii. p. 768. *Rel. of Nature*, p. 93, 94.

COROLLARY 2.

It certainly becomes us to use great modesty and caution when we are speaking of the Divine perfections. *Archbp. King on Predest.* 30, 31.

SCHOLIUM.

It ought to be remembered, that the incomprehensible nature of the Divine Being, is no sufficient reason for our allowing ourselves in self-contradictory language, when we are speaking of him; as some of the ancients did, when they spoke of him as *more than unknown, without existence, without substance, a super-divine Deformity*, and as *terminating infinity* itself, so that infinite space is but a small corner of his productions, and *beyond perfection*; which, though probably designed only as strong hyperboles, tend to expose the persons that use them to ridicule, rather than to exalt our ideas of the Divine glory.

Divine Analogy, p. 65, 66. *Fraser's Life of Nadir Schah*, p. 12—18.

PROPOSITION XLVII.

The passions and affections of human nature are not in any degree to be ascribed to God. Compare *Prop.* 1. *Gr.* 3. and *Prop.* 13.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Many of those passions are grievous and troublesome; as anger, envy, fear, shame, &c. and consequently there can be no room for them in a Being perfectly happy, as God is. *Prop.* 38.

2. Others of them, which afford more pleasing sensations, are founded on some degree of weakness, and plainly imply a defect of happiness; as desire, hope, &c. and consequently are inconsistent with the omnipotence, as well as the felicity, of God.

3. The workings of the passions in us are always attended with some commotions in animal nature, and therefore imply corporeity; but God being incorporeal, such passions can have no place in him. *Prop.* 41.

1, 2, and 3. 4. God is free from human passions. *Q. E. D.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Nevertheless, in a *figurative* sense, love and joy, anger and pity, &c. may be ascribed to God; when we mean no more than that God does such acts, as in us would be at least probable indications of such passions in our mind; *v. g.* supplying the necessitous, relieving the sorrowful, punishing the vicious, &c. Yet, strictly speaking, we are to conceive of all these as performed by him with the utmost calmness and serenity; and even that complacency with which God contemplates his own perfections, and the actions and characters of the best of his creatures, is of a nature very different from, and vastly superior to, those sallies of joy which we perceive in ourselves in the most agreeable situations of life, and when our enjoyments are most refined.

Limb. Theol. l. ii. c. x. § 3. *Burn. on the Art.* p. 24—27.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may be proper here to mention the scheme which Mr. Brown advances in his Divine Analogy, as of so great importance, and which is built upon a hint in Archbishop King.

He pretends, that all we know of God is merely by *analogy*; *i. e.* from what we see in ourselves and observe in others, compared with events produced by the Divine Being, we conclude, that there is something in God in some degree *answerable* to those phenomena, though indeed very *different* from them. This analogy, as he maintains, differs much from *metaphor*, which is a mere figure; *v. g.* when

we speak of the eye of God, the hand of God, it is a metaphor, God being entirely incorporeal; but when we speak of the knowledge and power of God, it is by analogy.

If he means by this, that the divine manner of knowing and acting is different from ours, or that whatever degree of knowledge and power we possess, bears no proportion to that of the Supreme Being, it is what every one will very readily allow, and has generally been asserted by all who believe the existence and infinite perfections of God; but if he intends any thing else, his meaning seems either very unintelligible, or very absurd; so that the scheme, in either of these views, seems utterly unworthy of that vast parade with which he introduces it, as if the whole of natural and revealed religion depended upon such an explication of the matter.

Archbishop King on Predest. § 3—6, 8, 9, 37. *Grove on Wisd.* p. 42, 43; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 48, 49. *Proced. of Understanding*, p. 3—6, and 132—143. *Divine Analogy*, c. i. *Law's Notes on King, on the Orig. of Evil*, p. 67—70. quarto; edit. 3. p. 89—93.

LECTURE LX.

PROPOSITION XLVIII.

To consider some of the most celebrated definitions of virtue, and accounts of the foundation of it, and to compare them with that given, *Def.* 38.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Dr. Clarke and Mr. Balguy have the same notion with that stated above, as evidently appears from the references to them, *Def.* 38. and 36. *Cor.* And those of the *ancients*, who defined virtue to be *living according to nature*, seem to have meant much the same.

2. Mr. Wollaston has placed it in a regard to *truth*; *i. e.* he supposes that not only our words, but our *actions*, have a language; when this language is agreeable to the nature of things, then the action is virtuous; but when it implies a false assertion, then it is vicious. This account, though it differs in words, seems entirely to coincide with the former, or evidently to depend upon it.

Rel. of Nat. p. 8—13, and 20—24. *Hutches. on the Pass.* p. 253—274. *Grove's Works*, vol. iv. p. 50—54.

3. Dr. Hutcheson defines *moral goodness* "to be a quality apprehended in some actions, which produces approbation and love towards the actor, from those who receive no benefit from the action;" and supposes what he calls a *moral sense* implanted in our natures, or an instinct, like that of self-preservation, which, independently on any arguments taken from the reasonableness and advantage of any action, leads us to perform it ourselves, or to approve it when performed by others.

Hutches. Inq. Pref. p. 6—8, and p. 101—106; edit. ii. p. 14—16, 111—116.

That there is indeed such a sense, as to some branches of virtue, though in many persons and instances much impaired, is not to be denied, and is well illustrated and proved in

Hutches. Inq. p. 107—124; edit. ii. p. 117—135. *Spect.* vol. viii. No. 588.

Nor does it imply any innate idea, as some have supposed, any more than the intuitive discerning of self-evident propositions implies the ideas connected with them to have been innate.

Watts's Ess. No. iv. § 5. p. 108—113.

But Dr. Hutcheson has made this instinct to be the very *foundation* of virtue; and expressly says, that "every good action is supposed to follow from affection to some rational agent;" and that "the true spring of virtue is some instinct, which influences to the love of others, as the moral sense determines us to approve actions flowing from this principle."

Hutches. Inq. p. 143, 153; edit. ii. p. 155—165.

But Mr. Balguy pleads, that this makes virtue an *arbitrary* thing, which might have been contrary to what it is, had the instinct been contrary: that it implies, that a creature with intelligence, reason, and liberty, could not have performed one good action without this affection: that it makes brutes capable of virtue, since they are capable of affections: that it estimates the excellency of characters by the strength of passions, by no means in our own power; and, on the whole, gives us a much less honourable idea of virtue than the method of stating it, which is taken above: to which we may add, that if we do not conceive of God as an *affectionate* Being, such an idea of moral goodness as this would be inconsistent with that of the divine rectitude.

It may be observed by the way, that though Lord Shaftesbury uses many expressions which Dr. Hutcheson has adopted, yet it seems that he in the main falls in with the account given above; since he considers virtue as founded on "the *eternal measure* and immutable *relation of things*," or, in other words, as consisting "in a certain just disposition of a rational creature towards the moral objects of right and wrong." *Shaftesb. Char.* vol. ii. p. 36, 40.

We conclude this head with observing, that Dr. Hutcheson's definition is liable to some exception, as there may be room to question what he means by the expression, "Those who receive no advantage from the action." If it be only *the generality of mankind*, it is evidently a vague, uncertain manner of speaking and for that reason to be declined in so important a definition; but if he means *all*

rational beings, then it will remain to be proved, that all these, or even the human species, do necessarily approve and love virtue in all its branches, and all that practise it.

Baly. Found. of Goodness, part i. p. 7—15. 20—22; *Tracts*, p. 46—54, 59—62.

LECTURE LXI.

4. Many writers, both ancient and modern, have placed virtue in *the imitation of God*; and it must be allowed to be a very noble view of it. Now, as it has already been proved, *Prop.* 44. that God is a Being of perfect rectitude, it follows, that taking virtue on our definition, it will also be an imitation of God; but, on the whole, this definition did not seem preferable, for two reasons: 1. Because it is difficult to prove the moral perfections of the Divine Being, otherwise than by the medium of an immutable difference in actions, the conformity to which shall be honourable, and the contrary dishonourable. 2. Because, when virtue is said to be an imitation of God, great allowance must be made for the different nature and relations of that blessed Being and ourselves; since there are some things in which it would be impossible or impious for us to attempt to imitate him; and others, in which it is impossible that he should be an example to us; *i. e.* in all those branches of duty which suppose either dependence, corporeity, or guilt. There is indeed in these branches of virtue, a *correspondence* between the nature of God and our temper and conduct; but that cannot in strict propriety be called a *resemblance*.

Plato ap. Howe's Blessedness, &c. Tit. Page. Tillots. vol. ii. p. 581. *Howe*, ib. p. 69—79. *Ap. Op.* vol. i. p. 471—475. *Evans's Christian Temp.* vol. i. p. 59—66.

5. Others, and particularly Dr. Cumberland, in his Law of Nature, have placed the whole of virtue, as in men, in the *love of God and our fellow-creatures*; or, to express it in his own words, "The foundation of all natural law is this: The greatest benevolence of every rational agent towards all, forms the happiest state of every and of all the benevolent, so far as it is in their power; and is necessarily requisite to the happiest state which they can attain,—and therefore the common good is the supreme law."

This is an amiable view of it, and well expresses that principle of gratitude and benevolence whence all true virtue in us must flow; but it nearly coincides with Dr. Hutcheson's notion, *gr.* 3. and in a great measure with *gr.* 4.; for to love God, is to regard him as the centre of happiness, whom therefore we must in all things study to resemble and to please; and thus it is an universal principle, of which the love of our neighbour is a very important branch; and when we are required to do to others as we would have them do to us, the meaning is, that we must treat them as we could reasonably desire they should treat us, were they in our circumstances and we in theirs. So that here is a reference to the fitness of things according to present circumstances; which plainly shows that precept to be founded on the definition of virtue which we have advanced.

Cumberl. Law of Nature, c. i. § 4. *Hobbes's Leviath.* p. 140. *sub fin. Evans's Christian Temper*, vol. ii. p. 186—194.

6. Aristotle, and other ancient moralists, have placed virtue in a mediocrity, supposing vice to consist in extremes; but it is evident, that merely from this definition none could know what virtue is; nor can it be determined what is an extreme, till we know what is agreeable to the nature of things; besides, there are some branches of virtue which cannot be carried to an extreme, *v. g.* resignation to the will of God,—belief of his promises, &c.

Aristot. Ethic. l. ii. c. vi. *Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis, Prol.* § 43—45. *Relig. of Nat.* p. 24, 25.

7. Some have placed all virtue in a *wise regard to our own interest*; which seems to have been the opinion of Dr. Waterland, Mr. Clarke of Hull, and Dr. Rutherford. Concerning which it may be observed, that the question is not Whether virtue be always most for our interest? (vid. *Prop.* 44. *Cor.* 2.) nor Whether there be any such thing in nature as disinterested benevolence? (which we shall afterwards examine, *Prop.* 50. *Schol.*) or Whether (supposing there is) all virtue consists in it, so that our own interest should be disregarded? but Whether a wise regard to it is the clearest, the most rational, and amiable view of virtue in general?—which, from what has been said above, evidently appears not to be the case.* †

* Dr. John Brown may be added to the number of those who have placed virtue in a wise regard to our own interest.—See the second of his Essays on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury.

† Other determinations of virtue, and accounts of the foundation of it, have been given since the Lecture was written. Mr. Hume considers, under the denomination of virtue, whatever is agreeable to ourselves and others; and whatever is useful to ourselves and others. Dr. Adam Smith ascribes it to the principle of sympathy. Mr. Archdeacon Paley defines virtue to be "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."

Hume on the Principles of Morals, as separately printed, passim, or in the Collection of his Essays. *Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments*, vol. i. p. [illegible] 6th edit. *Paley's Prin. of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 61. 5th 7th edit. *Dr. Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 80—87.

For a view of the different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue, and of the different systems which have been formed concerning the principle of Approbation, see Dr. Adam Smith who argues well on p. 155—330.

About forty years ago, Mr. Jamieson, a Scottish clergyman, published a treatise, to show that the obligations of virtue is entirely founded upon the reason and fitness of things, the moral sense, and the will of God.

COROLLARY.

From a survey of all these, it may appear that the most considerable writers, whose notions we have examined in the five first steps, have differed from each other, more in expression than in meaning, in the different views they have given of moral virtue.

LECTURE LXII.

PROPOSITION XLIX.

To estimate the degree of virtue in any given action.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. There can be no virtue at all in any action, if the agent by whom it is performed has not some idea of the moral fitness of things.—Vid. *Def.* 38.

2. There can be no virtue at all in it, if there be not an ultimate purpose of acting agreeably to that fitness, or from an end, which it is upon the whole virtuous to propose; for if the action be designed merely as a means of obtaining an end which it is vicious to desire and pursue, in that connexion it participates of the meanness of the end, how excellent soever it might otherwise have been; and the nobler the motive is, *cæt. par.* the more virtuous is the action.

Scott's Christian Life, vol. i. c. iv. p. 251—258; *Works*, vol. i. p. 97—100. *Spect.* vol. iii. No. 213.

3. The action must, on the whole, be *chosen* by the agent, in order to its being virtue in him; otherwise it is not so properly his action as the action of some other being, whose instrument or organ he at that time is.—Vid. *Def.* 10.

4. It is much debated, Whether it be necessary that the being acting should have a *liberty of choice*, (*Def.* 22.) *i. e.* be able to choose otherwise. It must be owned, this does not follow from our definition of virtue; nevertheless, it may be allowed, that the virtue of a being in a *state of probation*, must be founded in a liberty of choice.

Balguy's Divine Rect. p. 26—28. *Grove's Divine Wisdom*, p. 61—63.

5. It cannot be necessary that there should be in the general some degree of *affection* in every agent, to render his actions virtuous: for then the Divine Being, if he be free from affections and passions, would be incapable of virtue, contrary to *Prop.* 43.; but when passions are wrought into the constitution of any being, as in us, it is indeed very desirable that they should concur with the volition; but if they do not, and a fit action is performed without any passionate impressions at all, from a rational principle of gratitude to God, and regard to the happiness of man, it is still a virtuous action.—Vid. *Prop.* 48. *gr.* 3.

Balg. Inq. part i. p. 57—60; *Tracts*, p. 92—95.

6. Though the degree of virtue in any action is lessened by the degree in which it proceeds, from a regard to any private advantage, distinct from virtue itself (vid. *gr.* 2.); yet if any be excited to virtuous actions, in hopes thereby of attaining to a state of complete virtue, the degree of virtue in such actions is not thereby lessened: but this is properly loving virtue for virtue's sake.

Shaftesb. Char. vol. ii. p. 58—66. *Balg. Lett. to a Deist*, No. i. p. 33—36. *Balg. Moral Goodness*, part ii. p. 33—38; *Tracts*, p. 129—132.

7. When the passions work in a powerful manner on the side of virtue, the force of virtue is in that case less seen than when they work strongly against it, and a regard to the fitness of things surmounts them. Nevertheless, there may be as great virtue in a being, where there is no struggle at all, as where virtue triumphs over the most violent opposition; otherwise the Deity would be incapable of virtue: nay, there may be virtue where the passions plead strongly on its side; otherwise a man would daily grow less capable of exalted degrees of virtue as he gained a conquest over the irregularities of his passions; all which is most evidently absurd.

Shaftesb. Char. vol. ii. p. 36—38. *Balg. of Moral Goodness*, part ii. p. 88, 89; *Tracts*, p. 192, 193.

LECTURE LXIII.

COROLLARY 1.

On nearly the like principles (*mutat. mutand.*) the degree of *vice* in any given action may be estimated. The matter is largely stated on both sides in

Hutches. Inq. p. 150—168; edit. ii. p. 165—183.

COROLLARY 2.

It is impossible certainly to pronounce on the degree of moral good in any action, unless we exactly knew the heart of the agent, and also knew the whole of his circumstances and relations, so as to be able confidently to determine what he could, and what he could not, have known concerning the moral fitness or unfitness of the thing in question. —Vid. *Def.* 38.

COROLLARY 3.

God alone can certainly and infallibly judge of the degree of virtue or vice in any given action; much more may this be affirmed concerning the whole of any *character*.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Dr. Hutcheson has attempted to introduce ma-

thematical calculations into these subjects of morality; of which it may not be improper to give a little specimen. It is to be observed, that he undertakes to show the method of stating the importance of *a character*, rather than the degree of virtue in any *particular action*; and his rules are these: Let M signify the *moment*, or degree of *good* produced by the person, whose character is under consideration; B the *benevolence* of his temper; and A his *ability*: then $M=B\times A$, *i. e.* in a compound ratio of his benevolence and ability;—when, in any two beings, their abilities are the same, $M=B$;—when their benevolence is equal, $M=A$. On the other hand, it appears from the former view, that $B=\frac{M}{A}$ *i. e. directly* as the moment of good; and *inversely* as the ability.

When present interest lies *on the side* of virtue, if I express it, then $B=\frac{M-I}{A}$; but if it lies *against* virtue, then $B=\frac{M+I}{A}$. He adds, that it is the perfection of goodness, when $M=A$; for then the virtue of any two beings compared will be equal; *i. e.* : : 1 : 1 whatever their abilities are. This he supposes the Stoics meant, when they said, The virtue of a wise man was equal to that of the gods:—yet here, by the way, they took it for granted, that a wise man had no regard at all to his own interest, otherwise the assertion on these principles would be false; and if the reasoning in *Prop.* 45. *Sch.* 4. be allowed, this canon cannot be applied to the Divine Being; since A expresses an infinite quantity, and M can only express a finite.

To express the degree of *moral evil* in any character, let μ signify *the degree of evil* produced, and H *hatred* or ill-will,—and the former canon (*mut. mutand.*) may be applied.

Hutch. ib. p. 168—174, 177, 178; second edit. p. 182—188, 191, 192.

SCHOLIUM 2.

How right soever this may be in the general, yet when particular circumstances and characters come to be examined by it, it will be found of little use; since it is hardly possible to express, by proportional numbers, the degree of benevolence, the degree of ability for virtuous actions, and the degree in which interest is apprehended and considered for or against them; which must all be exactly adjusted before the preceding canons can be applied.

LECTURE LXIV.

DEFINITION XLI.

Those branches of virtue which more immediately respect God, are called DIVINE; those which respect our fellow-creatures, are called SOCIAL; and those which respect ourselves, HUMAN or PERSONAL VIRTUES.

PROPOSITION I.

To inquire into the principal branches of Divine Virtue.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. It is fit we should often contemplate the Divine Being, since he appears by the foregoing propositions possessed of such illustrious perfections as well deserve our most attentive thoughts; and since the knowledge of his nature must be of great use to direct us in the methods of pleasing him, and securing our own happiness.

Wright's Great Concern, edit. iii. p. 158—163; edit. i. p. 151—157. *Scott's Christian Life*, vol. i. p. 85—90.

2. On account of those perfections, it is fit we should humbly adore him, as infinitely superior to all other beings; and that both our souls and bodies should concur in the expression of such adoration.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 182—185; edit. i. p. 174—177. *Scott*, ib. p. 91—96; *Works*, vol. i. p. 33—36.

3. Forasmuch as God is the most amiable Being, it is fit we should love him with all our heart; *i. e.* should think of him with the highest complacency and delight; and, as he is our great Benefactor, that we should cherish the most lively sentiments of gratitude towards him; and that, seeing he is the source of being and happiness, we should consider our own happiness as centred in him.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 200—205; edit. i. p. 194—198. *Scott*, ib. p. 96—105; *Works*, vol. i. p. 38—41. *Collib. Inq.* p. 11—17. *Evans's Serm.* vol. i. No. viii. p. 167—173. *Abernethy's Sermons*, vol. ii. No. x.

4. Forasmuch as God is the Author and Disposer of all events, it is fit we should observe, acknowledge, and consider, his providential interposition in all the various occurrences of life.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 163—169; edit. i. p. 157—163.

5. In consequence of this his universal providence, in conjunction with his wisdom and goodness, it is fit we should acquiesce in the determinations of his will, when most contrary to our present interest or natural inclinations.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 196—199; edit. i. p. 189—194. *Scott*, ib. p. 115—126; *Works*, vol. i. p. 45—49.

6. Considering on the one hand his power, and on the other his evident and experienced wisdom and goodness, it is fit we should trust ourselves to his providential care, as to what is still before us.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 206—208; edit. i. p.

200, 201. *Scott*, ib. p. 126—135; *Works*, vol. i. p. 49—53. *Abern.* vol. ii. No. xi.

7. Seeing all our happiness does entirely depend upon his favour, it is fit we should make it our highest care to please him, by complying with all the intimations of his will, and by imitating the moral perfections of his nature, so far as we are capable of such imitation; which, as was before observed, implies a regard to all the known branches of virtue (*Prop.* 48. *gr.* 4.); nevertheless, when considered in this particular view, it is a branch of that duty which we immediately owe to God, and a regard to it should run through the whole of our lives; that even our minutest actions may, as far as possible, be dignified and sanctified by it.

Wright, ib. edit. iii. p. 192—195; edit. i. p. 185—189. *Scott*, ib. p. 105—115; *Works*, p. 41—45.

SCHOLIUM 1.

See also on this subject the following writers:

Amory's Dial. on Devotion. Fordyce's Moral Phil. l. ii. § 4. *Grove's Ethics*, part ii. c. xix. *Butler's Sermons*, No. xiii. xiv. *Xenoph. Mem.* lib. i. c. 4. lib. iv. c. 3. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 78—95. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 29—109.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Faith in the Divine declarations is also a branch of Divine virtue; but cannot so properly be considered here, as we have not yet examined the evidence of the Divine veracity; and we may add, that a diligent inquiry into whatever bears any striking and probable marks of a declaration from Heaven, will be a natural consequence of that veneration for God, that love to him, and that care to please him, which were specified in the 2d, 3d, and 7th steps, as branches of Divine virtue.

COROLLARY 1.

It is vicious to ascribe supreme divine honour to any other than God alone. Vid. *Prop.* 39.

COROLLARY 2.

It is also vicious to worship God by images, since it tends to sink our conceptions of him, *gr.* 2, 3.

Limb. Theol. lib. v. c. xxxiii. *Crellii Ethic.* lib. iii. c. vi. p. 329, 330; vol. iv. *among the Fratres Poloni.*

COROLLARY 3.

The desire of foreknowing future contingencies, and all such astrological and magical arts, as some pursue, in order to the discovery of them, are to be avoided; as not only tending to vex and disquiet the mind, but also, as in a degree inconsistent with the reverence, submission, and dependence, which we owe to the Divine Being.

Howe's Works, vol. ii. p. 137—144. *Turret.* loc. v. quæst. 7. § 18. *Prid. Connect.* vol. ii. p. 329—331. *More's Theol. Works*, p. 240—255. *Welwood's Memoirs*, p. 105—107. *Horace*, book i. ode xi. *Jennings's Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 381. *Limb. Theol.* book v. c. xxxv.

COROLLARY 4.

Great care should be taken, that our inquiries into the nature of the blessed God be made with a becoming reverence, and not in as loose and indifferent a manner as if we were examining the properties of a mathematical figure, or a mechanical engine.

Nieuwent. Rel. Phil. vol. i. pref. § 24. *Boyle on Veneration*, p. 1, 2.

COROLLARY 5.

To blaspheme the name of God, *i. e.* to speak of him in a manner signifying contempt, or hatred, must be a most horrible degree of wickedness.

Wits. Ægyp. lib. i. c. v. § 4. lib. ii. c. xvi. § 1. *Barrow's Works*, vol. i. p. 133—135.

COROLLARY 6.

Forasmuch as our obligation to these branches of *Divine virtue* is plainly founded on the nature of things, it is evident they give a very defective account of virtue who confine it (as the ancients generally did, and those who reject revelation often do) to *sobriety* and *benevolence*; and there is great reason to believe that God as indispensably requires those regards to *himself* before described, as he does *social* virtue; for though, on account of the infinite perfections of his nature he cannot require them for his own sake, *i. e.* to advance his own happiness, yet his love to rectitude and order, on the one hand, and his regard to the truest happiness of his rational creatures, on the other, must engage him absolutely to insist upon them.

Leland against Tind. vol. i. p. 236—243; edit. ii. p. 187, &c. *Leechm. Serm. on the Duty of a Minister*, p. 36—39. Glasg. edit. *Leechman's Sermons*, vol. i.

LECTURE LXV.

PROPOSITION 11

To take a general survey of social virtue.—*Def.* 41.

SOLUTION.

The universal rule here is, That virtue obliges us to avoid whatever would be grievous to any of our fellow-creatures, if it be not necessary to procure some greater good; and that we labour to promote the happiness of all about us to the utmost of our power.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Our natures are so constituted, that we cannot but approve of kind and benevolent actions, and abhor those which are malevolent and cruel.

1. 2. Every man by the practice of an ill-natured conduct, must expose himself to the hatred and contempt of others.

1. 3. By an ill-natured conduct, a man would be exposed to the upbraidings of his own mind.

4. Mutual ill offices naturally circulate; and it is exceedingly probable that they will at last come home to the man who allows himself in them.

Lettres Persannes, vol. i. No. viii—xi.

Prop. 45. and *Prop.* 50. *Gr.* 7. 5. God is good; and therefore a benevolent conduct is an imitation of him, and consequently a branch of virtue.

Gr. 2, 3, 4, 5. 6. It is reasonable, therefore, and consequently virtuous, to avoid doing what is grievous to others, and to do them all the good that we can, *i. e.* to be as benevolent as possible. *Q. E. D.*

Hutches. Inq. Ess. ii. § 5. p. 195—222. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 128, 129. *Puffend. de Off.* lib. i. c. viii. § 1—6. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 95—105. *Paley's Princ. of Moral and Political Philosophy*, p. 231—235, 241—250.

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it appears, that the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves, is a summary view of social virtue; which, at the same time that it gives the *rule*, suggests the *reason*,—as it is most apparent that our conduct is to be determined, not by considering who the person is, with regard to whom we act, but what the circumstances of his case are.

Religion of Nature, p. 41. *Evans's Christian Temper*, vol. ii. p. 168—176. *Butler's Serm.* No. xi. xii.

COROLLARY 2.

Since life is the foundation of happiness, virtue requires that we should not only forbear taking away the lives of our fellow-creatures, (unless when the good of the whole requires it,) but that we should be ready to preserve their lives, when we can do it without exposing our own,—and in our own, exposing the whole to damage at least equal to the advantage that would arise from the preservation of the life or lives supposed to be secured at the expense of ours.

Cic. de Offic. lib. iii. c. xxiii. p. 167. Tool. edit.

COROLLARY 3.

The law of universal benevolence extends also to *ourselves*; and consequently obliges us to take care to secure our own lives, and to furnish ourselves with the necessary supports of them, if it lie in our power, that we may not be burthensome to others. It also obliges us to act in such a manner, as to preserve our characters fair and untainted; for if they be damaged, our capacity of being useful to others will be proportionably impaired.

COROLLARY 4.

This law of universal benevolence extends itself even to the *brutes*, supposing them capable of sensation, and consequently of pleasure and pain; and though there should be reason to suspect that the arguments, *Prop.* 2. are not conclusive,—yet, since it is difficult, if not impossible, certainly to prove that they are mere machines, a virtuous man would be cautious how he abuses them, (especially since they are generally supposed to have sensation,) lest by any degree of cruelty towards them, a habit of cruelty might be contracted or encouraged; nevertheless, as they are capable of but small degrees of happiness in comparison with man, it is fit that their interests should give way to that of the human species, whenever in any considerable article they come in competition with each other.

Puff. Law of Nature, lib. iv. c. iii. § 6. *Hale's Contemplations*, vol. i. p. 293—295. *Guard.* vol. i. No. 61. *Fost. Serm.* vol. i. No. 3.[a]

SCHOLIUM.

As we here dismiss the consideration of benevolence in general, and proceed to particular branches and effects of it,—this seems to be the proper place to touch upon the celebrated question, Whether, and how far, benevolence is to be conceived as *disinterested?* With respect to which, the following remarks seem just and rational:—

1. That every man cannot but desire his own happiness, whenever he thinks of it.

2. That this happiness will be more effectually obtained by a due regard to the public, than by seeking a separate interest; as appears by principles laid down above.

3. That when the connexion of self-advantage with benevolent actions is thought of, it seems impossible that it should not also be intended and considered (*gr.* 1.); and the principle of universal benevolence, instead of forbidding, will require, that some regard should be paid to it, in such a circumstance.

4. That it would be very mean and ungenerous, if it were possible, to seek the happiness of the public without any affection to it, but merely as an instrument of private good.

5. That when a man feels the highest pleasure in doing good to the public, and even sacrificing his own separate interest to it, he must certainly have a real love for it, which may with some considerable propriety be called *disinterested*, if it be not so in the highest possible sense.

[a] The obligation of mercy to Brute Animals has been elaborately considered by Dr Humphrey Primatt, in an express Treatise on the subject. Mr Granger also published a Sermon on the same subject, which, both on account of its size and price, is better adapted for the instruction of the lower orders of mankind.

6. That as the happiness of *one* is of little importance, when compared with the happiness of *all*, it seems reasonable that, so far as it is regarded, it should not be made the chief end of actions profitable to the public, nor considered in any other view than as subordinate to the good of the community, of which each is but one.

7. That the benevolent affections may be so strong, as to prevent any reflection upon the present pleasure, and much more the future advantage, of a benevolent action to ourselves.

8. That the mind is so formed, as to reflect with great pleasure and delight on characters and actions, the consideration of which does not immediately affect our own personal interest; and to say, that our complacency in them arises from an apprehension that the prevalency of such a temper in us would be advantageous to ourselves, seems asserting an evident falsehood.

Hutch. on Pass. p. 13—26. *Inq.* p. 160—162.*

LECTURE LXVI.

PROPOSITION LII.

It is consistent with benevolence, and therefore with virtue, that brute animals should be slain for the food of men.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If animal food be used with moderation, it seems that hereby the happiness of mankind is promoted. This more generous kind of food may afford brisker spirits than a vegetable diet used alone; at least, it seems that those who have from their infancy been accustomed to eat flesh, would be exposed to considerable trouble and inconvenience, if not to distempers, by entirely leaving it off.

2. The happiness of the brutes is not on the whole diminished, but rather promoted, by this means; for a violent death does not seem to be nearly so painful as a natural death, coming upon them by the slow advances of a disease: their life, though it be shortened, yet is not imbittered with fear and expectation of death, of which they seem not capable; to which we may add, that out of regard to our own advantage we take care to feed and defend them, which renders their lives much happier than they would otherwise be; whereas, were they not to be used for food, we must either destroy them without eating their carcasses, to prevent their multiplying too fast upon us, or they would destroy each other, consume the vegetable creation, and perhaps grow dangerous to us for want of sufficient food.

It is also to be remembered, that where the custom of eating flesh has long prevailed, it ought not to be laid aside without great and important reasons; considering what great numbers of mankind are subsisted by keeping cattle, and trafficking in them alive or dead.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Whereas some have objected, That it is an invasion of the rights of God, as the great Lord of life, to make such havoc of the lives of brute animals, it may be answered,

1. That by appointing it in the course of his providence, that they should multiply so fast, God has made it necessary that many of them should be slain; from whence we may reasonably argue, that he allows us to kill them for food.

2. That in the various classes of animals, it seems that the greater are generally supported by eating the less; not to say (what yet some have urged) that the teeth and stomachs of men are so formed, as to intimate that they were intended to feed upon flesh.

3. The agreeable variety of tastes which God has given to the flesh of many birds, beasts, and fishes, is a further presumption that he designed them for our food; and consequently meant to give us a liberty of taking away their lives.

4. Most vegetables, when they come to be examined by microscopes, swarm with multitudes of small animals which live in and upon them;—so that a man who should scruple destroying animals, would hardly be able to find a subsistence, at least not without resigning some of the finest vegetables, and so frustrating the kind purpose of Providence in creating them.

Reynolds's Letters to a Deist, No. 1. *pass.* p. 24—61. *Thomson's Spring*, line 336—378; *Autumn*, line 1089—1124. *Ovid's Metam.* lib. xv. ver. 50—152. *Puffen. Law of Nat.* lib. iv. c. iii. § 4, 5. *Nat. Disp.* part. i. p. 44—49. *Fitzosb. Lett.* No. viii. *Clarke's Orig. of Evil*, p. 266—295.†

SCHOLIUM 2.

Nevertheless, care should be taken not to add any unnecessary circumstances of terror and pain to their death, nor should we accustom ourselves to sport with their lives.

Doddr. on Educ. p. 22, 23. *Delany on Relig. Dut.* p. 92. *Thom. Autumn*, line 360—482.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have objected, That several of the argu-

* That there is no such thing as disinterested benevolence, is a favourite principle with many writers. See, on this side of the question, Dr. Brown, in his Second Essay on Shaftesbury's Characteristics, and Dr. Rutherforth, in his Moral Writings. On the other side of the question are, Mr Hume, in his Principles of Morals, and, very recently, Dr. Godwin, in his Inquiry concerning Political Justice, book ii. chap. viii. p. 341—361. See also Dr. Beattie's Elements of Moral Science, vol. i. p. 244—249.

† Mr Holwell and Mr Oswald, both of whom have resided in the East Indies, have embraced the principles of the Hindoos, and written against the use of animal food. Mr Oswald in a distinct treatise, very lately published.

ments used in the proposition extend not to *fish*: but it is answered, That if a right of killing terrestrial animals for food be established, there seems little reason for scrupling to use fish in the like manner: it seems a part of the scheme agreeable to the rest; and the instinct which brings them in shoals at certain times to the shore, seems an intimation that they are intended for human use.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It seems an instance of the goodness of the Divine Being, that he has, in the course of his providence, appointed the greater part of animals to die by some sudden violence, rather than by a lingering decay; in which, on the whole, they would suffer a great deal more than they can do in the few painful moments which generally attend their death when slain by men, or when devoured by each other; in which, perhaps, surprise and astonishment take off much of the sense of pain.

LECTURE LXVII.

PROPOSITION LIII.

To inquire, How the parts and fruits of the earth ought to be distributed for the use of its inhabitants, before any mutual agreement is made between them? *i. e.* considering things in a *state of nature*.

SOLUTION.

1. If there be enough of each, every one may take what he first lights on.

2. When he has thus taken it, another person ought not to seize upon it without his leave; but should rather take some other part not so occupied.

3. Nevertheless, if there be not enough for each, he who has possessed himself of more than is necessary for his own subsistence, ought to impart some of it to him who is not capable of thus providing for himself. Vid. *Prop.* 51.

4. If necessary supplies be denied to a person incapable of providing otherwise for himself, he may seize on the possessions of another; nevertheless, with this proviso, that no one shall be destroyed by such a seizure, whose life is of more importance to the whole community than that of the person who makes the seizure. Vid *Prop.* 51. *Cor.* 2.

5. Nevertheless, it is not requisite that an equal distribution should be made; since, on the one hand, each has in common cases a right to the fruits of his own industry, on the principles laid down above, *gr.* 1, 2. and, on the other, it is for the good of society in general that some should be richer than the rest, seeing there are many civil offices to be performed in life, which might become matter of dangerous debate, if some persons were not, by the straitness of their circumstances, induced voluntarily to perform them.

DEMONSTRATION.

The demonstration appears from *Prop.* 51. *Sol.* and *Cor.* 2. for it is evident that these rules will promote the happiness of mankind in general.

Locke on Gov. lib. ii. c. 5. *Grot. de Jure Belli et Pac.* lib. ii. c. ii. § 2. *More's Utopia*, p. 78—98.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It seems that *usury* is not in general to be condemned, provided it be no more than is proportionable to that gain which the person borrowing receives from the loan, especially among men who subsist not merely by agriculture, grazing, and manual arts, but by trade or merchandise; since it is evident that among such, the money might turn to better account to the owners than in the former case; and consequently the owners would have a just claim to some equivalent, for the advantage they forego in favour of the borrower. Nevertheless, in exacting this, virtue requires a compassionate regard to any calamitous circumstances which may render the borrower incapable of paying interest, or perhaps the principal.

Puff. Law of Nature, lib. v. c. vii. § 8—12. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. xii. § 21.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Many things continue yet common, and are not become the property of any, there being enough to suffice all; some of them not being capable of occupation by one person alone,—and others such, that the property of them would not be useful to any; *v. g.* wild beasts and birds, air-insects, sea-water. Whether the *sea* can come into property has been warmly disputed:—Grotius denies it, in his *Mare Liberum*; and Selden asserts, in his *Mare Clausum*; but it would be tedious and unnecessary to give a view of their arguments here.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. ii. § 3—5. *Puff.* ib. lib. iv. c. v. § 5—10.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Property, in any degree, ceases when the thing is abandoned by the former possessor; and the security of mankind seems to require, that when any thing has been long in the possession of a person, family, or nation, it should continue with them, if for a considerable time the original possessor has entered no claim upon it. Perhaps, hereby that former possessor may suffer some damage; yet there would be so much room for fraud and litigation, were antiquated claims often to be revived, that, on the whole, they would undoubtedly occasion greater trouble than advantage to mankind; and it is impossible to lay down any general rules which would

* Mr. Bentham has lately published a curious Essay on Usury, in which the English laws upon that subject are examined, and the wisdom and propriety of them freely discussed.

not, in some instances, bear hard on the innocent and virtuous.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. iv. § 3—9. *Puff.* ib. lib. iv. c. xii. § 8.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Perhaps, upon these principles, that kind of theft which was permitted by the Spartan law, might be justified; as by making such a law, the proprietors seemed voluntarily to have relinquished their property to those who could seize it in such circumstances; but how far it was on the whole prudent to do it, is difficult to determine, without stating the matter more largely than would be convenient here.

Rollin Man. vol. iii. p. 340—347.*

LECTURE LXVIII.

DEFINITION XLII.

That verbal proposition is said to be ETHICALLY TRUE, in which we join those relations, attributes, or properties, which *seem to us* to belong to any idea,—and separate those which *seem to us* not to belong to it; but it is then LOGICALLY TRUE when we join those that *do really* agree, and separate those which *do not*.

COROLLARY 1.

A proposition *logically* true, may be *ethically* false, —and *vice versa*.

COROLLARY 2.

Propositions directly contrary to each other, in the mouths of different persons, may both be ethically, though not logically, true.

SCHOLIUM.

Ethical truth is sometimes divided into *veracity*, *i. e.* a conformity of our words to our thoughts; and *faithfulness*, *i. e.* a conformity of our actions to our words. The last seems to be limited to words expressing a purpose of doing *good* to another.

DEFINITION XLIII.

That proposition, in which we culpably violate ethical truth, is said to be A LIE.

Puff. ib. lib. iv. c. 1. § 8.

PROPOSITION LIV.

Virtue requires that ethical truth should be preserved among men, in their discourses with each other.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Speech may be useful in spreading the knowledge of those things which may advance the happiness of mankind.

2. In order to render it thus useful, it is necessary that a person should be believed.

3. If ethical truth be not regarded, the person speaking cannot be believed.

4. The violation of ethical truth has generally been regarded as infamous; and persons who allow themselves in it, do thereby necessarily subject themselves to great contempt, and so greatly impair both their comfort and usefulness.

1, 2, 3, 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Puff. ib. § 7, 10. *Watts's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 168—170; *Works*, vol. i. p. 226. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. iii. c. i. § 11. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. part ii. c. xi. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 184—189. 7th edition.

COROLLARY 1.

It is injurious to virtue to allow ourselves to abuse the ambiguity of words in such a manner as thereby to lead others into a mistake, since most of the ill consequences which follow from direct lying, do also follow from such equivocations and mental reservations.

Puff. ib. § 13, 14. *Grot.* ib. § 10. *Burnet's Essay on Queen Mary*, p. 63, 64.

COROLLARY 2.

Virtue forbids our deceiving others by *actions*, as well as by words; since the reasoning of the proposition does not depend upon making use of articulate sounds, or written characters, but upon any method taken to communicate our ideas to each other.—*Puff.* ib. § 2.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this some have added a further argument, taken from the *nature* of ethical truth, which, separate from all its *effects*, seems to imply something in it so sacred, that a violation of it is dishonourable and contemptible, and therefore vicious, though no damage should arise to ourselves or others from such a violation; especially, considering that God is the Witness of every falsehood; and consequently it is a kind of indignity offered to him, to utter any thing in his presence which he knows to be contrary to our own knowledge. This some have expressed, by saying God has given us *a sense*, by which we unavoidably delight in the truth; nor is it in our own power so far to reconcile ourselves to falsehood, as to approve of a scheme in which any given degree of happiness should be produced by falsehood, so well as one in which it should be produced by truth.

Baly. Law of Truth, p. 4—12; *Tracts*, p. 373—383. *Butler's Anal.* p. 316—318. 4to. edit.; 8vo edit. iii. p. 462—464.

SCHOLIUM 2.

From hence arises a question of considerable dif-

* Some singular opinions with regard to property are advanced by Mr. Godwin, in his Inquiry concerning Political Justice, vol. ii. p. 787—895. The doctrine of Property is particularly considered by Archdeacon Paley, in his Moral and Political Philosophy, b. iii. chap. 1. vol. i. p. 105—122. seventh edition.

ficulty and importance, Whether it may be in any case lawful to speak what is ethically false?

Those who maintain the principles of the former scholium must deny it; but those who place the obligation to ethical truth, merely on the principles laid down in the proposition, affirm, That if, in any case, the happiness of mankind may be more effectually promoted by falsehood than truth, in that case, falsehood ceases to be a vice, and becomes a virtue; and they suppose that many such cases actually occur; and that, on these principles, it is lawful to use falsehood in our discourses with persons that are distracted, with infants and sick men, with a melancholy man, and those who inquire after the truth, with a design of doing that injury by the knowledge of it, which without it they would not have been able to effect.

This must be acknowledged a controversy of very great difficulty. Perhaps, it is not possible for any human or finite understanding to determine, Whether the universal observation of truth would be more for the advantage of the rational creation, than the violation of it in some imaginable particulars? but as it is certain that the generality of mankind are too prone to artifice and deceit, and would be ready to abuse the doctrine of the innocence of falsehood in any case, we should be very cautious of maintaining it; and an honest, generous, and religious man, if he errs at all, would rather choose to err on the side of truth; and perhaps a regard expressed to it, even in circumstances where it could not be maintained, without great danger and seeming ill consequence to ourselves, might make such impressions on the minds of very bad men, as might prove of service to the cause of virtue and the happiness of mankind; especially considering the unlimited power which God has over all the thoughts of men's hearts, and all the circumstances and occurrences of their lives: and it will be seen, when we come to inquire into the evidence of the Divine veracity, that this attribute of the Deity is incapable of being proved, if the opinion which we are here opposing be admitted. To all which we may add, that the supposed lawfulness of speaking falsely in great emergencies for the preservation of life, might also be extremely mischievous to mankind, by depriving them of all instances of martyrdom for religion; and is, indeed, a maxim so dangerous to human society, that it seems that a wise and benevolent man, who firmly believes it, would on his own principles teach the contrary. And, after all, if the principle itself were granted, yet many of the instances mentioned above, seem of too trivial a nature to justify having recourse to a falsehood; and in particular, nothing can be more dangerous to children than to be taught to lie, by the example of their parents and governors.

Puff. ib. § 9, 10, 15, 16, 18. *Barbeyrac's Notes*, ib. lib. iv. c. i. § 7. *Grot.* ib. lib. iii. c. i. § 12—14. *Watts's Serm.* vol. ii.; App. p. 207—219; *Works*, vol. i. p. 240—245. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 29, 30. *Cambr. Telemach.* l. iii. p. 57—59.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, allowance is to be made for the change which custom may have introduced into the signification of words, which has brought some expressions of complaisance and kindness, in most civilized nations, to so loose an import, that a man has no room to imagine they will be interpreted rigorously, according to their utmost literal extent, and therefore need not be scrupulous about the use of them; *v. g.* as if he could not say "he was at a friend's service," unless he intended thereby to make himself *a slave*.

Puff. de Jure, l. iv. c. i. § 6. *Spect.* vol. viii. No. 557. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 5, 6.

LECTURE LXIX.

DEFINITION XLIV.

A PROMISE is any speech, or other sign, by which we signify to another person a present determinate purpose of transferring to him a part of our property or liberty, which nevertheless he is not actually to possess till after some time.

DEFINITION XLV.

A mutual promise, or agreement of two or more persons with each other, may be called A COVENANT, whether the performance of one of the parties be or be not the condition of obliging the other; but it is in the former case called a *conditional covenant*.

COROLLARY.

There is some foundation for distinguishing between *conditional promises*, and *pacts* or *covenants*; not only, as each party in a covenant may be absolutely bound to the performance of his part, without waiting to see whether the other will perform his,—but also, as there may be a *conditional* promise, which is not *mutual*,—whereas every covenant must necessarily be mutual.

Puff. de Jure, l. iii. c. viii. § 8.

PROPOSITION LV.

Virtue requires that promises be fulfilled.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 54. 1. Ethical truth, and therefore virtue, requires, that when I declare a fixed purpose of giving or doing any thing, I should really intend it.

Gr. 1. *Def.* 44. 2. The promisee, *i. e.* the person to whom the promise is made, acquires a property in virtue of the promise.

3. The uncertainty of property would evidently be attended with great inconvenience.

4. By failing to fulfil my promise, I either show that I was not sincere in making it, or that I have little constancy or resolution; and either way injure my character, and consequently my usefulness in life.

1, 3, and 4. *Prop.* 51. *Cor.* 4. 5. Virtue requires that promises should be fulfilled.

Watts's Serm. vol. ii. p. 146; *Works*, vol. i. p. 146. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. part ii. c. xii.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

A man is not bound by a naked *assertion*, as he is by a promise; nevertheless, when he makes such an assertion, he ought to intend to act according to it (*Prop.* 54.); and when publicly made, he should not lightly change it, lest his character for wisdom and resolution should thereby suffer.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xi. § 2—4. *Puff.* ib. l. iii. c. v. § 5—7.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Nevertheless, there are some excepted cases, in which virtue does not oblige us to fulfil our promises, because the reasons mentioned in the proposition do not extend to them, *v. g.*

1. If a promise was made by us, before we came to such exercise of reason as to be fit to transact affairs of moment; or if by any distemper, or sudden surprise, we are deprived of the exercise of our reason, at the time when the promise is made.

Puff. ib. l. iii. c. vi. § 5. *Grot. de Jure*, l. ii. c. xi. § 5—7.

2. If the promise made was on a false presumption, in which the promiser, after the most diligent inquiry, was imposed upon, especially if he were deceived by the fraud of the promisee.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xi. § 6. l. ii. c. xiii. § 4. *Puff.* ib. l. iii. c. vi. § 6—8.

3. If the thing itself be vicious; for virtue cannot require that vice should be committed.

Puff. ib. l. iii. c. vii. § 6, 7. *Grot.* ib. l. ii. c. xi. § 9.

Under this head, we may rank the giving a reward for an evil action.

Grot. ib. l. ii. c. xi. § 8. *Puff.* ib. l. iii. c. vii. § 8.

4. If the accomplishment of the promise be so hard and intolerable, that there is reason to believe that, had it been foreseen, it would have been an excepted case.

Grot. ib. l. ii. c. xvi. § 27. *Cicero de Offic.* l. i. c. x.

SCHOLIUM 3.

If the promise be not accepted, or if it depend on conditions not performed, the non-performance of the promise is so evidently justifiable, that it seems hardly worth while to insert this among the catalogue of excepted cases.

Grot. ib. l. ii. c. xi. § 14, 15. l. iii. c. xix. § 14. †

LECTURE LXX.

DEFINITION XLVI.

AN OATH is a solemn appeal to God, as the Witness of the truth of some facts asserted, or of our sincere resolution to perform some promise made, renouncing our claim to the Divine favour, or imprecating his displeasure upon ourselves, either implicitly or explicitly, in case of falsehood.

COROLLARY.

It is vicious to swear by any creature, since that is in effect ascribing to such a creature a degree of knowledge and power, which seems peculiar to God. Nevertheless, if without the express mention of the name of God, there be a secret appeal to him, in that case we swear by him ultimately, and not so much by the creature we mention, *v. g.* If I swear by my head, or my child,—meaning thereby, "May the Divine vengeance fall on my head, or my child, if I swear falsely!"

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xiii. § 11. *Puff. de Offic. Hom.* l. i. c. xi. § 3. *Puff. de Jure*, l. iv. c. ii. § 3. *Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 190—197. *Godwin's Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, vol. ii. p. 631—636.

SCHOLIUM.

A vow is a promise made to God. If any express or implicit imprecation attend it, it is evidently *an oath:* but as vows are made with different degrees of solemnity, some of them may, and some of them may not, be oaths. Yet, as an address to God is made by them, they necessarily approach nearer to an oath than a promise made to our fellow-creatures.

Paley's Moral and Political Philos. vol. i. p. 141.

DEFINITION XLVII.

PERJURY is the use of an oath in confirmation of an assertion, known, apprehended, or suspected, to be false; or the wilful violation of a promise, which by an oath we had bound ourselves to perform.

COROLLARY.

As when a person swears that a thing is so and so, he is in all reason to be understood to assert that he certainly knows that it is so: the guilt of

* A directly opposite doctrine to what is here advanced, is maintained by Mr. Godwin. See his "Inquiry concerning Political Justice," vol. i. p. 156—166. The deduction is, that it is a part of our duty to make as few promises, or declarations, exciting appropriate expectations, as possible.

† The whole subject of promises, from whence the obligation to perform them arises, in what cases they are to be interpreted, and in what cases they are not binding, is considered by Mr Paley. Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. i. p. 124—141. 8 vo. ninth edition.

perjury may be contracted, even where a man believes a thing is as he asserts, if he has not a competent and determinate knowledge of the thing.

PROPOSITION LVI.

Perjury is a very heinous crime.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. It is plainly inconsistent with the reverence due to the Divine Being; as it implies, either that we do not believe his omniscience, or fear his displeasure; either of which is contrary to *Prop.* 51.

2. Mankind have in all ages professed some peculiar reverence for an oath, so that it has been used to determine controversies, and seal the most solemn mutual engagements.

2. 3. Faith among men would be still more injured by perjury, than by a false assertion, or promise uttered without an oath; since, therefore, these have been shown to be detrimental to mankind, (*Prop.* 54, 55.) this must be yet more so.

4. Perjury has always been considered a very detestable thing; and those who have been proved guilty of it, have been looked upon as the pests of society.

1, 3, and 4. 5. Perjury, being thus dishonourable to God, injurious to others, and to ourselves, is a great crime. *Q. E. D.*

Occas. Paper, vol. i. No. vii. p. 5—12. *Puff. de Jure*, l. iv. c. ii. § 2. *Barrow's Works*, vol. i. Serm. xv. *Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 197, 198.

COROLLARY 1.

Care should be taken that we do not impair the reverence due to an oath, by using or imposing oaths upon trifling occasions, or administering them in a careless manner. *Occas. Paper*, ib. p. 22—24.

COROLLARY 2.

The reverence of an oath requires, that we take peculiar care to avoid ambiguous expressions in it, and all equivocation and mental reservation. Vid. *Prop.* 54. *Cor.* 1.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xiii. § 3. *Puff. de Jure*, l. iv. c. ii. § 12—15. *Tully de Offic.* l. i. § 13.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Something of this kind may be said of *subscription to articles of religion*, these being looked upon as solemn actions, and nearly approaching to an oath. Great care ought to be taken that we subscribe nothing that we do not firmly believe. If the signification of the words be dubious, and we believe either sense, and that sense in which we do believe them is as natural as the other, we may consistently with integrity subscribe them; or, if the sense in which we believe them be less natural, and we explain that sense, and that explication be admitted by the person requiring the subscription in his own right, there can be no just foundation for a scruple. Some have added, that if we have reason to believe (though it is not expressly declared) that he who imposes the subscription, does not intend that we should hereby declare our *assent* to those articles, but only that we should pay a compliment to his authority, and engage ourselves not openly to contradict them, we may in this case subscribe what is most directly contrary to our belief: or, that if we declare our belief in any book, as for instance the Bible, it is to be supposed that we subscribe other articles, only so far as they are consistent with that; because we cannot imagine that the law would require us to profess our belief of contrary propositions at the same time: but subscription upon these principles, seems a very dangerous attack upon sincerity and public virtue, especially in those designed for public offices.*

Burnett on the Art. p. 6—9. *Clarke on the Trinity*, Introd. edit. 1. p. 20—26; ed. 2. p. 23—29. *Conyb. Serm. on Subscript.* p. 24—31.

SCHOLIUM 2.

If we have bound ourselves by an oath to do a thing detrimental to our interests, we ought to submit to great inconveniences rather than violate it; but if the nature of the oath be absolutely and evidently unlawful, we are not bound by it: and it is certain, that in some of the cases mentioned above, in which virtue allows the violation of promises, it may also permit our acting contrary to our oaths; with this proviso, that in proportion to the greater solemnity of the latter, the case should be more weighty and urgent

Grot. ib. l. ii. c. xiii. § 4. *Bart. Works*, vol. i. p. 572. *Puff. de Jure*, l. iv. c. ii. § 9, 10.

SCHOLIUM 3.

If a conditional covenant (*Def.* 45.) be mutually confirmed by an oath, the breach of the condition on one side evidently dissolves the other party from his obligation; which by the way justifies the Revolution in England in 1688, though many of the persons principally concerned had sworn allegiance to King James.

Occas. Paper, vol. i. No. vii. p. 12—16.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Grotius is mistaken, if he maintains (as some have asserted he does) that by an oath we always promise something to God; and that for this reason

* The question concerning subscription to articles of religion has of late years occasioned the most ample discussion. It would be almost endless to enumerate the various tracts that have appeared on the subject. The controversy was revived by the publication of the "Confessional," and carried on to a much greater extent, by the different applications made by some of the clergy and the protestant dissenting ministers, for relief in the matter of subscription. The names of Blackburne, Jebb, Disney, Lindsey, Wyvill, Mayhew, Farmery, Powell, Radcliff, Watson, and many others, appear in opposition to human articles of religion. On the contrary side must be mentioned Tucker, Rutherforth, Randolph, Tottie, Powell, and a variety of writers besides. Mr. Paley has recently offered some thoughts on the matter, in his "Moral and Political Philosophy," vol. i. p. 218—220. Still more recently, a very elaborate treatise against subscription has been published by Mr. Dyer.

an oath must in no case be violated. It appears from the definition of an oath, that the former of these propositions is false; and from the second scholium, that if it were true, the inference drawn from it would be inconclusive: but the following passage, which some have quoted to prove this to be his opinion, is far from containing it.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xiii. § 14, 15.

LECTURE LXXI.

DEFINITION XLVIII.

MARRIAGE is a covenant between man and woman, in which they mutually promise cohabitation, and a continual care to promote the comfort and happiness of each other.

PROPOSITION LVII.

Virtue requires that mankind should only be propagated by marriage.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. A more endearing friendship, and consequently a greater pleasure, arises from continued cohabitation, than could arise from the promiscuous use of women; where there could be little room for a tender, generous, and faithful friendship between the sexes.

2. The promiscuous use of women would naturally produce a great deal of jealousy, bitter mutual contentions, and a variety of other passions, from which marriage, when preserved inviolate, very much secures.

Experience teaches that a promiscuous commerce between the sexes is very unfavourable to propagation, at least for producing a healthful offspring; and would prove the means of spreading to a fatal degree the venereal infection.

4. The weakness and disorders to which women are subject during pregnancy, require that, both out of regard to them and the future race of mankind, they should be tenderly taken care of; and that during their confinement they should be comfortably maintained. Now there is none from whom these offices of friendship can be so reasonably expected, as from the person who apprehends himself the father of the child; but without marriage, no man could ordinarily have the security of being so.

5. The education of children is much better provided for by this means, both with respect to maintenance, instruction, and government, while each knows his own, and the care and authority of both parents concur in the work; to which that of the father is generally, on the whole, of the greatest importance.

6. The regular descent of patrimony being the consequence of fathers knowing their children, is better provided for by marriage than it could be without it; which, by the way, is a great encouragement to industry and frugality.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. 7. The happiness both of men and women, and of the rising generation, is on the whole more effectually secured by marriage than it would be by the promiscuous use of women; therefore, mankind ought only to be propagated this way. *Q. E. D.*

Puff. de Jure, l. vi. c. i. § 5. *Wits. Ægypt.* l. ii. c. vi. § 13—15. *Baxt. Works*, vol. i. p. 314, v; vol. ii. p. 31, B. *Osterwald of Unclean.* § 1. c. i.: § 2. p. 4—10. *Fordyce's Mor. Phil.* l. ii. § 3. c. ii. *Milt. Parad. Lost*, l. iv. line 750—770.*

COROLLARY 1.

Those unnatural lusts, commonly known by the names of Bestiality and Sodomy, are to be greatly detested, not only as actions whereby the dignity of human nature is in the most infamous degree debased, but also as alienating the mind from marriage, which is so important a band of society.

COROLLARY 2.

Those who seduce single women to violate their chastity, are guilty of a very great crime; as thereby they discountenance marriage, and bring on persons so debauched, and the families to whom they are related, great calamity and indelible infamy.

Guardian, vol. ii. No. 123.

COROLLARY 3.

All those things which tend to cherish wandering lusts, are for that reason to be avoided; as lascivious actions and unclean words, which generally lead on by a strong impulse to greater irregularities.

Spectator, vol. iv. No. 286. *Osterv. of Unclean. Praef.* p. 16: ib. sect. 1. c. vii. p. 60—72. *Evans's Sermons*, vol. ii.

COROLLARY 4.

Since marriage is of so great importance to the happiness of mankind, it is plain that it ought not to be dissolved upon any trifling consideration; since uncertain marriages would be attended with many of the same inconveniences as the promiscuous use of women, and would differ from it little more than in name.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vi. c. i. § 20.

LECTURE LXXII.

PROPOSITION LVIII.

To enumerate the principal duties of the married state.

* Some [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

SOLUTION.

1. Virtue requires that both parties preserve their fidelity to each other inviolate.

2. They should study in every instance to promote each other's comfort and happiness.

3. They are to contribute their respective parts towards the maintenance and education of their children.

Delany on Relat. Dut. No. ii. iii. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 339—344. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 124—140.

DEMONSTRATION

The obligation to perform these several duties arises from the nature of the engagements into which the parties have entered (*Def.* 48.); and from the tendency which such a conduct will have to secure their mutual happiness and that of their families.

PROPOSITION LIX

Virtue requires that no man should at the same time have more than one wife,—and no woman more than one husband.

PART I.

No man should have more than one wife at a time.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The number of females, so far as we can judge by the best computation, is not entirely equal to the number of males, in the human species. Vid. *Prop.* 27. *Dem.* 4. *gr.* 4.

Dorham's Phys. Theol. p. 175, 176. *Reflect. on Polyg.* p. 4—7.

1. 2. Should polygamy prevail, there would not be females enow to supply all the males; consequently many of them must be deprived of the advantage of marriage,—not to mention how far it might be the occasion of those hateful and destructive practices of Sodomy and Evirration.

Reflect. on Polyg. p. 32—34.

2. 3. Quarrels would probably arise between those men who endeavoured to possess themselves of more women than one, and those who were by this means deprived of partners in life; which might be attended with fatal consequences on both sides, should polygamy very much prevail.

4. The jealousy of the wives would probably make them very unhappy, were several women to share among them the affection and care of the same man; and it would occasion many caballings, and mutual endeavours to supplant each other in his affections, by which the peace of families would be greatly disturbed; not to mention the frequent adulteries that might be expected, if there was not a strict guard. Vid. *Gen.* xxix. xxx.

5. The discords of the mothers might be communicated to the children; and so not only alienate their hearts from the father, and thereby prevent the efficacy of his care for their education, but also prevent a due harmony between them in riper years, and lay a foundation for quarrels to be transmitted to the next generation.

6. The master of the family would have his part in all this uneasiness; and would find it hardly possible to preserve his own quiet in any tolerable degree, without sacrificing the peculiar pleasure of having one intimate and best beloved friend, with whom to converse with the highest endearment: and if he had any true taste of the sublimest pleasures of friendship, the gratification of appetite with a variety of women must appear but a poor equivalent for such a sacrifice.

7. The practice of polygamy may leave room to a married man to be continually entering upon new amours and treaties with respect to other women; which would keep the mind in an uneasy agitation, and greatly divert him from applying to cares of the greatest importance to the happiness of his family and of the public, and expose him thereby to many obvious inconveniences.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. 8. Since polygamy is thus pernicious to the interest of the husband, wife, and children, and, if it commonly prevailed, to that of so many single persons, virtue requires that one man should have but one wife at a time. *Q. E. D.*

Burn. Life of Rochest. p. 112, 113. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vi. c. i. § 16—19. *Salm. State of Turkey*, p. 411—416. *Reflect. on Polyg.* p. 13—19. *L'Esprit de Loix*, vol. i. lib. xvi. c. ii—vii.*

COROLLARY.

It is yet more evidently unlawful for him who has married one wife, with a promise of confinement to her, afterwards to take a second. Vid. *Prop.* 55.

SCHOLIUM I.

Some have argued in favour of the proposition, That it would prevent the over-stocking the world with inhabitants, which would be the consequence of polygamy; but we have waved that argument,—

1. Because it seems that the contrary is true, *i. e.* that the number of mankind is lessened rather than increased by polygamy, which is a direct conse-

* The question concerning Polygamy has recently been revived, in consequence of an elaborate treatise in defence of it, written by the late Mr Morton Mutlow, and entitled The Epigamia. To this were many answers appeared during which may be reckoned, Polygamy Unscriptural, by John Travers. Remarks on Polygamy, by Thomas Wood. Polygamy Indefensible, by J. P. Smith. Remarks on Theliphthora, by James Peirce. Reasons of Polygamy displayed, by R. Hill. Examination of Theliphthora, by John Palmer; and Refutation of Polygamy, by T. Bloore. There were, also, several anonymous publications on the subject, of which it may be sufficient to mention Anti-Theliphthora: Marriage and its Vows Defended, by a Female. The Unlawfulness of Polygamy cleared: and the Cobbler's Letter to the Author of Theliphthora. But the most decorous idea that was given to the Theliphthora, was in two articles which occur in the sixty-third volume of the Monthly Review. These articles were written by the late Rev. Samuel Bourne. Some general Reflections on Polygamy may be seen in Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. i. p. 419—426, and in Beattie's Elements of Moral Science, vol. ii. p. 127—129.

quence from *grad.* 1.; for it is plain, that ten women, for instance, would be like to have more children by ten men, than by one, especially in some length of years; considering how much the body might be weakened by that luxury with which seraglios are generally attended: and accordingly it is found in fact, that there is the greatest increase of men where polygamy is not used, as the author of the Reflections on that subject has proved, in an accurate and convincing manner. But,

2. If it were fact that polygamy would increase the number of mankind, it would be an argument *for* it, rather than *against* it; for it is certain, the earth with proper cultivation would be capable of maintaining a much greater number of inhabitants than at present subsist upon it; and so many general calamities have from age to age interposed to thin their numbers, that it is hardly to be imagined they will ever grow insupportably great. In the mean time, that polygamy lessens the number, is an additional argument that it is contrary to the happiness of the species, and therefore to virtue.

Reflect. on Polyg. Diss. vi. vii.

PART 2.

One woman should have but one husband at a time.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Several of the arguments urged in the preceding demonstration will (*mut. mutandis*) prevail here; especially those taken from the proportion of the sexes, mutual jealousy, and the want of peculiar endearments arising from one most intimate friend.

2. The offspring would be thereby rendered uncertain, and healthful propagation prevented, by which the main purposes of marriage would be evidently defeated. *Prop.* 57.

1 and 2. 3. *Valet propositio.*

Puff. ib. lib. vi. c. i. § 15.

SCHOLIUM.

This has appeared so intolerable a thing, that it has hardly been practised by any nation on earth, unless some very barbarous people are to be excepted. On the contrary, it has almost universally been made a main branch of the marriage covenant, that with regard to matrimonial converse, a wife should be the property of one husband alone; and those women have been accounted infamous who have violated this engagement.

L'Esprit des Loix, vol. i. lib. xvi. c. v. *Temple's Hist. of Engl.* p. 14—16.

LECTURE LXXIII.

PROPOSITION LX.

To inquire to whom virtue prohibits marriage.

SOLUTION.

1. In general it is not advisable that marriage should be contracted by those who, by reason of their unripe age, or some natural or accidental defect in their understanding, are destitute of reason, and so incapable of making a proper choice, or behaving themselves aright in the conjugal state.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vi. c. i. § 26.

2. It is prohibited to those who are evidently incapable of propagation, unless they marry with others in the like condition with themselves: otherwise, by their incapacity, the great end of marriage would be frustrated, and a foundation laid for a perpetual jealousy, and many other irregular passions.

Puff. ib. § 25. *Ricaut's Ott. Court*, p. 293. *Lettres Persannes*, No. 41.

3. To those who labour under any distemper of body, or distraction of mind, which would probably be conveyed to their offspring.

4. To those who are already married, and whose consorts are yet living, virtue forbids marriage, upon the principles of the preceding proposition, while the former marriage continues undissolved: and whereas, among us, one man and one woman have been mutually appropriated to each other, it is yet more evidently and universally unlawful for either to marry a third person, without the consent of the other, as it is a breach of the marriage covenant. Whether it may be lawful when such consent is gained, even supposing the preceding proposition to hold good, *i. e.* whether marriage may be dissolved by mutual consent? will be inquired in the next proposition.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. v. § 11.

5. It has generally been said, that marriage is unlawful to those who are nearly allied by blood or affinity. The chief reasons assigned against such marriages are,

1. That in some cases, the duties of other relations would be plainly confounded by them,—as in case of a mother's marrying her son.

2. Friendship by this means would be less widely diffused, and covetous parents would hinder their wealth from being communicated, perhaps on these principles even forcing the elder brethren to marry their sisters, however contrary to their inclination; which must be the source of great calamity to them, as well as detriment to others.

3. By prohibiting these marriages, provision is made against some temptations to unchastity, arising from the more frequent converse of near relations.

4. There seems to be something generally in the constitution of our natures abhorring such marriages, if the relations are near,—which has rendered them infamous among most civilized nations: though, it must be owned, the Egyptians and Per-

stains with an exception to this rule: however, among the European nations, it prevails in its full force.

Puff. ib. § 28, 32, 34. *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. ii. lib. xxvi. c. xiv.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Notwithstanding what has been said, it must be owned very difficult to fix the degrees of affinity, or consanguinity, within which marriage is unlawful; and if mankind ever have been, or should be, in such circumstances, that a brother could have no wife but his own sister, most of the arguments urged above would cease, and the rest must give way to such a necessity."

SCHOLIUM 2.

The argument urged *gr.* 5. concludes much more strongly against marrying with those nearly related by *blood* than by affinity. *Puff.* ib. § 35.

PROPOSITION LXI.

To inquire in what cases marriage may be rightly dissolved.

SOLUTION.

1. It is no doubt dissolved by the adultery of either party; which is an apparent breach of the most fundamental article of the covenant. *Def.* 48. and *Prop.* 55.

2. For the same reason, it is dissolved upon the obstinate desertion of one of the parties, since thereby the covenant is also broken.

Life of Galeacius Caracciolus.[1]

3. It is questioned whether marriage may be dissolved, on account of the unkind behaviour of one of the married persons. In one view, it may appear reasonable that it should, since consulting their mutual happiness and comfort is a branch of the marriage covenant: yet, when we consider what damage might arise to the innocent offspring,—how frequently complaints of this kind occur among married people,—how generally in this case both parties are to blame,—and on these accounts how uncertain marriage would be rendered, if the dissolution of it in this case should be allowed,—it seems on the whole more for the happiness of mankind, that some who are in these unhappy circumstances should bear their calamity, than that they should be eased of it on terms so hazardous to the security and happiness of many more. To which we may also add, that the consideration of marriage, as an indissoluble bond, may engage both husband and wife, out of regard to their own peace, to be careful to govern their passions, so as not to make it mutually intolerable; in which exercise of wisdom and virtue, each party may find a very great account.

[illegible] 8

4. Marriage may not be dissolved, as many other covenants may, by the consent of the parties: if it might, marriages might frequently be contracted almost in jest, or merely in some views of present indulgence: and when one party was weary of the bond, very indirect measures might be used to procure the consent of the other to dissolve it; and thus a state of things would probably be introduced into the world, little different from that which marriage was intended to prevent.

5. Neither ought marriage to be dissolved merely on account of barrenness, unless one of the parties evidently appears to have been under some natural incapacity before the contract: otherwise it would be difficult to fix the time when such a dissolution should take place; and great room would be left for fraudulent separations.

6. Neither are marriages to be dissolved on account of any concealed deformity of body, or flaw in estate; though it be allowed very criminal and foolish for any to impose upon another in a matter of so great importance.

Milton's Prose Works, p. 5—12. *Puff.* lib. vi. c. i. § 20—22, 24. *Lettres Persannes*, vol. ii. No. 102. *Locke on Government*, part ii. § 78—81. *Reeves's Apol.* vol. i. p. 187, 188. *More's Utopia*, p. 141—144.

COROLLARY.

Since the marriage bond is of so strict a nature, it ought never to be formed without the most mature consideration; nor should any be forced into it by the authority of superiors, contrary to their own inclinations.

LECTURE LXXIV.

DEFINITION XLIX.

CONCUBINAGE is a sort of marriage, in which the woman, by agreement of both parties, is to be considered as a servant in the family; and express provision is made that her children shall not have such a right of possession and inheritance as the children of the primary wife.

SCHOLIUM.

It appears by *Prop.* 59. part 1. that the taking a concubine during the life of another wife, is generally at least to be avoided; and it seems that he who never marries any woman but as a concubine, neither pays due respect to the female sex, nor sufficiently consults his own happiness, in a free and ingenuous friendship; yet perhaps, in case of a second marriage, where the children by a former wife are living, concubinage is not altogether to be condemned, if the constitution of the country permit it.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vi. c. i. § 36. lib. iv. c. xi. § 9. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. v. § 15.

PROPOSITION LXII

Virtue requires that parents should take peculiar care of their own children.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The state of infancy is so feeble, that if tender care were not taken of young children, they would die quickly after their birth.

2. In childhood, on account of the weakness of reason, they are incapable of providing for themselves.

3. It is evidently of importance to themselves and the public, not only that their lives be taken care of, but that their minds be formed to virtuous and pious sentiments, of which they are at first void,—not to say that many at least seem strongly inclined to the contrary.

1, 2, 3. *Prop.* 51. 4. Virtue requires that some provision should be made for the education of children.

5. Those who have produced them ought not in reason to throw them as a burthen upon others, when they are capable of taking care of them themselves.

6. That στοργη, or natural affection, which parents feel towards their children, will render this task more easy and delightful to them than it would be to others.

6. 7. It is probable *(cæt. par.)* that children will be better taken care of by their parents than others.

4, 5, 7. 8. Virtue requires that parents should take peculiar care of their own children. *Q. E. D.*

Rel. of Nature, p. 159, 160. *Delany on Rel. Duties*, Serm. iv—vii. *Fordyce's Mor. Phil.* § 3. c. iii. *Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 345—367. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 139—148.

COROLLARY 1.

Virtue generally requires that those who have children should make them their principal heirs.

Grot. ib. lib. ii. c. vii. § 5. No. ii. *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. ii. lib. xxvi. c. vi.

COROLLARY 2.

Virtue requires that remoter ancestors should be careful of grandchildren, or other descendants; especially if the immediate parents be either taken away by death, or any other way rendered incapable of affording them assistance. *Grot.* ib. § 6.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It does not appear necessary that an equal distribution of goods be made among all the children: some proper regard should be had to the merit of each; yet great care should be taken that the parent does not, by an imprudent distinction, sow such seeds of discord as may counterbalance the advantage accruing to the most deserving child from a larger share.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It seems reasonable that the eldest son should generally have a larger share of his father's possessions than the rest; that so the honour of the family may be supported, and that he may be a refuge to younger children, if they should fall into poverty; especially since *(cæt. par.)* it may reasonably be expected that he will be more capable of managing what he has for the common good; and the distinction made in his favour will generally be less provoking to the rest than if it were made in favour of any other child.

Puff. de Jure, lib. iv. c. xi. § 8. *Fleetw. Rel. Duties*, p. 111—113. *Paley's Principles of Mor. and Political Philos.* vol. i. p. 359, 360.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, an elder son, or any other, may be disinherited, or deprived of a part of what he would otherwise have had, upon account of his vicious disposition, if there be reason to believe that he will abuse it to the detriment of others: this the reason of things requires, and the laws of most nations admit of it, though Plato only allows it with the consent of near relations. As for the argument brought against it from Deuteronomy xxi. 15. &c. as a law of God to the Jews, it may be answered, That the Jews had not that power of alienating their estates in general, which all allow to others not under such a peculiar appointment, and therefore no valid argument can be drawn from hence; and it is plain, God often interposed to transfer the inheritance; as in a most memorable instance Jacob did, and that (as all who believe Scripture must suppose) by Divine direction, Gen. xlix. 3. 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. not to mention that power which the law of God gave to Jewish parents to put a wicked child to death; which might render a particular licence to disinherit him needless.—*Deut.* xxi. 18. &c.

Puff. ib. § 11. *Fleetw.* ib. p. 113—127. *Burn. Life of Sir M. Hale*, p. 7, 8.

LECTURE LXXV.

AXIOM XVII.

There is an evident fitness, that when one rational being has received a favour and kindness from

* The doctrine of the Scriptures [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

another, he should have some sense of gratitude, and return good rather than evil.

Puff. de Off. lib. i. c. viii. § 7, 8.

COROLLARY.

Virtue requires gratitude.—Vid. *Def.* 37.*

PROPOSITION LXIII.

To inquire into the duty of children towards their parents.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Forasmuch as children have received important favours from their parents, gratitude, and therefore virtue, requires that they should *love* them.—*Ax.* 17. and *Cor.*

2. Considering the superiority of age, and the probable superiority of wisdom, which there is on the side of parents, and also how much the satisfaction and comfort of a parent depend on the respect shown him by his children, it is fit that children should *reverence* their parents.

2. 3. It is fit, that while the parents are living, and the use of their understanding continued, their children should not ordinarily undertake any matter of great importance without *advising* with them, or without very cogent reasons pursue it contrary to their consent.

4. As young people need some guidance and government in their minority, and as there is *(cæt. par.)* some peculiar reason to trust the prudence, care, and affection of a parent, preferable to any other person, it is reasonable that children, especially while in their minority, should *obey* their parents; without which, neither the order of families, nor the happiness of the rising generation, could be secured; nevertheless, still supposing that the commands of the parents are not inconsistent with the will of God.

1, 2. 5. Virtue requires, that if parents come to want, children should take care to furnish them with the necessaries of life, and so far as their ability will permit, with the conveniences of it.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vi. c. ii. § 4, 7, 11. *Fleetwood on Religious Duties*, p. 4—22, 51, 52. *Delany*, ib. No. viii. ix. *Puff. de Off.* lib. ii. c. iii. § 12. *Rel. of Nature*, p. 161, 162. *Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 368—378. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 118—130.

COROLLARY 1.

The like regards are in some degree due to remoter ancestors, if yet living; though, if they come to want, they fall most properly under the care of their more immediate surviving descendants.

COROLLARY 2.

If any generous and compassionate friend act the part of a parent, in taking care of a helpless child, he may justly expect from him the returns of filial duty.

COROLLARY 3.

When the parent has delegated his authority to some other person, reverence and some degree of obedience are on that account to be paid to him, beyond what would otherwise be his due.

COROLLARY 4.

Different degrees of obedience will be due to parents according to the different age and circumstances of the child, and in some degree according to the capacity and character of the parent.

Puff. de Off. lib. ii. c. iii. § 5—8.

COROLLARY 5.

It is the duty of parents, or of those who sustain their character and place, to behave to the children under their care in such a manner as may most effectually conciliate their reverence and love, and make the yoke of obedience as light as possible; and for this reason all unnecessary severities are to be forborne.

Fleetwood of Relative Duties, p. 73—81.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Many have chosen to build the right of parents to the obedience of the child, wholly or chiefly on their having been the instruments of bringing it into existence, and have hence inferred a sovereign right in the parent to dispose of the life, liberty, and fortune of the child; but it appears from the preceding propositions, that parental authority within moderate bounds may be fixed on a basis less liable to exception.

Grot. lib. ii. c. v. § 7. *Filmer of Patr. Government*, c. i. § 1—8. *Locke of Government*, lib. i. § 52—56. *Puff.* ib. § 1—6. *Barbeyrac's Notes on ib.* § 10. p. 606, 607.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It appears from the reasoning of the proposition, that *both* the parents have a right to the duties there mentioned; nevertheless *(cæt. par.)* the authority of the *father* is chiefly to be regarded; though Hobbes is of a contrary opinion, and maintains that a sovereign and unlimited power over the children resides in the *mother*, and that the authority of others over them is derived from her.

Hobbes de Cive, c. ix. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vi. c. ii. § 2, 3. *Puff. de Offic.* lib. ii. c. iii. § 3. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. v. § 1. note.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Though it appears from *Demonstration*, *gr.* 3. that it is an irregular thing for children, generally speaking, to contract marriages without the advice or consent of their parents,—nevertheless, it might be attended with still worse consequences, if marriages so contracted were to be deemed invalid.

Puff. ib. § 14. *Grot.* ib. § 10.

* Some considerations of a different kind, with respect to the duties and rights of children, are advanced in the first Dissertation prefixed to the Dutch edition of Lord Vaughan, and by Mr Groenvelt, in his Inquiry concerning Political Justice, vol. i. p. 85—88.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The indigence of human infants seems to have been wisely designed by Providence, on purpose to lay a foundation for those mutual offices of parental and filial duty, on which much of the happiness of life evidently depends.

Cambray on Government, p. 26, 27.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It hence follows that, when the health of the mother and the convenience of the family will admit of it, it is fit that mothers nurse their own children, or take care that they be nourished at home.

Tillots. Serm. vol. i. p. 523—525. *Delany of Rel. Dut.* Serm. iv. p. 79—88. *Spectator*, vol. iii. No. 246. *

LECTURE LXXVI.

DEFINITION L.

A COMMUNITY is a company of men who are so associated, that the whole body, either by themselves or their representatives, should judge concerning any disputed rights or properties of each member of it.

Locke of Government, lib. ii. c. vii. § 87.

DEFINITION LI.

Those men are said to be in A STATE OF NATURE who are not by any mutual engagements, implicit or express, entered into communities.

PROPOSITION LXIV.

It is for the happiness of mankind, that men in a state of nature should form themselves into societies.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The happiness of mankind requires that controversies which arise among them should be determined.

2. The prejudices of self-love would lead men to lay down different rules for themselves and others; it is proper, therefore, that there should be some universal rule.

3. When these rules are admitted, prejudice would bias particular persons in the application of them; therefore, it is fit that particular cases should be determined by some other person, rather than by either of the parties, whose interest is in question.

4. Such determinations would often be in vain, if there were not some power to enforce the execution of them.

5. Where men are formed into communities, rules may be laid down, judges appointed, and determinations enforced, by the joint power of the whole body.—Therefore,

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Prop.* 51. 6. The happiness of mankind, and therefore virtue, requires that men should form themselves into communities.

Locke of Gov. lib. ii. c. ii. § 124—126. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vii. c. i. § 8—11. *Cambray of Gov.* p. 36—38 †; *Thoms. Seas. Autumn*, line 43—144.

SCHOLIUM.

It is queried, Who is to be considered as *a member of a community?* There can be no doubt as to those who have given their express consent to it; as for those who live under the protection of any community, it is to be taken for granted that while they so continue, they consent to bear the burthen, as some equivalent for sharing the happiness of it; but for aught that yet appears, such may withdraw themselves from it when they shall judge it requisite.

Locke of Gov. lib. ii. c. viii. § 119—122. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. v. § 24. No. ii.

DEFINITION LII.

A LAW is a rule of action, prescribed by some superior, in such a manner as at the same time to declare a purpose of favouring or punishing those under his power, as they shall act agreeably or disagreeably to it.

Puff. de Jure, lib. i. c. vi. § 1—4. *Baxter's Works*, vol. ii. p. 25, 26. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. i. c. i. § 9.

COROLLARY.

If it shall appear to us hereafter, that God has given us intimations, not only of his own delight in virtue and aversion to vice, but also that he will reward the one and punish the other, then it may properly be said, that the *law of God* requires virtue.

DEFINITION LIII.

They are said to have the SUPREME CIVIL GOVERNMENT in any state or community, who have the supreme power of *making laws* for that community, and *executing* them in their own persons, or by such officers as they shall appoint.

DEFINITION LIV.

When the supreme civil government is entirely in the hands of *one person*, it is called A MONARCHY: if in a *select number*, AN OLIGARCHY, which some have divided into an ARISTOCRACY, which is the government of the *nobles*, and AN OCHLOCRACY, which is the government of a few of the *meanest*, appointed and supported in a tumultuous manner; whereas A DEMOCRACY is the government of the *whole body* of the *people*: but a constitution of

* On this question, recourse may be had to Dr. Cudgan's Essay on Nursing, and Mr. Nelson's Treatise on the Government of Children.

† The book entitled Cambray on Government, was not written by Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, but by the Chevalier Ramsay, the principles of that prelate

government compounded of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, like the British constitution, is called A MIXED MONARCHY.

SCHOLIUM.

The composition in different governments is so various, that some have thought this distribution not sufficiently accurate, urging that neither Poland nor Holland fall under any of these.

Temple's Ess. vol. i. p. 47, 48. *Voltaire's Hist. Charles* XII. bb. ii. p. 61—67. *Temp. on Neth.* c. ii.; *Works*, vol. i. p. 30—43. *Universal History*, vol. xxxiv. p. 6—30; *ibid.* vol. xxxi. p. 3—12.

DEFINITION LV.

Laws made by the supreme civil power of any community, to be observed by all their subjects, are called CIVIL LAWS, and so differ from MUNICIPAL, made for particular towns and corporations.

SCHOLIUM.

The word *civil law* among us is generally used to signify the laws of *the Roman empire*, which, on account of their equity, have been generally received in other nations; whereas those which have been established by *act of parliament*, are commonly called *statute*, though they be in our sense *civil* laws. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. viii. c. i. § 1.*

LECTURE LXXVII.

PROPOSITION LXV.

To inquire into the probable original of civil government, or of communities.

SOLUTION.

1. Considering the natural dependence of children upon their parents, it is certain that government would at first be *parental*; and it is exceeding probable that it, according to many of the most credible traditions, the human race descended from one pair, so long as the first man lived, and continued in the exercise of reason, he had a considerable influence over the councils and actions of his descendants, and was regarded by them as their common head.

2. From the nature of things, it is not probable that the power he had over his family descended entirely to the eldest son; it is certain, that the reason for being governed by an *elder brother*, is by no means the same as for being governed by a *father*; though we may naturally suppose that *(cæt. par.)* the age and experience of the elder brother, together with the larger share of the inheritance which he probably had, would have given him some superiority,—yet not so great as an elder brother would now generally have; partly, as the world being thinly peopled, each might have as much land as he pleased, and partly, as in proportion to the length of men's lives in those early ages, (if we credit tradition as before,) the difference between the ages of the several elder brethren of a family would be very inconsiderable.

Sidney on Gov. c. i. § 2.

2. 3. Each family would probably on the death of the common parent become a kind of little sovereignty, whose governor would naturally be the father of it during his life; and such sovereignties as these would be greatly multiplied in the third, fourth, or following generations.

4. It is exceedingly probable that, among these lesser communities, disputes would arise; for the determination of which they might judge it proper, on the principles mentioned *Prop.* 64. to form themselves into larger societies, including several of those domestic communities; and perhaps the form of these might be various according to the various tempers, characters, and circumstances of the persons concerned.

5. As disputes arose between one and another of those larger societies, which no doubt they often did, it was necessary that, on their forcibly opposing each other, the command of their respective armies should centre in one person; and if he were not only remarkable for his valour, but also for his wisdom, humanity, eloquence, piety, good success in affairs,—any of these, but especially the conjunction of them all, would greatly tend to increase his authority in the community, and might engage them to acquiesce in his stated government.

Sidney on Government, c. i. § 16.

6. It is not to be supposed that persons, families, or larger communities, before free and independent, would submit themselves to the government of any one person whatever, without some equivalent; which could probably be no other than that of protecting them in their liberties and properties; so that there was no doubt some original *contract* between the prince and the people existed, in all those kingdoms where the prince gained his power by a peaceable election.

7. Some ambitious persons, partly by stratagem and partly by force, might possess themselves of power over others; yet even these conquests could not be settled without some agreement between the victor and the vanquished; for till such an agree-

* The ablest Civilians have recommended the Roman Law for general use, chiefly as a part of their Learning. It may not be amiss to add, that Heineccius's Elementa Juris Civilis, Gravina's Origines Juris Civilis, and Cunningham's Views of Roman Law, Dr. Taylor's Elements of the Civil Law, the same gentleman's Summary of the Roman Law, and Dr. Ferguson on the Society of Jews, republished, and his History of the Legal Polity of the Roman State, and of the Rise, Progress, and Extent of the Roman Laws.

ment was made, there was evidently a state of hostility, and not a community.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vii. c. iii. § 1, 5—9. *Temple's Misc.* vol. i. p. 55—82. *Camb. of Govern.* c. vii. p. 49—54. *Locke of Govern.* part ii. c. viii. § 95—112. *Roll. Anc. Hist.* vol. i. Introd. *Lyttelt. Pers. Let.* p. 33, &c. *Ancient Univ. History*, folio, lib. i. p. 108; 8vo, p. 230. *Ibid.* folio, p. 71, 72; 8vo, p. 385—388. *With Baumgarten's Supplement*, vol. i. p. 42—69.

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it will follow, that though there might be various kinds of governments prevailing, and in monarchies various degrees of liberty in the people, and power in the prince, yet there must always have been some original *contract* between them, as the foundation of all government, except that of a father over his descendants.

Sidney on Government, c. i. § 20.*

COROLLARY 2.

Hence we may see how far sovereignty may be said to have its original *from God*. We have reason to believe, that it is the will of God that we should do our utmost to promote the happiness of mankind:—now *some* government appears necessary for this purpose (vid. *Prop.* 64.); and when governments are formed, attempts to destroy them might in many instances be pernicious to ourselves and to the public; we have reason therefore to believe, that God wills not only that government in general should be, but that the present form of government should continue in any place, so long as the happiness of the whole may be promoted thereby; but there appears as yet no reason to believe, that God wills it should continue immutable, however it is administered, or that a prince can justly claim a commission from God in attempting the ruin of the community, which it is his business to protect. God's being the Author of government in the sense explained above, will be a great aggravation of the guilt of such a tyrannical sovereign; and any pretence to Divine authority in such outrages, will only be adding impiety to treachery and cruelty: but this will be examined hereafter.

Camb. of Gov. c. vi. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vii. c. iii. § 2—4. *Roll. Man.* vol. i. p. 423, 424. *Sidn. on Gov.* c. i. § 6. *Delany on Rel. Dut.* Serm. xiv. p. 276—285. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 141—163, 7th edit.

* In opposition to the notion of an original Contract, or Compact, see Hume's Essays, vol. i. Essay 12. Edinb. edit. of 1764. Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 139—141, and Dean Tucker's Treatise on Government. Dr. Tucker has been answered by Dr. Towers, in his Vindication of the Political Principles of Mr. Locke.

LECTURE LXXVIII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The account of the original of civil government here given is illustrated, and something confirmed, by the constitution of several of the most considerable nations which we find in ancient history; particularly by the power of the Ephori and General Assembly amongst the Spartans (*a*), the Amphictyones of Greece (*b*), the Suffetes, Senate, and Popular Assembly of Carthage (*c*), the Senate, Comitia, and Tribunes of Rome (*d*), the Saxon Wittenagemot (*e*), which was the original of the British parliament, and the Spanish Cortes (*f*); not to mention the constitution of many other more modern governments.

Sidney on Government, c. ii. § 16. p. 130, &c.

(*a*) *Stanyan's Gr. Hist.* vol. i. lib. iii. c. iv. p. 80—82. *Univ. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 574.

(*b*) *Potter's Archæol.* lib. i. c. xvi. vol. i. p. 83—85. *Stanyan*, ib. p. 119, 120.

(*c*) *Rollin's Anc. Hist.* lib. ii. § 3. vol. i.

(*d*) *Moyle's Works*, vol. i. p. 8, 9, 103—108. *Vertot's Rom. Rev.* vol. i. p. 7—9. *Kennet's Rom. Ant.* part ii. lib. iii. c. ix. and xvi.

(*e*) *Rapin's Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 152—156. *Squire of the Anglo-Saxon Gov.*

(*f*) *Geddes's Misc.* vol. i. p. 317, &c.†

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some probable conjectures why arbitrary monarchy prevailed more in the northern parts of Asia, and in Africa, than in Europe, may be seen in

Temple's Misc. vol. i. p. 50—53; *Works*, vol. i. p. 390. *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. i. lib. xvii. p. 377—385; *Eng. Transl.* p. 390—395.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The objection against this scheme, from our not having a right over our own lives, and much less over the lives of others, in a state of nature, goes upon a very false principle; for every man, previously to contract, has a right of using all his natural power for the public good, and when that seems to require it, even of taking away the life of another, or forbearing to defend his own: and all that any man promises in this respect, is submission to a sentence of death in certain cases; for no law ever condemns a man to execute himself.

Burn. iv. *Disc.* p. 10, 11. *Locke on Govern.* part. ii. c. xi. § 135. *Puf. de Jure*, lib. viii. c. iii. § 1. *Hoadly on Gov.* p. 168—188.

† For further and extensive information on these subjects, recourse may be had to M. Mallet's and Dr. Leslie's Histories of Europe, the Travels of Anacharsis the Younger, Spelman's Dissertation on Parliaments, Hooke's Roman History, Ferguson's History of the Roman Republic, Dr. Adams's Roman Antiquities, Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V., Tytler's History of Scotland, Anderson's Britannic Constitution, Sir Thomas Smith's Essay on the Republic, Lacedæmonian Constitution of England, Hurd's Dialogues, vol. ii. p. 80—331, third edit. Dr. Gilbert Stuart's History of English Government, and Lord Lyttleton's History of Henry the Second, vol. iii. p. 267—281, third edit. p. 372—[illegible] edition.

PROPOSITION LXVI.

To propose and confute that other hypothesis of the original of government, which is commonly called the *Patriarchal Scheme*.

SOLUTION.

1. The foundation of it is, that the *first man* was absolute sovereign of all his posterity, so as to dispose of their possessions and their lives, without being accountable to any but God.

2. That on his death, his eldest son Cain having been disinherited by God, the supreme power devolved upon Seth, the next eldest son, and passed from him by a lineal succession to Noah.

3. That he, according to the Divine direction, divided the earth, after the Deluge, among *seventy* of his descendants, heads of so many nations, who were each of them made independent and absolute sovereigns; in whose successors (when they can be discovered) the right of government still continues.

4. That it is to be presumed, that in every country the *reigning prince* is that successor, and consequently, that such unlimited obedience is to be paid to him, unless it appears that some other person has an hereditary claim better founded than his.

Hoadly on Gov. p. 3, 4. *Filmer's Patriarchal Scheme*, c. i. § 4—9. p. 12—22.

CONFUTATION.

Admitting the credibility, and, for argument's sake, the inspiration, of the Mosaic History, the following objections seem abundantly sufficient to overthrow this hypothesis:—

1. It can never be proved that Adam had such an unlimited power over his whole race: it is certain, the relation of a *father* does by no means imply it, (*Prop.* 63. *Schol.* 1.) and no text in the writings of Moses is alleged directly to prove it, unless *Gen.* i. 26—30 and iii. 16.; the first of which was a grant to the human race of the whole animal and vegetable creation for its use; and the second related only to Eve, and at most amounts to no more than that, as woman had abused her husband's tenderness, she should sometimes find herself galled by the yoke of his authority; but this does not imply an absolute power: at least, there is not a shadow of argument for any thing more than Adam's dominion over his own wife, and by no means over their descendants.

Hoadly on Gov. p. 5—35. *præs.* p. 5—13. *Locke on Gov.* part. i. c. iv—vi. *præs.* p. 23—31.

2. Allowing Adam to have been possessed of such a power, it will by no means prove that it was to descend from him, and centre in one of his children. It is certain that the right of a *father* and of an *elder brother* are in this respect very different (*Prop.* 63, 65. *gr.* 2.); and as for the argument of a supposed Divine appointment, drawn from *Gen.* iv. 7. though it may prove some *pre-eminence* in an elder brother, especially during the time that his younger lived with him, it will never prove an *absolute power* during life, over him and all his remotest descendants.

Hoadly, ib. p. 35—38. *Locke*, ib. c. viii. *Sidney*, ib. c. ii. § 4.

3. The distribution of mankind into seventy nations, with an absolute sovereign to each, supposes a contradiction to the right of primogeniture, as before asserted by Filmer, without any apparent reason; and is itself a most chimerical and arbitrary assertion. *Gen.* x. 32. is a most feeble foundation for such a grand superstructure; and only signifies, that the chief nations among whom the earth was divided sprang from the persons there mentioned. The division, which Filmer supposes, would make the parents subject to their children; besides, that some of those there mentioned were not born when the distribution is supposed to have been made.

Hoadly, ib. p. 49—54. *Sidney*, ib. c. i. § 7, 8.

4. Had God meant to establish the right of primogeniture in this manner, it is not probable he would so often have chosen *younger* sons to special favours, dignity, and authority, as we are sure he did, if the truth of the Old Testament be granted.

Sidney, ib. c. i. § 13. *Hoadly*, ib. p. 55—59.

5. The admission of such an hypothesis, grounded on so slender an evidence, would be attended with great damage to mankind,—as it might destroy the settlement of many very considerable nations, as appears from the genealogy of their royal families. At best, this is an *useless* scheme, since no one person upon earth can be known to be the true heir; and since the number of sovereigns in the world is so vastly greater than *seventy*, it would, upon Filmer's hypothesis, be *(cæt. par.)* a great probability against any one that he was not one of those seventy in whom the right lay.

Locke, ib. c. xi. *Sidney*, ib. c. i. § 14, 17, 18.

6. The scheme is plainly inconsistent with itself; for if fatherhood give an absolute power over the children, then it rests in all parents; and consequently, had Seth commanded his children to have resisted Adam, they would on this scheme have been obliged to do it, though by another part of it they were obliged to an unlimited obedience to Adam.

Locke, ib. § 68—72. *Hoadly*, ib. p. 13—15. *De Foe's Jus Divin.* lib. ii. p. 2—6. *Grove's Miscel.* p. 42—62.

SCHOLIUM.

Some have argued for what they call *indefeasible hereditary right* in monarchs, from the right of elder children to succeed to the land of their parents; but it is certain that the elder son has not in equity a right to succeed to the whole paternal inheritance,

so that the rest of the children should have no share of it; though it may generally be fit he should have a larger share than the rest (*Prop.* 62. *Schol.* 2.); yet he may be disinherited whenever a regard for the common good requires it: besides, that a succession to places of trust, power, and dignity, is a thing of a very different nature from a succession to an estate.

Camb. of Gov. c. ix. *Hutch. Syst.* 3. viii. 3. 9—11.

LECTURE LXXIX.

PROPOSITION LXVII.

Every man is born in a *state of freedom*, *i. e.* he is (so far as appears by the light of nature) no further obliged to support or submit to the form of government in the country where he is born, than he shall judge, upon a view of present circumstances, that a subjection to such government will be for the good of the whole.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If a person were, by any argument which the light of nature suggests, universally bound to be subject to and support any government further than it appears to him for the public good in present circumstances, such obligation must be built, either on some natural right in the governors to unlimited obedience, or on such a power conferred upon them by some previous contract.

2. The natural right in favour of primogeniture has been considered and confuted above, *Prop.* 66.

3. A previous contract of parents, binding themselves and their offspring to unlimited subjection, is a thing which can hardly be supposed; but if we were sure that such a contract had been ever so expressly made, as they had no right to dispose of the lives and properties of their children according to their own will, the children could not be bound by such a contract.

1, 2, 3. 4. *Valet propositio.*

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it will evidently appear, that virtue will allow to resist the supreme governor, if any circumstances shall arise in which such resistance shall appear to be most for the public good. Vid. *Prop.* 65. *Cor.* 1. and *Prop.* 56. *Schol.* 3.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vii. c. viii. § 5. *Locke on Gov.* part ii. § 202—222. *Sidney on Gov.* c. iii. § 41.

COROLLARY 2.

Much more may it be allowed in a *mixed* monarchy, that the other branches of the legislative power should resist the monarch when he goes about to subvert their constitution, in direct violation of that contract on which he is admitted to the crown.* *Caermich. Puff. de Off.* lib. ii. c. ix. § 4.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Some, waving all pleas from a supposed donation of power from God to kings, assert resistance to be universally unlawful, because it can never promote the public good, but must on the whole be detrimental to mankind. But it may be answered,

1. That cases may occur, in which the affections of the people may be so alienated from the government, that a revolution may be accomplished with very little bloodshed and confusion.

2. That by this means, the civil and religious liberties of a mighty nation may be, and often have been, secured, when even on the brink of ruin.

3. That such an event may contain matter of very wholesome instruction to succeeding princes, in that country and elsewhere, and by preventing future oppressions, may greatly promote the good of mankind.

And whereas it is urged, that the encouragement which the doctrine of resistance might give to insurrections and popular tumults would be an equivalent for all this,—it is to be remembered,

1. That it may be concluded, a virtuous man will, as he certainly ought to do, attentively weigh the reasons and consequences of things before he engages in so important an undertaking.

2. That the apparent danger attending it will deter men of prudence from embarking themselves in it till there be a great prospect of succeeding; which probably there cannot be till the people have been alienated from their governors by long, frequent, and notorious oppressions.

3. That though it is true this doctrine may be abused, and may in some cases be attended with ill consequences,—yet, considering the temptations of royalty, the doctrine of *passive obedience* and *non-resistance* is likely to be much more abused, as it has certainly in fact been; so that, upon the whole, the hazard seems to be abundantly balanced.

Camb. on Gov. c. x. p. 74—76, 84. *Locke on Gov.* part ii. c. xix. § 223—230. *Sacheverel's Trial*, p. 88—114. *Sidn. on Gov.* c. iii. § 40. p. 434—436. *The Judgment of whole Kingdoms and Nat. concerning the Rights, Power, &c. of Kings, and the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People*, printed in 1710. *Hutch. Syst.* § vii. 3—7.

* That great question concerning the Origin and Design of Government, the Rights of the People, and the Power of Resistance, have lately been amply considered, in consequence of the two general pastoral controversies of the age, occasioned, first, by Dr. Price's Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, and still more recently, by Mr Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. It would be endless to attempt to refer to the variety of treatises and pamphlets which have appeared on both sides of the question in agitation. A list of those publications may be collected from the Reviews of the time, and especially from the Monthly Review, which we the rather mention, as being more accessible to the generality of readers. Several years previously to these controversies, Dr. Priestley published an Essay on the First Principles of Government.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Considering the many difficulties to which princes are exposed, how liable they are often to be imposed upon when they design best, and how impossible it is for the bulk of the people to enter into all the reasons of their counsels and actions, we do most readily grant, that men ought to put the most candid interpretation upon the actions of their governors which they can in reason bear; and that they should never have recourse to violent methods, but in cases of very great extremity, and where the probability of promoting the public security and happiness by it is very apparent.

Camb. on Gov. c. x. p. 78—83. *Evans's Christ. Temp.* vol. ii. p. 308, 309. Sermon 14.

PROPOSITION LXVIII.

To inquire what form of government is to be preferred, as generally most subservient to the happiness of mankind.

LECTURE LXXX.

SOLUTION.

A *mixed monarchy, generally* to descend by *inheritance*, seems preferable to the rest.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. An *arbitrary monarchy* would undoubtedly be most desirable, if the monarch were perfectly wise and good; seeing he would then have much greater opportunities of doing good to his subjects than under a limitation of power he could possibly have; and the unavoidable imperfection of general laws would be greatly remedied by his integrity and wisdom: but considering the degeneracy and imperfection of mankind, it seems unsafe to trust so much power in one man; and it is generally in fact seen, that where this kind of government is admitted, tyranny, cruelty, and oppression, prevail with it.

2. An *aristocracy*, and much more a *democracy*, leaves too much room for the cabals of statesmen, makes the despatch of business slower, and there are secrets of state of which it is impossible that the people should be proper judges, and which it is by no means convenient to lay before them; and when discords arise between one part of the people and another, it is much more difficult to compose them when there is no monarch.

1, 2. 3. The chief advantages of all these constitutions are secured, and the chief disadvantages are avoided, by a *mixed monarchy*; especially in one that consists, like ours, of three states, one of which is to be chosen by the people, and to have the power of granting revenues to be raised on the subjects, while the prince has the power of making peace and war: such a constitution is therefore to be preferred.

4. That a kingdom should be *elective*, has indeed many advantages; especially as it prevents the succession of an improper person, and moderates the temptation which the sovereign is under to enhance the prerogative of the crown; as also that which the nobles are under to oppress the people, if the people have any share in the election.

5. Yet it proves the occasion of so many factions, and where the kingdom is considerable, of so many destructive civil wars, that the danger seems to be more than equal to the advantage.

4, 5. 6. The proper balance between both seems to be, that the right of *succession* should *generally* prevail; but that in case of any evident incapacity or mal-administration, the next heir should be set aside by the other branches of the legislature.

3, 6. 7. *Valet propositio.*

Camb. of Gov. c. xv. xvi. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vii. c. v. § 22. *Moyle's Works*, vol. i. p. 57—61. *Puff. de Off.* lib. ii. c. viii. § 4—8. *Spect.* vol. iv. No. 287. *Hobbes's Leviath.* c. xix. *Sidney on Gov.* c. ii. § 16, 24, 27, 30. *L'Esprit des Loix*, lib. xi. c. vi. lib. xix. c. 27; *English Transl.* p. 321, 337, 456—458. *Preceptor*, vol. ii. p. 474—486.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Notwithstanding these general reasons, so much regard is to be had to the temper and usages of particular nations, that it might often be attended with dangerous consequences to attempt a change from a less to a more perfect form of government.

Temple's Ess. vol. i. p. 16, 17; *Works*, vol. i. p. 70.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Instances of the oppression and misery which have attended arbitrary governments, are to be seen every where, especially in

Addis. Freeholder, No. x. *Krowonski's Rev. of Pers.* vol. i. *pass.* *Knox's Ceylon*, lib. iii. c. iii. iv. *Hanway's Trav.* vol. ii. p. 339—411.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The Commons of Great Britain have grown up to their present share in the government, by gradual advances. In the earlier reigns, particularly that of Edward I. (A. D. 1290.) the laws were enacted by the king and lords, the commons being only mentioned as *suppliants*. But what laid the foundation of their growing so considerable, was the grant which, according to Cambray, Henry VII. but indeed Stephen, Henry II. and John, had long before his time made, to empower the lords to

* A most excellent explication of the mixed form of government is given us by Mr. Adams's Defence of the Constitutions of the United States of America, to which the whole work is a very valuable supplement. Some valuable sentiments occur in Gordon's Letters concerning Political Justice, vol. ii. p. 423—483.

alienate their lands; which thus passing into the hands of the commons, who before were only their tenants, they became more considerable than before, as the proprietors of land in a state will always be.

Rapin's Hist. of Eng. p. 155. note. *Camb. on Gov.* p. 138—140, 147—149. *Bacon's Hen.* VII. p. 12. *Lyttelton's Pers. Lett.* No. 59—69. *Sidn. on Gov.* c. iii. § 10. p. 297, and § 28. *Preceptor*, vol. ii. *on Government*, ch. 3, 4. *Hurd's Dial.* No. 5, and 6. *passim.*[*]

LECTURE LXXXI.

PROPOSITION LXIX.

Virtue requires that obedience should be paid to civil rulers, in those things in which the authority of God is not apprehended to contradict their commands.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 64. 1. Virtue requires that there should be communities.

2. Affairs cannot be administered in communities, unless some civil rulers are appointed to manage them.

3. This appointment would be vain, unless obedience were to be generally paid to them, as above.

2, 3. 4. The refusal of such obedience to civil power, tends to the ruin of communities.

1, 4. 5. Virtue requires they should be generally obeyed, as above. *Q. E. D.*

Puff. de Jure, lib. vii. c. viii. § 1. *Hutch. Syst.* § vii. 2. ix. 17, 18.

COROLLARY 1.

Reverence is to be paid to rulers; and in dubious cases, virtue will require us to put the mildest construction upon their actions which they will reasonably bear. Vid. *Prop.* 67. *Schol.* 2.

Puf. ib. § 3.

COROLLARY 2.

Virtue will require us rather to acquiesce in their determinations, even where we imagine ourselves injured, than to disturb the public by taking our revenge into our own hands,—unless it may be the probable means of freeing a country from an intolerable tyranny.

Killing no Murder, *pass.* *Ap. Harleian Miscell.* now separately published.

COROLLARY 3.

To choose to determine points by single combat, rather than to refer them to the judgment of the magistrate, is to be condemned,—as being a derogation from his authority, or opposition to his determination, as well as a rash exposing our own lives or that of others; and a probable means of introducing a wrong sense of honour, which may be detrimental to the lives and souls of many, who might otherwise be useful to the commonwealth.

Hale's Gold. Rem. p. 107—115. 8vo. p. 70—96. 4to. *Spect.* vol. ii. No. 97. *Montesq. Spirit of Laws*, vol. ii. lib. xxviii. c. xvii. xx. xxiv. xxv. *Freethinker*, vol. i. No. xv. *Delany's Serm. on Duelling*, vol. ii. *Watts on Self-Murder*, § 6, latter part; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 387, 388.†

SCHOLIUM 1.

Marriages are to be made only as the civil law of any country directs, supposing there is nothing in the ceremony so directed which shall appear unlawful to the parties concerned; and though private contracts are undoubtedly binding in the sight of God, yet they ought to be discouraged, and the offspring of such unauthorized marriages may justly be laid under some incapacities, in order to prevent the prevalency of them, which would be much more to the damage of society: and the same kind of observations and reasons may be applied to *divorces* and to *wills* in some degree, where the civil law determines the circumstances with which they shall be attended.

Puff. de Jure, lib. vi. c. i. § 36. *sub fin.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Princes are undoubtedly bound by their covenant with their people; for the reasoning, *Prop.* 55. *Dem.* has a peculiar weight when applied to them. Some have questioned, Whether a succeeding prince be bound by any concessions made by his predecessors: but there can be no room for such a debate, when a prince swears, or even promises, to govern according to law; and the concessions made by preceding princes have been, as they generally are, passed into civil laws. To say that such concessions were sometimes forcibly extorted, and therefore are not obligatory, would be to destroy all the faith of treaties, and is bringing the thing back to the exploded scheme of passive obedience.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. xiv. § 10, 11.

PROPOSITION LXX.

Briefly to inquire into the mutual duties of masters and servants.

SOLUTION.

1. Servants owe to their masters diligence in

* Much information on this head may be derived from the early volumes of the Parliamentary History, Sullivan's Law Lectures, Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, vol. i. King on the English Constitution, Millar on the English Government, Russel, Ellyss's Essays on Temporal Liberty, tract the fourth, and the several volumes of Dr. Henry's History of Great Britain. For a review of the British Constitution as it now stands, see Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 190—234, and Dr. Beattie's Elements of Moral Science, vol. ii. p. 391—441. A still more copious discussion of the subject is presented in Mr De Lolme's Treatise on the Constitution of England.

† Dr. Hey has written a distinct Dissertation upon the practice of Duelling, and Mr. Mac Laurin wrote a considerable part of the first volume of his work on Sermons. Concise views of the subject may be seen in Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 372—376, and in Godwin's Inquiry concerning Political Justice, vol. i. p. 84—86.

their business, fidelity in any other trusts reposed in them, and such a reverence in their behaviour as may both promote and express their obedience.

2. Masters owe to their *hired* servants a regular payment of their wages: to *all*, a proper care of their support during the time of service, and a kind and affable treatment:—they are to see that they be neither unemployed, nor overwhelmed with business beyond what their strength and time will admit, and that their minds be duly cultivated, according to the circumstances of life in which they are placed.

Spect. vol. ii. No. 107 and 137. *Delany on Rel. Dut.* Serm. x. xi. *Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 233—235. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. i. p. 150—153.

DEMONSTRATION

The obligation to these duties on both sides is evident, from the nature of the relation, and those mutual covenants which generally attend it, in which these things are either expressly or tacitly stipulated.

Fleetwood on Rel. Dut. p. 279—281. *Puff. de Off.* lib. ii. c. iv. § 1, 2. *Hutch. Syst.* § iii. 1. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 509—511.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is disputed, Whether it be unlawful to buy men as slaves, and forcibly compel them to do service for life, or a term of years? Some have thought the strength of body and stupidity of mind to be found among some parts of the human species, especially the *Negroes*, intimate that they were designed to be the drudges of the rest; but to admit such an argument might be attended with dangerous usurpations and contentions; for who does not think he has genius enough to command others? Nevertheless, if any case occurs, in which a man may be justly condemned to be a slave by the laws of his country, it seems very allowable to buy him and use him as such; and if purchasing men for slaves out of the hands of their enemies, by whom they are taken prisoners, may be a means of preserving their lives, which in Guinea is often the case, it seems very allowable to purchase them,—unless it prove the means of encouraging unreasonable and destructive wars, and the mischief occasioned thereby be greater than the good arising from the preservation of the lives of those already taken, and the fruit of their labours, which may possibly make the matter a greater difficulty than some imagine. Yet virtue will require, even in this case, that the slaves be treated with as much humanity as may be consistent with the safety of their master, and with a prudent care of his affairs.

Snelgrave's Guin. p. 160, 161. *Puff. de Off.* lib. § 3, 4 with Caermichael's Notes. *Month. Review*, vol. xxiv. p. 160. *Hutch. Syst.* ii. vol. iii. xiv. 3. § iii. 2—5. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 5, 11—13. *Spirit of Laws*, lib. xv. c. ii. vol. i. p. 336—357; in another edition, p. 348, 369.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is questioned, Whether a father may ever sell his child? Some have argued, but without reason, that fatherhood gives a right universally. It seems he only has it when the constitution of a country appoints him the civil judge of his children; or when his circumstances are such, that the sale of his child in his minority is absolutely necessary for the supporting the lives of either or both of them.—*Prop.* 51. *Cor.* 3.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. v. § 5. *Hutch. Syst.* c. ii. 5. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. vi. c. ii. § 9.

LECTURE LXXXII.

LEMMA TO PROPOSITION LXXI.

As the word *punishment* occurs in the proposition, and is not defined, it may be proper here to give a definition of it as a Lemma, not to alter the number of the succeeding definitions; and it may be taken thus:—PUNISHMENT is an evil inflicted, in consequence of an offence committed against the person by whom it is inflicted or appointed, whether under a public or private character.

PROPOSITION LXXI.

Virtue may permit, or even require, the civil magistrate, not only to execute other heavy punishments upon offenders, but in some cases to take away their lives.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Virtue requires that the civil magistrate endeavour to preserve the public peace and tranquillity,—which is the design of his office.

2. In order to this, it is necessary that effectual methods be taken to deter men from such crimes as are ruinous to society, *v. g.* murder, treason, theft, &c.

3. The corruption of men is so great, that it evidently appears in fact, that they rush on to the commission of those crimes, even though they are made capital by the laws of their country.

4. There is great reason to believe that if

* The question concerning Negro Slavery has lately received the most ample discussion. It may suffice here to refer to Mr. Ramsay's elaborate controversial tract, to Mr. Clarkson's two judicious and full volumes, and occasionally to the Debates, in the House of Lords, on Mr. Dundas's Resolutions, and to Dr. Beattie's Dissertation on Slavery, vol. iii. p. 156—254. The reader may now have before him a temperate and able work on the same subject, by Mr. Day, and Mr. Bicknell's Dying Negro. Miss Hannah Weston Peckard's Epistle to Mrs. Hannah More's Address to Mr. Wilberforce, and Slavery, a poem, written as is supposed by Mr. Roscoe of Liverpool.

such crimes were not severely punished, and even sometimes with death, they would be much more frequently committed, and the community in time destroyed by them.

1, 2, 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Puff. de Jure, lib. viii. c. iii. § 6, 7. *Hutch. Syst.* c. ix. p. 10—14. *Beccaria on Crimes and Punishments, with Voltaire's Commentary, passim. Principles of Penal Laws, passim.* (Understood to have been written by William Eden, Esq. now Lord Auckland.) *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 268—302. *Godwin's Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, vol. ii. p. 687—759.

COROLLARY.

A regard to the public good may in some cases require that an innocent person should be given up to calamity, and even to death: *v. g.* If a man infected with the plague were, in a frenzy, to run up and down to the evident hazard of spreading the contagion; and many add, when an innocent person is demanded by an enemy, against whom the public cannot defend itself. It seems more justifiable to confiscate the estates of traitors, though thereby innocent children are impoverished; both that a regard to their family may prevent their conspiring against the government, and that the children of noble families may be less able to revenge the death of a father.

Puff. ib. § 33. c. ii. § 5. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. xxv. § 3. *Considerations on the Law of Forfeiture, passim.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Considering how precious life is, and how much the fear of violent death would imbitter the enjoyment of it, virtue requires that capital punishments should be sparingly used; for murder, none can doubt the reasonableness of them; but perhaps some methods might be found out, in case of theft, that would strike the offender with so much terror, as to render capital punishments but seldom necessary; and the severity of Draco, in introducing them on the smallest occasions, was greatly to be condemned.

More's Utopia, p. 145, 146. *Spirit of Laws*, vol. i. lib. vi. p. 16. *Whiston's Life*, vol. ii. p. 415—470. *Stanyan's Gr. Hist.* p. 145, 146. *Mitford's History of Greece*, vol. i. p. 261, 262. *Gillies's ditto*, vol. i. p. 455. *Thoughts on the Extension of Penal Laws, passim.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Public executions ought to be managed with very great solemnity; and it would be prudent to make a difference between the kinds of death inflicted for different crimes,—since perhaps some may be found who would dread the pain and shame of some executions, even more than death itself.

Mandeville on Executions, c. iv. lib. v.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is questioned, Whether a community has a right over its *exiles?* but that must be determined by the degree of severity attending the sentence; for if the exile possesses the revenues of an estate in that country from whence he is driven, it is evident that community has a right and power over him, more than it would otherwise have had.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. v. § 25. *Warb. Div. Legation*, vol. i. p. 16, 17, and notes. *Bott against Warburton*, p. 73—78.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is questioned, Whether private persons have a right of killing those who invade them by violence? —Civilians generally state it thus:—Where communities are formed, it is to be considered whether it be the intent of the law, barely to *permit*, or also to *require*, such executions. In the former case, *v. g.* If a man find another in adultery with his wife, or if a rape be attempted, or an assault made by a robber, the law, though it permits to kill the aggressor, and thereby frees the slayer from punishment, yet cannot justify the action before God. Yet where the law *requires* such resistance, as in the case of soldiers invading a country, then it becomes the duty of the subject to endeavour the destruction of such invaders; but it seems, that in the former case it is a person's *duty* too, when, upon the best views he can form of the consequences, it appears probable that the immediate slaughter of the aggressor will turn to the public good; otherwise it is a vicious indulgence of the passion of revenge; and those who believe a future state ought to be peculiarly solicitous that they do not plunge even an enemy into irrecoverable misery, by cutting him off unnecessarily in the act of his crime.—*Prop.* 51. *Cor.* 2.

Grot. ibid. lib. ii. c. xx. § 17. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. v. § 11, 14. *Grove's Moral Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 353—364.

LECTURE LXXXIII.

DEFINITION LVI.

Those rules which by a tacit consent are agreed upon among all communities, at least among those who are reckoned the polite and humanized part of mankind, are called the LAWS OF NATIONS.

Grot. ibid. *Proleg.* § 17. *Grove's Moral Phil.* vol. ii. p. 96. *Spirit of Laws*, vol. i. p. 7, 8.

PROPOSITION LXXII.

The laws of nations are to be regarded.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Communities have certain affairs which must of necessity be transacted between them.

1. 2. Disputes may arise upon these, which cannot be determined by the peculiar civil laws of either of the contending parties.

2. 3. Recourse must in that case be had to the laws of nations, to prevent disputes, which might otherwise be very mischievous.

3. 4. Mutual regard must be paid to these laws. *Q. E. D.*

Hutch. Syst. vol. ii. p. 350, 351. *See Vattel's Le Droit de Gens, and his Questions de Droit Naturel.* See also the English Translation of the former Work.

DEFINITION LVII.

War is a state wherein men endeavour by open violence to hurt and destroy the persons or possessions of each other.

Grotius de Jure, lib. i. c. i. § 2. *Puffend. de Jure*, lib. i. c. i. § 8.

COROLLARY.

War is a great evil, and virtue will require us to avoid engaging in it, unless circumstances should arise, in which it should appear necessary for the greater good of mankind. Vid. *Prop.* 51.

PROPOSITION LXXIII.

Virtue may in some cases permit, and even require, that men should engage in war.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The injustice of some is so great, that men will not be able to secure their possessions and their lives in many cases, unless they oppose force to force.

2. Persons violently oppressing their inoffensive neighbours, without just cause, are so far from being valuable members, that they are the pests of society.

2. 3. By attempting to destroy such invaders, we may not only secure ourselves, but also many others who might afterwards be swallowed up by them, especially if their power of hurting were strengthened by our submission or destruction.

1, 3. 4. Cases may occur, in which opposing force to force may tend to the public good, *i. e.* in which virtue may allow and require us to engage in war. Vid. *Def.* 57. *Prop.* 51. *Q. E. D.*

Grot. ibid. lib. i. c. ii. § 1—3. *Puffend.* ibid. lib. viii. c. vi. § 7. *Carmich. in Puff. de Off.* lib. i. c. v. § 17. p. 123, 124. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 408—426. *Godwin's Inquiry concerning Political Justice*, vol. ii. p. 511—525.

SCHOLIUM.

The argument urged in this demonstration, only proves it *lawful* for men to be lawful; it is questioned, Whether it is ever lawful to engage in an *offensive* war?

Ans. It is certainly inhuman, and therefore vicious, to begin to hurt unprovoked; and considering the many calamities brought on mankind by war, virtue will require us to abhor the thought of increasing our dominions and possessions by the ruin of innocent persons; nevertheless, self-defence will require us to take up arms before we are actually invaded, as it may prevent the intended invasion, and the mutual slaughter which would be consequent upon it; and will indeed be necessary in order to sustain the first shock, which would otherwise be fatal to the party unprepared; nay, a regard to our own safety may require us to invade and subdue the country of the aggressor, and to push on our conquest till he is disabled from doing us further mischief.

As to the question, Whether it is lawful to take up arms, in defence of the injured subjects of another state, to preserve their civil and religious liberties? it must be determined by the prospect of good arising from such a war: if there be an apparent probability that tyrannical power may be reduced, and the happiness of other states, as well as that invaded, may thereby be promoted, it seems lawful on the common principles of humanity.

Puff. ibid. § 3. *Burn. on Art.* p. 361. *Grot.* ibid. lib. ii. c. xx. § 41—43.

DEFINITION LVIII.

PUBLIC WAR is that which is undertaken and managed by the authority of the community; PRIVATE is that which is undertaken and managed without it. *Grot.* ibid. lib. i. c. iii. § 1.

COROLLARY.

Private war may sometimes be necessary, where the assault is too sudden to allow an act of the community to authorize resistance.—Vid. *Prop.* 71. *Schol.* 4. But, generally, where the prospect of danger is more remote, it is very unwarrantable for persons to form themselves into military bodies, without commission from the civil magistrate, even though it be on pretence of warding off the enemy. Yet it must be acknowledged, there may be cases of public danger so extreme, that the force of the civil law may seem for that time to be suspended; and it is the business of every good man, conscientiously, to judge for himself when these cases occur; and the business of every wise and good state to indemnify by a law such acts as shall appear to have been so necessitated, though, not being foreseen, they could not have been provided for by laws *a priori*. *Grotius*, ibid. § 2.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Subjects may not, even when commanded by their prince, engage in any war which they are *fully persuaded* is unjust; but if it appears a *dubious*

point to them, the same obligation does not hold; for otherwise, common soldiers could hardly ever engage at all, since they seldom have or can have a full view of all the circumstances of the affair. Nevertheless, officers in the higher ranks are under great obligations to inquire critically into it, both as they have much better opportunity of information than their soldiers, and as the part they are to act in carrying on the war is of much greater importance.

Grot. ibid. lib. ii. c. xxvi. § 3—5. *Puff.* ibid. § 4. *Burn. on Art.* p. 362.

SCHOLIUM 2.

He who offered the injury may defend himself, when the party injured has refused an equitable satisfaction proposed: in that case the party injured becomes the aggressor; much more may subjects defend themselves, even when their prince has been to blame, if the enemy endeavour to avenge the quarrel, not on the person of the prince, but on his innocent subjects.

Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. i. § 18. c. xxvi. § 6. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. v. § 19.

LECTURE LXXXIV.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The violence of war is to be attempered, as much as may be consistent with securing the good ends proposed by it. An unnecessary waste of the enemies' goods, (vid. Deut. xx. 19, 20.) and much more of their blood, is to be avoided, and especially rapes, which injure the person by, as well as those upon whom they are committed; nor are women and children to be slaughtered, unless women be found in active war, and then they are to be treated as other soldiers; but it is to be observed, that we here, and in all this part of the work, speak only of war as undertaken on the principles of the common rights of mankind, not pretending to dispute the right which God has to doom any of his creatures to death, in such circumstances as he shall see fit, and to make some of them executioners on others.

Grot. de Jure, lib. iii. c. iv. § 10. c. xiii. § 4. *Hutch. Sys.* 3. x. 6.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is questioned, How far *stratagems* in war are lawful?

Ans. It may be lawful to deceive the enemy by dubious actions, which may probably be interpreted wrong; and the rather, as there is a kind of universal agreement to suspect each other, where no treaties are commenced, so that faith among men is not so much injured by these as by other deceits. Yet there is a degree of honour to be observed, even towards an enemy; and a direct lie, especially a false oath, should by no means be allowed.

Grot. de Jure, lib. iii. c. 1. § 17, 20. c. xix. § 1. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. viii. c. vi. § 6. *Telemaque*, lib. xx. p. 426—432. *Hutch.* ib. § 6.

SCHOLIUM 5.

The laws of nations are to be observed in war; and these forbid violating the persons of *ambassadors*, (seeing this would make wars perpetual, as none would venture to mediate a peace,) hiring soldiers to assassinate their general, or subjects their prince, and poisoning the enemy by weapons, water, or any other method.

Grot. ib. lib. iii. c. iv. § 15—18. lib. ii. c. xviii. § 2, 3, 7. *Puff.* ib. § 18. *More's Utopia*, p. 158—164. *Hutch.* ib. § 12—14.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It is much queried, Whether temples dedicated to God may be spoiled of their treasures by the conqueror?

Ans. Those treasures being in some degree still the property of the state, and therefore used in times of great extremity for its defence, the conqueror may justly seize them; yet care should be taken to avoid any circumstances of rudeness and irreverence, lest by that means religion should be brought into contempt.

Grot. de Jure, lib. iii. c. xii. § 6. *Prideaux's Connect.* vol. ii. p. 25, 26. *Anno Ante Christum*, 278. vol. iii. p. 35. *Works of the Learned, for March* 1738, *Art.* 16.

PROPOSITION LXXIV.

To inquire how far government may justly be founded in conquest.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. The victor in a just war may see it necessary (in order to repair the expenses and losses sustained, in order to punish those who have been injurious to the public peace, and that he may prevent future assaults from the vanquished) to make himself king of a conquered country, and to model the laws of it in such a manner as he shall on the whole judge fit and he may be justified in doing it. Nevertheless, if the persons so conquered enter themselves into no engagements to him, it may reasonably be expected that they should take the first opportunity to throw off his yoke, and they are not obliged to submit to it so much as that of their natural sovereign: yet virtue will require them to be cautious that they do not make their own condition and that of the public worse, by a precipitate resistance.

2. If a prince, by an unjust war, or any other unrighteous method, have possessed himself of the government, and uses it well, though he gained it ill, virtue will require that he be obeyed; at least

till the person to whom it belongs be able and willing to assert his right, with some probable prospect of success: for it is certainly better that an usurper should govern, than that there should be no government at all.

3. It seems reasonable, that if the rightful prince, or at least his immediate successor, be not able to assert his claim, but the government continue for a considerable time in the hands or family of an usurper, long possession should make up the defect of an original title, lest the encouragement of antiquated claims should throw nations into confusion, and, by a parity of reason, private families too.

Puff. de Jure, lib. viii. c. vi. § 24. lib. vii. c. vii. § 3, 4. c. viii. § 9, 10. *Locke on Gov.* part ii. c. xvi. xvii. *Camb. on Gov.* c. viii. *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. i. lib. x. c. iii—ix. *Hutch. Syst.* 3. viii. 4—8.

SCHOLIUM.

The rights of hostages and captives are to be settled by the law of nations: but it is plain that neither hostages, when upon public faith, nor slaves, when they have by compact obliged themselves to their masters, may be allowed to desert, unless extreme injury be offered.

Grot. de Jure, lib. iii. c. xiv. § 7. lib. iii. c. xix. § 51.

LECTURE LXXXV.

PROPOSITION LXXV.

To inquire into the principal branches of human or personal virtue.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Since the happiness of a rational creature must chiefly depend upon the state of his own mind, virtue requires that great care be taken of it, particularly to furnish it with such knowledge as may be delightful and useful.

Foster's Serm. vol. iv. i. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. ii. No. 11—13. *Abernethy's Disc.* vol. ii. No. 5.

2. As we may, by a heedless conduct, be betrayed into numberless evils, virtue requires that we should attentively consider our circumstances in life, and often reflect on our conduct.

Lowther's Counsels of Prudence. Grove's Works, vol. ii. p. 221—242.

3. Since we are compounded of body as well as mind, virtue will require a proper care of the body, that on the one hand, it may not want any thing necessary for its subsistence, health, and vigour; and, on the other, that it may not be indulged in such excesses as, however pleasant at first, might at length enfeeble and destroy it.

Collier's Ess. part ii. No. 17. *Stubbes' Dial. on Pleasure. Protest. Syst.* vol. ii. No. 12. *Fordyce's Serm. on the Love of Pleasure. Abern. Disc.* vol. ii. No. 16.

4. As it is impossible to be happy while our minds are the sport of irregular appetites and passions, virtue will require a due guard upon these; that the agreeable things of life may not be objects of excessive desire, hope, or joy; and that the evils of it may not overwhelm us with fear, with grief, or resentment, nor its uncertainty with excessive solicitude.

Watts on the Pass. § 15—24. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. iv. No. 6. *Grove's Ethics*, p. 257—287.

5. As many disorders of body and mind may take their rise from idleness, virtue will, on the preceding principles, require that we keep ourselves in a series of useful employments and labour, to improve every proportion of our time well; proper allowance being made for such recreation as animal nature requires.

Balguy's Sermons, vol. ii. No. 8. *Grove on Recreations, passim.*

6. That we may not be led into undertakings disproportioned to our strength, that we may not expect too high regard from others, nor be too keenly impressed with a sense of slights and injuries, as well as for many other important reasons, virtue will require us to moderate our opinion of ourselves, in proportion to the degree and value of our real advantages, whether of mind, of body, or estate.

Coll. Ess. part i. No. 1. *Watts on Humility, passim. Scott's Christian Life*, vol. i. c. iii. § 1: *Part* i. *Works*, vol. i. p. 18—23. *Carmich. Suppl. to Puff. de Off.* lib. i. c. v. § 2. *Wright's Great. Concern*, p. 113—125. *Fordyce's Moral Phil.* lib. ii. § 2. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. part ii. c. ii—v. *Grove's Serm.* vol. v. No. 10, 11. *Price on Morals*, p. 258—263. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 105—123.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may be observed, that the first and second of these steps comprehend *prudence* and *consideration*: the third, *temperance*, *chastity*, and *mortification*: the fourth, *fortitude*, *contentment*, *meekness*, and *moderation*: the fifth, *diligence*: the last, *humility*: and thus the distribution in effect coincides with those of Scott, Wright, &c.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Thoughts tending to vice are no further criminal than as they are approved and indulged by the will. *Def.* 38.

Osterv. of Unclean. § 1. c. vii. p. 72—74.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Though a constant care should be taken (on the

principles laid down *gr.* 3.) to maintain such moderation in the articles of food, dress, sleep, &c. as may prevent the mind from being enslaved to the body; and though it be prudence in us to inure ourselves to such hardships as may be expected in a worthy and honourable passage through life, it is by no means necessary to deny ourselves in every thing which gives pleasure to the senses; for God has placed us in such circumstances, that some pleasures are unavoidable; (the benevolence of his nature no doubt engaging him to delight in the happiness of his creatures;) it is, therefore, ingratitude to him, as well as injustice to ourselves, to throw back his gifts upon his hands, as if they were snares rather than favours. To which we may add, that in the circumstances in which mankind now are, were all the elegances and ornaments of life to be renounced, many families must be undone, who are now maintained by an honest labour in furnishing them out, and maintained more cheerfully, and indeed more safely, than they could merely by alms.

Philem. to Hydaspes, part ii. *præs.* p. 26—61. 91, *ad fin.*

PROPOSITION LXXVI.

To inquire into some of the principal means of promoting virtue in the soul.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Virtue may be promoted by attentive hearing and reading discourses on divine subjects, and seriously meditating upon them; all which may serve to assist us in forming right notions of God, and in judging of our duty, and may awaken us to the practice of it.

2. External acts of adoration and praise may promote as well as express inward veneration.

Atterb. Post. Serm. vol. ii. No. vii. p. 191—203.

3. Earnest and frequent prayers to God may greatly tend to promote virtue; for though they can neither inform nor move him, yet they may bring us to a proper temper for receiving his mercies. And if any object, That God has established such an order of things as he will not alter in compliance with the entreaties of his creatures,—it may be replied, That this order was no doubt established in connexion with and in correspondence to the view which the Divine Being always had of the prayers and temper of his rational creatures; and husbandry, and all the most necessary labours of life, might as reasonably be argued against as prayer, on the force of this objection.

Burn. Life of Roch. p. 52, 53, 60—64. *Stubbs. on Div. Rev.* p. 36—42. *Bens. of Prayer*, p. 13—21. *Ibbot's Serm.* vol. ii. Serm. 10, 11, 12; *On the Duty and Benefit of Prayer. Sherlock on Provid.* edit. 9. p. 391—402. *Dr. Price's Dissertations*, Diss. 2. *Ogden's Serm. on Prayer. Kippis's Sermons*, Serm. 7. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 31—47. 7th ed. *Relig. of Nat.* p. 103, 104. *Leechman's Serm. on Prayer, præs.* p. 14, 24, 25. Glasg. edit. *Grove on Secret Prayer. Ess.* 1. *King's Origin of Evil.* 5. v. 1. *præs. par.* 7—13. *Abernethy on Attrib.* vol. ii. p. 401—415.

4. It is proper that men should meet in religious assemblies, to join in divine worship, as thereby a public honour is done to God; and the hearts of men may be fixed and quickened by beholding the devotion of each other.

Price, ibid. p. 257—267. *Protest. Syst.* vol. ii. *Sermon* 8. *Collib. on Nat. and Rev. Rel.* p. 25. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 84—87.*

4. 5. It is proper that some person should be appointed, whose chief business it should be to preside in these assemblies,—since by this means, religious offices will be performed in a manner most tending to common edification.

4. 6. Lest the civil business of some should interfere with the religious appointment of others, it is proper that some time should be set apart by common consent for religious purposes: besides, that the rest of beasts and servants may require some such appointments; which, therefore, have made a part of the religious constitution of almost all nations.

Watts's Hebr. of Times and Places, p. 3—5; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 396. *Fost. Serm. on the Morality of the Sabbath*, 4 vols. 8vo. vol. 4.

7. It may be proper that fasting should sometimes be joined with other acts of divine worship, to promote more intense devotion, to express our humiliation for sin, and to promote that command of the mind over the body, which is suited to the constitution of a rational being.

Lamb. Theol. lib. v. c. lxxv. § 3, 4. *Amory's Dial. on Devot.*

* The Validity, Property, and Duty of Prayer. W[illiams], occasioned by the Rev. G[eorge] W[illiams]'s [Letter] [illegible] [illegible] Prayer. [illegible] Prayer. [illegible] Prayer.

LECTURE LXXXVI.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Those things are only to be asked of God in prayer which are of some considerable importance, by which our truest happiness may probably be promoted, and which there appears some hope of obtaining; and where it is dubious, as with respect to many temporal enjoyments it is, whether obtaining our petitions will be on the whole for our advantage, we are to ask these things only conditionally, with a becoming submission to the superior wisdom of God.

Juven. Sat. x. *Plato's Alcibiades.* ii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is questioned, Whether we may pray for what we are sure God will give or do?

Ans. There can be no doubt of this, if our asking it be the *condition* of its being bestowed or done: nor can we, without a revelation, be absolutely sure of any future event, how probable soever: and it seems, that if a promise were absolutely given, we might justly plead it with God in prayer, thereby to promote our conformity to the Divine Will, our expectation of the blessing, and fitness to receive it; but such prayers ought to be managed, so as not to intimate any doubt of the Divine veracity, but, on the contrary, to express a firm and joyful reliance upon it.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is allowed that *forms* of prayer may help the ignorant and weak, and may prevent public devotion from falling into that contempt, of which there might otherwise be danger when such persons are to officiate; as also from being made the vehicle of conveying the errors and irregular passions, which particular persons so officiating might otherwise mingle with them; they may also be useful in secret and family worship, and even to persons of the best capacity, in seasons when they are out of frame for the duty. Yet it is very unreasonable that persons in public or private should be confined to forms, since they cannot suit all circumstances; and a frequent repetition of the same words, tends to deaden those affections which ought to accompany prayer.

The chief objections against *extemporary* or *free* prayer are,

1. That the mind cannot, without great disturbance and dissipation of thought, give that attention and examination to it which is necessary to a rational assent and concurrence.

2. That the auditory may be disquieted with the fear lest the person officiating should fall into some impropriety or absurdity of expression inconsistent with the reverence due to the Divine Being, and the improvement of his fellow-worshippers.

To the *former* we reply, by appealing to experience as an evidence of the quickness of the mind in its operations, to which the quickness of words bears but little proportion. A probable guess may be made at the tendency of a sentence from its beginning, especially when due care is taken that sentences be not drawn out to an immoderate length, and when any book supposed sacred, furnishes out much of the language.—As to the *latter*, experience also shows, that persons of no extraordinary genius are capable of praying without gross absurdity, or impropriety of expression; so that where the abilities of the person are known, the probability of his running into them is so small, as not at all to affect the mind; and there is a possibility that a *reader* may mistake.

Bennet's Abridg. of Lond. Cases, p. 72—78. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 122—124. *Pierce's Vind. of Diss.* lib. iii. c. iv. p. 398, 399, 404—406. *Jacks. on Lord's Prayer, pref.* p. 7. *Limb. Theol.* lib. v. c. xxv. § 28. *Halif. Char. of a Trimmer*, p. 45, 46. *Baxt. Works*, vol. i. p. 671. *Watts's Miscel.* p. 202—213; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 537—542. *Dr. John Taylor's Scripture Account of Prayer. Public Prayer, a Treatise against Forms, in two parts*, 12mo, 1766, part i. c. i—iv. p. 13—60. *Disquisitions relating to the Dissenters*, 12mo, 1767, c. i—iv. *for Written Forms*. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 58—67.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Where liturgies are established by public authority, great care ought to be taken that there be no phrases in them likely to lead men into hurtful mistakes,—seeing the veneration quickly contracted for such offices, would render it exceeding difficult to eradicate an error so imbibed.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is our duty to pray for *others*,—since hereby our benevolence for them is expressed and increased; and it is the only way by which we can express it to far the greatest part of our species.

Price's Dissertations, No. 2. p. 221—227, 237—239.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It is the duty of the community to take care that there be able teachers, of a virtuous character, that so virtue may be promoted in it. Nothing therefore should be done to deter fit persons from undertaking the work, by subscriptions, oaths, &c. which would be most likely in some cases to exclude the most valuable men. It is also fit that the community by whom they are employed, should allow them such subsistence that they may pursue their studies without avocation, and may be fitted for performing their office in a manner most honour-

able to the Divine Being, and most edifying to those among whom they officiate.

Rees of Maintenance. Hutch. Syst. vol. ii. p. 310—312.

SCHOLIUM 7.

Great care ought to be taken that religion be not overburthened with ceremonies; for the mind of man is of so limited a nature, that by an over-exact attendance to these, greater things will probably be neglected; and the diversity of tastes, education, &c. will probably lead men into differences with respect to them, which, if they be too much regarded, will be very detrimental to that benevolence which they ought to maintain for each other.

Tind. Christianity as old, &c. p. 123, 124. *Geddes's Tracts*, vol. iv. p. 205—225.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Though prayer and praise have been mentioned above, as the *means* of virtue, yet they are not *only* to be considered in that view; they are certainly a part of the duty we owe to God, as well as proper means of disposing us to the other branches of virtue; and it would appear unnatural, under a deep sense of our dependence upon and our obligations to the Divine Being, never to express it in any kind of address to him, though we believe him continually present with us. *Dr. Price's Second Dissertation.*

LECTURE LXXXVII.

PROPOSITION LXXVIII.

Virtue requires that the civil magistrate should not so interpose in matters of religion, or rites of worship, as to inflict any penalties on his subjects upon account of them, so long as nothing is done prejudicial to the peace of the community.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Prop. 49. *gr.* 23. 1. Virtue, and consequently religion, which is that branch of it that more immediately relates to God, consists not merely in the external performance of an action, but in a correspondent temper and disposition of soul.

2. Compulsion only influences the external actions, and can by no means convince the understanding.

1, 2. 3. Such severities cannot make men religious, but are rather likely to make them hypocrites.

3. 4. Persecution for conscience-sake must be prejudicial to the public, by corrupting the characters of men.

5. The persons persecuted must probably be brought into a very unhappy condition by it; for if they renounce their profession, they subject themselves to great remorse, while they secretly believe it to be true; and if they maintain it, penalties are incurred, by which ruin may be brought on themselves and their families.

6. The minds of men are naturally prejudiced in favour of a religion for which men suffer hardships, though they do nothing injurious to the public peace.

7. Persecutions may promote the cause they are intended to destroy, and by increasing the number of its votaries may occasion insurrections, which may be extremely detrimental to the public tranquillity.

Tert. ad Scap. c. v. *ad fin. Apol. c.* i. *Boyle's Occas. Meditations*, p. 145—148, § 5. No. 2.

4, 5, 7. 8. The magistrate, by interposing in these cases, would prejudice the public rather than serve it; and therefore virtue requires him to forbear such interpositions.

Moyle's Post. Works, vol. i. p. 24—26. *Warburton's Div. Legation*, vol. i. p. 304, 305. *Owen's Syn. Pneum.* p. 137—139. *Tind. Rights of the Chr. Chur.* part i. c. i. § 20. *Montes. Spirit of Laws*, lib. xxv. c. xiii. vol. ii. p. 183—186. *Doddridge's Serm. on Persec. Old Whig*, vol. i. No. v. vi. viii. ix. x. *Fost. Serm.* vol. i. No. vi. *Watts's Essay on Civil Power in Things Sacred*, § 3, 7, 10. *Appendix in the last vol. of his Works. Voltaire on Toleration. Fownes's Inquiry into the Principles of Toleration*, edit. 3. *Furneaux's Essay on Toleration. Ditto's Letters to Mr. Justice Blackstone*, edit. 2. *Six Letters on Intolerance.*

SCHOLIUM.

The history of religion in most countries, and the many calamities which have arisen from persecution, greatly tend to illustrate and confirm the last steps of this demonstration; and perhaps there is no part of history more instructive, though none be more melancholy.

Occas. Pap. vol. i. No. iv. p. 18—22. *Temp. Netherl.* p. 166—169, 175. *Geddes's Account of the Inquisition, Ap. Tracts*, vol. i. *Geddes's Hist. of the Expulsion of the Moriscoes*, ibid. vol. i. *New Advent. of Telemachus. Chandler's Hist. of Persecut. pass.*

DEMONSTRATION II.

1. There are a variety of religions in the world, which are so inconsistent, that it is impossible they should all be true.

2. If it be the duty of the magistrate to establish and defend *any* religion by penalties, he must establish and defend that which he takes to be true.

3. There is reason to believe that the generality of men take their own religion to be true.

1, 2. 3. 4. Many magistrates in the world, and perhaps the greatest part of them, would be obliged (if the contrary to the proposition were true) to persecute truth and establish falsehood. *Q. E. D.*

Old Whig, vol. i. No. xxxiii. *Price's Morals*, p. 313, 314.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To the whole reasoning in *Dem.* 1. it is objected, That some errors in opinion and in worship are so displeasing to God, that the toleration of them would quickly bring down his vengeance upon the public, which it is the magistrate's business to endeavour to preserve.

Ans. It seems that opinions and practices so provoking to God must be highly contrary to reason, and therefore that the prevalency of them might be prevented by a rational debate, without having recourse to violence; and if in some few instances they should prevail, there may be danger, lest God should be more provoked by attempting to root them out, by methods so detrimental to human society, and to the cause of truth (*Dem.* 2.); which this objection itself supposes to be the cause of God. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, that if God should give any nation convincing proofs that he would visit it with some extraordinary calamity and judgment, if any particular religion were violated among them, this would indeed alter the case, and justify such a magistrate in fencing it with such penal laws, as in other cases would be unjustifiable; but if a magistrate rashly concludes this to be the case of the people under his government, he is answerable to God for all those injuries which he may do them and religion upon this false supposition; and as for *Christianity*, it does not treat with *nations* as *such*; nor does the New Testament contain declarations of vengeance against the nations rejecting it, however virtuous they may be, but only treats with *particular persons*, as those who shall be finally happy or miserable as it is received or rejected.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To *Dem.* 1. *gr.* 5. it is objected, That it may be kindness to the person suffering, to endeavour by such severity to reclaim him from such notions and practices which (supposing what is generally granted in this debate, the immortality of the soul) may expose him to the danger of eternal ruin.

Ans. It appears by *gr.* 3. of that *Demonstration*, That persecution is not the way to prevent it, but rather to bring on further guilt, by adding hypocrisy to error; and if it be said that by this means at least others are preserved,—it is answered, That the evidence itself may be sufficient, without violence, to preserve men from such gross and dangerous errors as the objection supposes. If it be further pleaded, that the corruption of their natures will lead them to error, if human terrors be not employed to restrain them from it,—it may be answered, Persecution tends to beget a suspicion in the minds of the cause to be supported by it;—the magistrate cannot by any means prevent and cure all the secret abominations of the heart, but many of them must be referred to the judgment of God; and upon this principle it might be allowable to persecute any notion whatsoever, which the fury and uncharitableness of the magistrate might call a damnable error.

SCHOLIUM 3.

To *gr.* 2. *Dem.* 1. it is objected, That severity may bring men to examine,—and examination may introduce a rational conviction.

Ans. Arguments so offered are not likely to work upon the mind;—and the magistrate seems to have done his part, if he has taken care that the argument should be fairly, clearly, and strongly proposed; nor is it worth while to risk so much evil for the sake of people that will not be persuaded to inquire,—especially since the generality of such people usually go into the prevailing religion, which is that of the magistrate, and rest there.

Grot. de Jure, 2. 20. 44. *Shaftesbury's Characteristics*, vol. iii. p. 107. *Locke's Essay*, 4. xvi. 4.

SCHOLIUM 4.

To the argument of *Dem.* 2. it is generally replied, That none are obliged to use violence in defence of their religion, but those whose religion is true; but then the question returns, Who is that person? Every man will say it is he; and the controversy will be eternal, and all the mischief arising from it perpetual, unless some one person or body of men can give the world convincing proof that they are in the right; and then there will be no further room for persecution, even on the principles of our adversaries.

Bayle's Philos. Commentary on Luke xiv. 23. *Compl. Scrm. on Exped. of Rev.* p. 17—21.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Many insist upon the right of punishing those who *teach* false religions, though they confess that men are not to be obliged to profess the true; but seeing a man may think himself obliged in conscience to endeavour the propagation of a religion, as well as himself to believe and practise it, most of the reasonings in both *Demonstrations* will take place here. Nevertheless, we readily allow that the magistrate, or any religious community, may deprive a teacher of any salary or emolument, given him at first as a teacher of truth, if he appear in the judgment of that person or society to become a teacher of error;—but this by no means comes within the case condemned in the proposition.

Scottish Confess. Pref. p. 52—58. *Old Whig*, No. iv. p. 37, 38.

SCHOLIUM 6.

The doctrines of Atheism, human sacrifices, and community of women or goods, are so evidently detrimental to society, that many who have in general condemned penal laws in religion, have allowed them with regard to these, as well as to those who deny the essential difference between virtue and vice.

We readily allow, that if by any *overt act* in consequence of these doctrines, any subjects of the society be injured, the aggressor ought to be severely punished, and his pretences to conscience to be admitted as no excuse in these cases, or any others; but these notions are so notoriously absurd, that there is little danger that upon a free examination they should prevail, especially in a civilized country; and the danger there would be of admitting persecution on any pretence whatsoever, seems an equivalent for the damage the public would sustain, by permitting them to be publicly defended while they reached no further than speculation.

Alliance between Church and State, p. 118—121. *Old Whig*, vol. i. No. xiii. xiv. xvi. xviii. xxxvi.

SCHOLIUM 7.

If a body of men, as the Papists among us, hold principles which will not allow them to give the government security for their peaceable behaviour, and yet bring them under strong suspicion of being engaged in designs subversive of it, the government may in that case weaken them by heavier taxations than are laid upon other subjects; especially if the probable suspicion of their disaffection puts the public to any additional charge; and it seems only so far as this principle will justify it, that our laws against the Papists can be vindicated, on the foot of natural religion, not now to inquire into any supposed revelation.

Sermons against Popery, at Salters Hall, vol. i. p. 36—38. *Locke on Tol.* Let. 1. *pass. Dod. Serm. on Persec.* p. 6—19. 20—28. *Old Whig*, vol. i. No. xi.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Some have represented all encouragement given to one religious profession in preference to another, as a degree of persecution; but this seems to be carrying the matter into a contrary extreme. Both a regard to the honour of God and the good of society, (which surely the magistrate is not the only person under no obligation to,) must engage him to desire and labour that his people may be instructed in what he takes to be truth; for which purpose it will be necessary that some provision be made for those that so instruct them, preferable to other instructors: that he may maintain such out of his private purse, none can doubt; and if he have a discretionary power with respect to any branch of the public revenue, it seems he may apply it to this purpose, even though most of his people were of a different religious persuasion from himself; and for any who teach different doctrines, or will not submit to the ritual he thinks fit to establish, to claim the same emoluments from him, seems an invasion of that right of private judgment, which the magistrate and others joined with him must be allowed to have, as to the manner in which either his revenue or theirs shall be disposed of; but then it must be allowed that it will be matter of duty and prudence in the magistrate, and those that join with him, to make his establishment as large as he can; that no worthy and good men, who might as established teachers be useful to the public, may unnecessarily be hampered and excluded; and for this he will be answerable to God. If the majority of the people by their representatives join with the magistrate in such establishments, it will be the duty of the minority, though they cannot in conscience conform themselves, yet to be thankful that they are left in the possession of their own liberty, as by the reasoning above they certainly ought to be. If it be asked, Whether such dissenters may regularly be forced by the magistrate and majority to assist in maintaining established teachers whom they do not approve? it is answered, That this will stand upon the same footing with their contributing towards the expense of a war which they think not necessary or prudent. If no such coercive power were admitted, it is probable that covetousness would drive many into dissenting parties, in order to save their tithes or other possessions. So that none can reasonably blame a government for requiring such general contributions; and in this case, it seems fit it should be yielded to, as the determination of those to whose guardianship these dissenters have committed themselves and their possessions; but if the majority disapprove of the conduct of their governor in this respect, it must stand upon the same footing with the right of resistance in any other case, in which the people apprehended themselves to be betrayed by their governor.

Dunlop's Preface to Scottish Confess. Ahorn. Tracts, p. 170—176. *Furneaux's Letters to Mr. Justice Blackstone*, Let. 1, latter part.

LECTURE LXXXVIII.

PROPOSITION LXXVIII.

Virtue prohibits any man to put a period to his own life.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Self-murder plainly implies a want of reverence

for God, and resignation to his will, who is the Lord of life and death, and has assigned to every man his post in life, to be maintained till he shall dismiss him from it.

2. It is generally injurious to the public, in defrauding it of a member who might some way or other be useful to it, and introducing an example which might be very pernicious.

3. It brings great distress, and often great infamy, on surviving relatives and friends.

4. It argues a dishonourable weakness of mind, in not being able to endure the calamities of life, which many others, whose passions are well governed, support with serenity and cheerfulness.

5. If there be a future state (which we shall afterwards prove) it may, in consequence of the preceding arguments, bring irreparable damage on the person himself, who dies in an action highly displeasing to God, and cuts off the possibility of further preparation.

1, 5. 6. Self-murder is contrary to the duty we owe to God, to ourselves, and our fellow-creatures, by the preceding propositions, and therefore contrary to virtue. *Q. E. D.*

Watts against Self-Murder, p. 4—8, 39—41, 47—52; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 358, 359, and p. 368, 369. *Clarke of Nat. and Rev. Rel.* p. 207—211. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. iv. § 19. *Cic. Somn. Scip. ap. Off.* p. 229. *Græv.* c. iii. ed. ibid. *Tusc. Disp.* lib. i. c. xxx. *Grotius*, p. 1150. *Obrect.* tom. ii. p. 325—327. Geneva edit. *Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 17—28. *Spirit of Laws*, vol. i. p. 145. vol. ii. p. 29. *Grove's Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 274—280.*

COROLLARY 1.

All lawful means are to be used to preserve our lives; for not to preserve is to destroy.

COROLLARY 2.

If bringing any temporary disorder upon ourselves may be the probable means of preserving life, virtue will not only permit but require us to do it, though it may be attended with some hazard, provided that hazard be less than would arise from omitting it; and if *inoculation* for the small-pox be lawful, it is on these principles.

Soame of Inocul. pass. Sowden on ditto, pass.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To *Dem. gr.* 1. it is objected, 1. That life was given as a *benefit*; and therefore may be returned when it ceases to be so.

Ans. It was not given as a benefit merely to the person that enjoys it, but as a *trust*, to be improved for the good of others,—God intending, in the creation of each creature, not merely the happiness of that individual himself, but of the whole system of which he makes a part. This plainly follows from *Prop.* 45.

2. That we are such inconsiderable creatures, that there is no reason to believe that God will be displeased with what affects the order of nature so little as our death would do.—But this argument would conclude for killing ourselves or each other at pleasure, and, indeed, at once overthrow the basis of all morality and virtue.

3. That we may conclude God gives us leave to retire, when our continuance in life will answer no good purpose;—but to this it is answered, We can never say that this is the case; since we may be sometimes unexpectedly recovered from great calamities,—or even when we lie under them, may be very serviceable to others, by affording them examples of patience and resignation. God alone is capable of judging certainly when our usefulness is quite over, and therefore his orders are to be waited.

4. As for *Gildon's* observation, That we do not come into life by our own consent, as a soldier does into an army,—the answer is obvious: That God, as our Creator, has a much greater right to our humble obedience, than a general can have to that of a soldier, how willingly soever he may have enlisted himself into his service.

Blount's Orac. of Reas. p. 7—13; *In his Life*, p. 10, 11. *Lettres Persan.* vol. ii. No. lxiv. lxvii. *Passeran's Phil. Enq. pass. Fitzosb. Lett.* No. xxii. *Montaigne's Ess.* vol. ii. c. iii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To *gr.* 2. it is objected, That some people cannot in any respect be serviceable to the public; or that, if they could, they have a right to retire from the community when they see fit.

Ans. This can only be allowed when there may be a prospect of at least equal happiness to mankind by the remove; otherwise the general laws of benevolence oblige them to a continuance, and how this can be the case in self-murder will be hard to show.

Watts, ibid. p. 12—14; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 360.

SCHOLIUM 3.

To prevent a tormenting death (whether natural or violent) certainly approaching, or the violation of chastity, seems the most plausible excuse for suicide. Yet as to the first of these, it is to be considered, (besides what was hinted *Schol.* 1.) that to die in torment for the sake of truth, is a glorious example of virtue, which may be exceedingly useful; and humbly to yield to a severe sentence of

* A Treatise on Suicide, in two volumes, octavo, has lately been written by the Rev. Mr. Moir. It may be the smallest volume entered at every quarter sessions in England, and the only remedy for the appalling sin it contemplates is not mentioned, whether sacred or profane, or even slightly referred to or quoted. I have not encouraged it by my subscription, nothing both of the title-page, in Renshaw's New Illustrations

death for any crime committed, may deter others from it much more effectually than self-violence could do, and may be on the whole an action the most pious and the most beneficial a man can in these circumstances perform. As to the *latter*, such violence would not destroy the character and usefulness of the person suffering by it; or if it did, it were to be borne with submission as a trial coming from the hands of Providence.

Watts, ibid. p. 65—69; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 372, 373.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Nevertheless, it seems that if the magistrate condemns a man to death, and gives him his choice whether he will die by his own hand, or by a more severe execution from the hands of another, he may in that case execute himself. *Athen. Oracle.*

LECTURE LXXXIX.

PROPOSITION LXXIX.

God is true in all his declarations, and faithful in all his engagements to his creatures, if he enters into any engagements with them.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 54, 55. 1. Virtue requires *us* to be true to our declarations, and faithful to our promises.

2. Our obligations to truth and fidelity in our converse with our fellow-creatures, does not arise from our own weakness and dependence, but from the general laws of benevolence; and if a being, beyond all possibility of receiving any personal advantage from falsehood and treachery, were to be guilty of it, he would be so much the more inexcusable, and therefore so much the more odious.

1, 2. *Prop.* 14. *Cor.* 3. 3. *Valet propositio.*

Abern. Serm. vol. ii. No. v. p. 229—231; Dublin edit. p. 216—218; London edit. p. 124, 125. *Tillots.* vol. ii. p. 654; *Serm.* 87. p. 579, 580. fourth edit. *Wilk. Nat. Rel.* p. 140—142. seventh edit.

SCHOLIUM 1.

If there be any force in what is said *Prop.* 54. *Schol.* 1. to prove that there is a kind of *instinct* in favour of truth rooted in our nature, that may afford some presumption that God, the Author of our nature, is a Lover of truth, as the *benevolent* instinct implanted in our nature may be an argument of his benevolence.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Many have questioned whether God, by the veracity and fidelity of his nature, be obliged to fulfil his *threatenings*. It is urged, that promises give another a right of a claim to what has been promised; but for a person not to accomplish his threatening, is to be *better* than his word; and consequently it would be no reflection on the Divine Being to suppose it thus with regard to him.

But it seems this question is to be determined by the manner in which the threatening is delivered. If any action be forbidden by God on such a penalty, and no further declaration be added, he does not seem to be bound by it; but if he has in any case added a declaration, that he will in fact make his threatenings as well as his promises the rule of his final proceedings, it seems inconsistent with his *veracity*, though not his *fidelity*, to act contrary to them; especially if we consider, that as there is no change in the views and purposes of God, if he fail to act according to such minatory declarations, he must have intended to act contrary to them even at the time he made them;—which seems a mean and dishonourable artifice, infinitely beneath the Majesty of God.

Tillots. vol. i. *Serm.* xxxv. p. 353, 354; edit. 1704. p. 413, 414. *Watts's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 146, 147; *Works*, vol. i. p. 218.

DEFINITION LIX.

That governor is said to administer his government with JUSTICE, who, in proportion to his legal power, distributes good to the virtuous, and evil to the vicious; or, in other words, treats his subjects on the whole according to their characters.

Abern. vol. ii. No. v. p. 180—186. Lond. edit.; p. 193—197. Dublin edit.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Justice sometimes signifies "Giving to every one that which is his own, or that which he has in reason a right to," *i. e.* which virtue requires he should have; or, in other words, treating him as virtue requires he should be treated. Now, in this sense of it, it is *universal rectitude*. (*Def.* 38.) Sometimes it stands distinguished from *charity*; and then he is said to be *a just* man who gives to every one that to which he has by law a claim; and he is *good* or *charitable* who abounds in such good offices as human laws do not oblige him.

Fost. Serm. vol. i. No. ii. p. 27—35.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Justice, as it respects *men*, is often divided into *commutative* and *distributative* justice: the former consists in an equal exchange of benefits; the latter in an equal distribution of rewards and punishments.

Bury-street Lect. edit. i. vol. i. p. 82, 83; *Serm.* iv. p. 71, 72. edit. 2.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It will not follow from the definition given above,

* Mr. Hume, in his Essays, vol. 2. on the Principles of Morals, [illegible] p. 213 &c. founds the rules of [illegible] entirely on [illegible] and others have done before him.

that every governor is unjust who does not carry the execution of the law to its utmost rigour upon offenders; all governments allowing a power of pardoning, in cases in which the governor shall judge it most agreeable to the public good to do it; and as the public good is the supreme law, justice is no further a virtue than as it consists with it: but as injustice is always a term of reproach, it is not to be applied to those instances of favour which, though contrary to the *letter* of the law, are consistent with and subservient to its general design.

PROPOSITION LXXX.

God is, with respect to his dispensations, on the whole just to all his rational and free creatures.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. All rational and free creatures are the proper subjects of moral government, *i. e.* are capable of being governed by a law, enforced by the sanction of rewards and punishments.

1. 2. It is in itself highly congruous that they should be treated with favour or severity, as virtue or vice do on the whole prevail in their tempers and conduct.

2. 3. It would be justly accounted an infamous thing, for any created governor to act contrary to the rule of justice, in his treatment of any such creatures committed to his government.

4. The most excellent creatures might in some imaginable instances lie under some temptations of this kind, to which an omnipotent God cannot possibly be exposed.

3. 4. 5. It would be most dishonourable to conceive of the Divine Being as acting contrary to those rules, and dispensing final good and evil without regard to the moral character of his creatures.

Gr. 5. *Prop.* 44. *Cor.* 3. 6. *Valet propositio.*
Abern. Serm. vol. ii. No. v. *præs.* p. 186—280. Lond. edit.; p. 197—220. Dublin edit.

COROLLARY.

GOD is just in all his dispensations to mankind. *Prop.* 16.

Tillots. vol. ii. p. 647. *Wilk. Nat. of Rel.* p. 139, 140. p. 123, 124. seventh edit. *Butler's Anal.* part i. c. iii. vii. *Bourn's Sermons*, vol. ii. No. ii. p. 123, 124.

SCHOLIUM.

The only considerable objection against this, arises from the unequal distribution of good and evil observable in the present administration of Providence; but it may be sufficiently answered by considering,

1. That we are often mistaken in the judgment we form concerning the characters and conditions of men.

2. That the interest of particular persons may sometimes clash with that of society, in such a manner as that public justice will require that for the present the former be sacrificed to the latter.

3. That if a future state be admitted, it will solve those phenomena which otherwise would appear the most unaccountable; and perhaps those inequalities may be permitted, to convince us of it:—but of this, more hereafter.

Scott's Christian Life, vol. ii. p. 248—265. vol. i. p. 284—291. *Relig. of Nat.* p. 110—114. *Abern. Serm.* No. v. p. 209—216. Dublin edit.; London edit. p. 197—205. *Bourn's Sermons*, vol. ii. No. iii.

LECTURE XC.

DEFINITION LX.

He is said to REPENT of a vicious action that he has committed, who is so convinced of the folly of it, as heartily to wish that he had not committed it, and stedfastly resolves that he will no more repeat it.

Tillots. Sermons, vol. iii. p. 63—69; Serm. cxiii. p. 61—66. 4th edit.

COROLLARY.

Wherever there is true repentance for an injury offered to another person, the penitent will be ready to make restitution, so far as it is in his power to do it.

Tillots. vol. iii. Serm. cxvi. p. 85—90; p. 80—85. edit. 4. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. iii. c. i. § 5—11. *Grot. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. xvii. § 13—17. *Granada's Mem.* p. 119—121.

SCHOLIUM.

If it be hereafter proved that every man who has committed a vicious action is obliged to repent of it, then he who by an unjust war has deprived any of their rights is obliged to make restitution; and if any possessions came into the hands of a conqueror in a just war, which did not of right belong to the persons from whom he took them, such a conqueror seems obliged to restore them when the claim of the former owner is made and proved; proper allowance being made for the trouble and expense of recovering them.

Grot. de Jure, lib. iii. c. x. § 4—6. c. xvi. § 1—3. *Conti's Will. ap. Life*, p. 7—14.

DEFINITION LXI.

Those rules of action which a man *may discover* by the use of his reason to be agreeable to the nature of things, and on which his happiness will appear to him to depend, may be called the LAW OF NATURE; and when these are considered as intimations of the Divine will and purpose, they may be called the NATURAL LAWS OF GOD.—Vid. *Def.* 52.

Cocceneii. Puff. 1st Suppl. c. i. § 10, 19, 20.

DEFINITION LXII.

That part of the law of nature which a man, by the exercise of his reason, *has actually discovered*, is to him at that time THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

COROLLARY.

The light of nature and the law of nature may to the same, and yet more evidently to different, persons be different; yet they can in no instance be contradictory to each other.

SCHOLIUM.

If by the *law of nature*, be meant in general the obligation arising from the nature of things, it can in all its extent be known only to Him to whom the nature of things is universally known, *i. e.* to God; and with respect to him, it can only improperly and figuratively be called a *law*, since there is no superior whose will is thereby signified to him.—Vid. *Def.* 52.

Conyb. against Tind. p. 11, 13—17. *Leland against Tind.* vol. i. c. ii.

PROPOSITION LXXXI.

The natural law of God requires the practice of universal virtue.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 44. *Cor.* 1. 1. Since God is a Being of perfect rectitude, it must be his will that creatures capable of virtue should practise it in all its branches.

Prop. 80. 2. As he is the just Governor of the world, he will, on the whole, dispense good or evil as virtue has been cultivated, or as it has been violated.

Gr. 1, 2. *Def.* 61. 3. *Valet propositio.*

Cic. de Rep. ap. Lactant. quod vide ap. Middlet. Life of Cic. vol. ii. p. 556—558. 4to edit; vol. iii. p. 351, 352. 8vo edit. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 8—77.

COROLLARY 1.

A due reverence to the Divine Being, as well as a regard to our own happiness, will require us attentively to study the law of nature; especially seeing there are so many cases in which it is exceedingly difficult to determine what it requires.

Sykes's Connect. c. i. ii.

COROLLARY 2.

The natural law of God must require that those who have been guilty of vice should repent of it. Vid. *Def.* 60.

COROLLARY 3.

This natural and universal law of God is of infinitely greater efficacy to restrain vice and promote virtue than any human laws can be; since, whereas in human laws, *punishments* are generally the only sanctions, (the magistrate being neither capable of judging of the degree of virtue in any action, (compare *Prop.* 49. *Cor.* 2.) nor having a fund out of which he can universally reward men in proportion to it,) the Divine law has the sanction of *rewards* likewise, and extends itself to what the civilians call *duties of imperfect obligation*, *i. e.* those which cannot fall under the cognizance of human governors.

Warb. Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 12—21. *Fitzosb.* Lett. No. xlvi.

COROLLARY 4.

It is highly for the interest of states that the great principles of natural religion should be believed, *viz.* the being and providence of God, and the certainty of an exact retribution either here or hereafter; since it is on these principles alone that the efficacy of such supposed laws must depend.

Warb. ibid. p. 22—25. *Watts of Civil Power in Rel.* p. 27—29; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 139, 140.

COROLLARY 5.

For any to pour contempt upon this natural law of God, under pretence of extolling any supposed Divine revelation, or intimation of God's will in an extraordinary manner, will appear very absurd;—since our obligation to receive any such supposed extraordinary discoveries made by God, must depend upon our knowledge of his moral perfections; and no discovery can be supposed so particular, as not to need the use of reasoning upon the principles of the law of nature, in explaining and applying it to particular cases.

Hodges's Elihu, Preface, p. 23—25. *Dove's Creed*, p. 9, 10. 13.

SCHOLIUM 1.

That it will not at all follow from the usefulness of religion to communities, that therefore it is merely an engine of state-policy, is in a most sagacious and conclusive manner shown in

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. lib. iii. § 6. p. 443—471. part ii. p. 253—286.

SCHOLIUM 2.

From the second *Corollary* arises a most difficult and important question, *viz.* Whether the justice of God will permit him to forgive the penitent? at least, whether we can have such assurance of it as cheerfully to depend upon pardon, how great soever our offences may have been? Some have asserted the contrary in the strongest terms; and urge that there is an infinite degree of evil in sin, from which it is impossible that any creature should recover himself; and that the infinite goodness of God must make every the least violation of the laws of eternal order and rectitude an incurable evil; but others have universally asserted, that we may on the principles of the light of nature be certain that God will, and must upon repentance, fully and freely pardon every sin; but, on the whole, we must answer in a medium between those two opinions.

1. There seems some probable reason to believe

that at least *some* sins may be forgiven by God, considering the known goodness of the Divine Being, and especially from observing the provision he has made in the world of nature for the necessities and calamities of mankind, even of many which are brought upon men by their own folly; and indeed had God determined to punish every sin without mercy, we can hardly believe that such a benevolent Being would have placed mankind in circumstances of such strong temptation from within and without, that not a person on earth who is arrived at years of understanding should be free from it. Nevertheless,

2. We cannot *certainly* and *universally* conclude that sin shall be pardoned on repentance; for the end of punishment is not merely, as some have rashly asserted, the amendment of the offender, (though even some punishments might be inflicted upon repentance, to make him more cautious, and to preserve him from future guilt,) but principally the maintaining the honour of the Divine government, and the admonition of others; now it is impossible for us certainly to say, how far the right of his government and the interest of the whole rational creation may require severity, even against penitents themselves, especially in cases of notorious provocation. So that, on the whole, it seems that unassisted reason could give us at best but a wavering and uncertain hope that *all* sin was pardonable, though it might show it to be highly probable that *some* sins were so, or that the penalty inflicted for them might not be the utter destruction of the penitent.

Tind. Christianity as old, &c. c. iv. Conyb. against Tind. p. 114—131. *or Leland against Tind.* vol. i. c. vi. *Balguy on Redempt. Fost. Disc. on Nat. Rel.* vol. i. c. viii. *Hallet on Script.* vol. ii. 326—343. *Taylor against Deism*, c. i. p. 1, &c. *Watts's Strength and Weakness*, &c. p. 72—87; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 236—242. *Butler's Anal.* part ii. c. v. § 2—4. *Howe's Living Temple*, part ii. c. vi. § 3. c. vi. § 5, 6, 10. *Leibn. Theod.* § 73, 74. *Sykes on Redem.* p. 5—19.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, though it remains dubious how far God will pardon sin upon repentance, yet repentance will appear reasonable,—since, to be sure, if any pardon is to be expected, it must be received in that way; for it would be utterly unbecoming the dignity of the Divine Being, and his character as the Universal Judge, always to spare and always to bless an obstinate and incorrigible rebel; and if any punishment is after all to be expected, it must surely be much better to meet it in a posture of humble submission, than with a vain and obstinate resistance and opposition to a Being infinitely superior to us, and who can continue us in a capacity of feeling punishment as long as he pleases; for some mitigation of which punishment we might at least hope, in consequence of such humble submission as is recommended above.

Collib. of Natural and Revealed Religion, part i. § 8. p. 27—35.

PART IV.

OF THE IMMORTALITY AND IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL; ITS ORIGINAL, THE GENERAL OBLIGATIONS TO VIRTUE, AND STATE OF IT IN THE WORLD.

LECTURE XCI.

DEFINITION LXIII.

THE DEATH of the MAN is the universal cessation both of perception and of animal motion, and particularly respiration, and the circulation of the blood in the human body.

SCHOLIUM.

Though perception and animal motion are not necessarily connected,—yet, so far as our observation reaches, the latter being never found without the former, it seemed not improper to join them as we have done in the definition.

DEFINITION LXIV.

The DEATH of the MIND is the utter destruction of its percipient and thinking powers.

PROPOSITION LXXXII.

The soul does not die with the body, but survives

in a state of greater happiness or misery than before, as it has behaved in a virtuous or vicious manner.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Prop. 80. 1. As God is just, he will take care that, on the whole, his creatures shall be more or less happy or miserable, according to the degree in which virtue or vice prevails in their characters.

2. No such distinction is here made correspondent to their characters; but virtuous men are often exposed to the greatest distress, whilst the worst of men live and die in a series of prosperity.

Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. iii. § 32—35.

1, 2. 3. There must be a future state of retribution. *Q. E. D.*

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 251—257. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 199—203. *Balguy's Six Sermons*, p. 81—86. first edit. *Balg. Sermons*, third edit. p. 396—401. *Burlamaqui Elementa Juris Naturalis*, part ii. c. xii. § 1—14. c. xiii. § 1, and 11—15. *Price on Morals*, p. 449—466.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, That the secret pleasure attending virtue is its own reward, and renders the good man happier in his most calamitous state, than the wicked man is in his greatest prosperity.

Ans. 1. That the support and comfort of a good man in his troubles, greatly depends on the expectation of a future state; and that this expectation being his greatest encouragement to persevere in virtue under its greatest disadvantages, we can hardly suppose that a wise, just, and good God would so order it, that the great foundation and support of virtue should be a false and vain expectation.

2. There are some sufferings of flesh and blood to which good men, even for conscience' sake, have often been brought, so extreme, that without some extraordinary support from God, it is morally impossible the pleasure of rational thought should be enjoyed under them; and this case would be a sufficient answer to the objection, unless such supports were granted; which, if they were, as they arise from views of a future state, the faithfulness of God, as well as those attributes mentioned before, would seem to be injured, by supposing there were no such state.

3. Good men, in calmer seasons of life, often find the inward satisfaction arising from the consciousness of their own virtue interrupted, whilst they labour under disquieting doubts and fears as to the state and prevalency of it; and it is unreasonable to suppose that God would leave their minds under such distresses, if the present pleasure of virtue were its only reward. On the other hand, bad men often outgrow the remorse of conscience; so that those who are the most experienced in wickedness, and so deserve the heaviest punishments, do, so far as we can judge, suffer much less than others not equally criminal, and owe their tranquillity to their wickedness.

4. That all this passes in private, and is little taken notice of; whereas one would naturally expect, that the justice of God should have its public triumphs, especially over those who, being in exalted stations of life, and therefore under the greatest obligation to virtue, have acted a very guilty part without appearing to be in any measure proportionably miserable; and in favour of those who have suffered very hard things for virtue, without any visible retribution, and have perhaps even died in its defence.

Relig. of Nat. p. 203—205. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 257—261. part ii. p. 108—111. *Balg. Six Serm.* p. 88—91. *Baxt. Reas. of Christianity*, part i. c. xiv. § 1. *ap. Op.* vol. ii. p. 46—48. *Fost. Disc. on Nat. Rel.* vol. i. c. ix. *Parker's Law of Nature*, part. i. § 31.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Others urge that this goes on a false supposition that there are some good men; whereas the best being but imperfectly virtuous, can claim no future rewards.

Ans. 1. It must be acknowledged that the best of men cannot in strict justice claim any reward from God as a debt, seeing they owe all to him; especially are they destitute of such a claim, when they have in any instance failed of the duty they owe him, as the best here do. Nevertheless,

2. The vast difference there is in the characters of men, will require that there should be some greater difference in the manner of treating them than there is in the present state, where there is no proportion between their suffering and present demerit.

3. That considering the extraordinary progress some make in virtue, and consequently how fit they are for the most sublime and rational happiness, and how unavoidable some degree of imperfection is, considering the constitution of our nature and the temptations of life, there seems some probable though not certain reason to hope, that God will hereafter reward those who are in the main his faithful servants, with some greater degrees of felicity than they have here enjoyed.

Hallet on Script. vol. i. p. 226—229. and p. 236—240. *Grove's Thoughts on a Future State*, c. vii. p. 340, &c. *Kenrick's Poems*, p. 148—150.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed, that reason does not certainly assure us that all good men do *immediately* pass into a state of happiness; least of all could we conclude it in favour of those penitents who have been reclaimed but a little before their death, after a long course of vice, for which they

have met with no remarkable calamity. It might seem more probable with regard to such, that they should either suffer an utter extinction of being, or pass through some state of purgation, whereby at least some further honour might also be done to the Divine violated law.

Virg. Æn. lib. vi. ver. 719—748. *Plato's Phæd.* § 11. E. *Cyrus's Trav.* vol. ii. p. 110. 8vo. *Eschan. Dial.* iii. § 19—21. *Jortin's Dissertations*, No. vi. *Pindar's Second Olympiad. by West.*

LECTURE XCII.

DEMONSTRATION II.

1. The human mind is framed with capacities for perpetual improvement; whereas brutes soon attain to the utmost perfection of which their natures are capable.

1. 2. It seems not consistent with the Divine Wisdom to form so excellent a being for so short a duration, and such low employments, as are to be found in this mortal life.

1. 3. The human mind is formed with a capacity for far greater happiness than it can enjoy in the present state.

4. Men are necessarily exposed to a great variety of evils, from which even innocent infants are not exempted; and perhaps it may be acknowledged, that were immortality to be absolutely despaired of, the state of brutes would appear less calamitous and pitiable than that of men; at least that it would be so, were the whole human species to disbelieve a future state.

5. There is a strong desire of immortality possessing our natures, and it is strongest in the most virtuous minds.

3, 4, 5. 6. The circumstances of men in the present world are such, as we can hardly reconcile with the Divine Goodness, unless we suppose some other and better state of existence; especially considering that in others and those much inferior things, there is a correspondence between natural desire and the possibility at least of enjoyment.

Gr. 2. 6. *Prop.* 12. 15. 7. The wisdom and goodness of God join in requiring that there should be a future state, and therefore it is reasonable to expect it. *Q. E. D.*

Spect. vol. ii. No. cxi. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 208—211. *Clarke at Boyle's Lectures*, p. 260. *Howe's Vanity of Man, &c. pass prac. ap. Op.* vol. i. p. 640—650; 8vo edit. p. 20—46. *Hallet on Script.* vol. i. p. 256—258, 272—289. *Fost. Serm.* vol. i. No. xv. p. 406—408. *Baly. Ser. Serm.* p. 66—69 *in Works*, vol. i. p. 380—384. *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence*, No. xi. *Grove against Hallet*, c. iv. *Young's Night Thoughts*, No. vii. *Kenrick's Poems*, p. 161—166.

SCHOLIUM.

Nearly akin to this argument is that which Mr. Balguy draws from the sense of *friendship* rooted in the human heart; which engages virtuous friends to wish to continue for ever in the enjoyment of each other, and renders the thoughts of a final separation so shocking, that it is not to be imagined the great and benevolent Author of Nature should have implanted such a passion, had he not intended to leave room for the gratification of it; and it may further be observed, that whatever weight there is in this argument is increased, by considering that the notion of the mortality of the soul will be an additional grief to a virtuous mind, when he considers, that, upon this supposition, he must not only be deprived himself of the enjoyment of his friends, but they likewise must entirely perish, and lose all the delight which growing science and virtue have given, and which they seemed fitted for receiving, in yet further and more exalted degrees;—to which we may add, on like principles, that the love of God growing in the virtuous mind, will make the thought of the extinction of being more painful in proportion to that advance,—as all enjoyment of God must of course cease; and the importance of this thought both illustrates Balguy's remark, and is strongly illustrated by it.

Balguy's Ser. Serm. p. 71—75; *Works*, vol. i. p. 386—390.

DEMONSTRATION III.

1. The lives of men, according to the ordinary course of nature, are continually in the power of themselves and others.

2. If the soul were mortal, a desperate villain might immediately deprive the most virtuous man of his being; and with it, of all the further rewards which his virtue might have expected and received.

1. 3. Such a person might also, upon that supposition, put a period to all further punishment intended for his crimes and due to them, by laying violent hands upon himself.

2, 3. 4. The justice of God might, in a great measure, be frustrated, if the soul were mortal.

Prop. 31, and 80. 5. Seeing God is an omnipotent and just Being, we have reason to conclude that his justice cannot be frustrated.

4, 5. 6. The soul is immortal. *Q. E. D.*

Watts's Relig. Jud. No. lxxv. p. 334—336; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 594.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it may be objected, That God will, in an extraordinary manner, interpose, to prevent such

deaths as would interfere with the distribution of justice.

Ans. 1. So far as we can judge, many such deaths do in fact happen.

2. It would be unreasonable to expect a course of things to be established, in which, without perpetual extraordinary interpositions, the greatest irregularities must happen: this would reflect as much upon the wisdom, as the other on the justice, of the Divine Being.

Watts, ib. p. 336, 337; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 595.

SCHOLIUM 2.

What is most solid and important in the argument for a future state, from the impossibility of governing the world without the belief of it, seems to coincide with this argument, or *Demonstration* 1.

Baxt. Reas. of Christ. part. i. c. xiv. § 5, 6; *ap. opt.* vol. ii. p. 49—51. *Barrow's Works*, vol. ii. p. 334—337. *Hallet's Notes on Scripture*, vol. i. p. 288—297. *Grove on a Fut. State*, c. v.

DEMONSTRATION IV.

1. There is in man a certain affection of mind, or principle of action, which is commonly called *conscience*, whereby we are capable of considering ourselves as under a divine law, and accountable to God for our conduct.

1. 2. Hence arises self-approbation, or self-condemnation, in men, as they apprehend their actions have been agreeable or disagreeable to the divine law.

3. The force of this often appears so great, that the worst of men cannot, at least without great difficulty, divest themselves of it; and that even when they are in such circumstances as to have least to fear from their fellow-creatures, and especially in their dying moments.

Juvenal, Satire 13, ver. 192, &c.; *Satire* 1, ver. 196.

2, 3. 4. It is exceedingly probable that this principle is intended by God to intimate a future state of retribution, since it is chiefly to that it seems to refer.

1, 4. 5. Both the wisdom and truth of God seem to require that there should be a future state, in some respect answerable to this apprehension. *Q. E. D.*

Tillots. Serm. vol. iii. p. 124, 125; p. 119, 120. 4th edit. *Barrow*, vol. ii. p. 334, 335. *Hallet on Script.* vol. i. p. 259—263. *Fost. Serm.* vol. ii. No. iii. p. 55—68. *Balg. Six Serm.* p. 75—79. *Vol. of Sermons*, p. 390—394. *Juvenal. Sat.* xiii. v. 192, &c.; *Sat.* i. ver. 196.

DEMONSTRATION V.

1. It appears that most nations, not excepting the most barbarous, have generally believed the doctrine in the proposition; and it is observable that most of their *funeral rites*, so far as we are informed concerning them, seem to imply some apprehension of it; as that very ancient kind of idolatry, the worship of the dead, (as well as all pretences to the art of *necromancy*, which were plainly founded on this persuasion,) contains a further and most evident proof of it;—to which we may also add, that the *lesser initiation* of the ancients seems to have been a sort of machinery, in which, especially in the *Eleusinian mysteries*, the seats both of the blessed and damned were represented.

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. l. ii. § 4. *Grove on a Future State*, c. vi.

1. 2. The doctrine was probably inferred from some arguments level to every capacity, or it would not have been so universally believed. Compare *Prop.* 17. *Dem.* 2.

2. 3. It is reasonable to believe it. *Q. E. D.*

Tillots. vol. iii. p. 116—118; 111—113. 4th ed. *Stev. against Pop.* Serm. vii. p. 192—194. *Bp. Sherlock's Disc.* vol. i. No. vi. *Customs of the East Ind. and Jews comp. Art.* vii. p. 39—42. *Balg. Six Serm.* p. 70, 71. *Vol. of Sermons*, p. 384—386.

LECTURE XCIII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is objected, That a great many ancient philosophers disbelieved the immortality of the soul, and some of the ancients tell us, it was first taught by the Egyptians.

Ans. The common people seem to have had a firmer persuasion of it than the philosophers, many of whom do indeed speak dubiously about it; and as for others of them, the accounts they give of it are very low and absurd, and several of the arguments which they bring for the support of it are weak and inconclusive; and it may by the way be observed, that in Plato's Phædon, the argument in the first demonstration, though so proper to the circumstances of Socrates at that time, is strangely omitted; nor do any that I remember mention it before Seneca.

Dr. Warburton has lately stated this matter very particularly; and undertaken to prove, though the philosophers did indeed believe the doctrine of the soul's immortality, they did not believe that of the future state of rewards and punishments; which he proves to be inconsistent with the essential principles, not only of the Epicureans, but also of the Pythagoreans, Peripatetics, Platonists, and Stoics, particularly with the doctrine of the *το ἐν*, or the refusion of souls into their common eternal prin-

ciple; and also with that doctrine, which taught the Deity to be incapable of that resentment without which they supposed he could not punish; so that all those passages in which these philosophers inculcate future retribution, are, according to this ingenious author, to be looked upon merely as popular accommodations to doctrines commonly received; or at most, as what the philosophers thought fit to teach, though they did not themselves believe them, in a view to their being useful to society: and he imagines that the distinction between the *exoteric* and *esoteric* doctrines is of great importance here. On the contrary, Dr. Sykes and Mr. Bott suppose these philosophers really to have believed a future retribution, and that the difference between the external and internal doctrine, was only in the manner of illustrating the kinds of those rewards and punishments which they asserted in both; and the doctrine of the *το ἐν* is so explained by Bott as to be consistent with that of retribution.

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. l. iii. § 1—4. *Bott against Warb.* § 2. *Sykes against Warb. Critical Inquiry into the Principles and Practice of the Philosophers concerning a Fut. State, pass.* ***Tillots.*** vol. iii. p. 132—134. *Plato's Phaed. pass.* N. *Taylor of Devm.* p. 80—110. and p. 119—141. *Grot. de Verit.* c. i. § 22. c. ii. § 9. *Whitby's Certainty of Christ. Faith.* c. x. § 11. with Annot. p. 312—315. *Cudworth's Intell. Syst.* c. i. § 45. *Leland on Revelation*, vol. ii. part iii. præs. c. ii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Others account for the phenomenon, by saying that men might *wish*, and therefore *think*, themselves immortal.

Ans. Most who held and taught a future state of distinct personal existence, seemed to think it a state of retribution, which, it is to be feared, it was not their interest to desire; and the fears of it are sometimes spoken of as a burthen; and if, notwithstanding these fears, they wished the soul immortal, it is so much the greater confirmation of *Dem.* 2. *pr.* 5.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The principal objections against this doctrine are reckoned up by Lucretius: but most of them are so evidently weak as not to deserve a particular examination. The most plausible are those that arise from the sensible decay of the faculties of the mind with those of the body, and the supposed impossibility of action and perception without bodily organs: but to these it is replied,

1. That the soul does sometimes continue in full vigour, even when the body is under the greatest disorder, and death immediately approaching.

2. That it may be a law of nature, that while the spirit is united to the body, it should be so affected with the good or bad state of the bodily health as we often see it is; and that the memory should be impaired with age and sickness will not appear at all strange, considering how much it depends on the brain. Vid. *Prop.* 8. *Dem.*

3. That, perhaps, this may be a state of imprisonment to the soul, as many of the philosophers thought; and that when it is set at liberty from the body, it may obtain new and noble ways of perception and action, to us at present unknown.

4. That if a body were necessary, we might more reasonably believe God would give it a new body in the state immediately succeeding this, than suffer its faculties to perish, for the reasons assigned above.

Lucret. l. iii. ver. 418—740. *Polignac's Anti-Lucretius. Rel. of Nat.* p. 194—199. *Cicero's Tusc. Disp.* l. i. § 20. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 79—81. *Plat. Phaed.* § 9, 10. *Rochest. Life*, p. 65—68, and p. 20, 21, 150. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. § 5. præs. p. 395—400. *More's Immort.* l. iii. c. xiv. xv. *Kenrick's Poems*, p. 152—155.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Others attempt to prove the immortality of the soul, from the impossibility of governing the world without such hopes and fears, on the one hand, (vid. *Dem.* 3, *Schol.* 2.) or of God's governing it by a lie on the other, as they say it is plain he in fact does, if there be not a future state. They also argue from God's being the Author of those hopes which arise in the mind of a good man; and from the probability there is that there are other worlds inhabited by spiritual beings, to whom therefore the soul may go, and among whom it may dwell, after the dissolution of the body. It is likewise said, That since we see other beings ripening gradually to perfection, and animal life improved from low beginnings to noble heights,—it is, on the principles of analogy, probable that the human soul shall pass by death into some more elevated state of being, or at least may be a candidate for it:* but as where these arguments are distinct from the former, the premises in some of them are liable to much dispute, and perhaps cannot be all sufficiently made out; and as in others, granting the premises, the conclusion may be disputed, we reckon it enough barely to have suggested these considerations without entering into the more particular examination of them.

Baxt. Works, vol. ii. p. 55, 658. *Butl. Anal.* part. i. c. i. *Young's Night Thoughts.* No. vi. p. 158, 159. edit. 12mo.

* The argument from the soul's complacential inclination or desire of [illegible] capacity of perceiving and acting after death, may be seen in Spectator, vol. viii. No. 487. Baxter on the Soul, vol. i. p. 230—236. Young's Night Thoughts No. 6. p. 148. Lond. edit. 12mo. p. 194—196. Svo. edit.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It may further be questioned, Whether, allowing a future state, it can be proved *eternal* and *immutable*?

Ans. The soul seems originally designed for an eternal duration, on the principles urged in *Dem.* 2. but that the state on which it shall enter at death shall be eternal, the light of Nature does not discover. There is no reason at all to expect eternal rewards for so short and imperfect a virtue as can here be attained; and as for eternal punishments, though some of the heathens did assert them, and many have undertaken to infer them from natural principles, (all moral evil being a breach of order, and every instance and act of it having a natural tendency to harden the soul, universal and perpetual misery must follow, unless God interpose in an extraordinary manner, either to restore the health of the soul, or to end its being,) yet it seems that our natural apprehensions of the Divine Goodness would rather encourage us to hope that he would leave some room for amendment and recovery of happiness, in a future state, or by annihilation would put an end to men's misery, when they appeared humbled by their punishment. But if it should prove that in a future state of chastisement, the sinner should harden himself against God, and go on still in his crimes, perpetual succeeding sins would justify perpetual succeeding punishments; for it is certain, every new crime committed after severe punishment, is on that account so much the more aggravated. The same may be said concerning a series of eternal happiness, in case of continued virtue, and that very consistently with the preceding observation. Vid. *Prop.* 81. *Schol.* 2. *Prop.* 82. *Dem.* 1. *Schol.* 3.

Lucret. lib. i. ver. 108—112. *Taylor on Deism*, p. 149—167. *Joseph. Bell. Judaic.* 3. vii. 5. *Balguy's Serm.* vol. i. p. 409—413.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It may be granted, that the resurrection of the body, whatever change it may be supposed to undergo after death, may be possible to the Divine Power, and may be subservient both to render rewards and punishments the more complete, and the triumphs of Divine Justice more conspicuous than they would otherwise be; but it by no means appears certain by the light of nature.

Lime-str. Lect. vol. ii. p. 376—384. *Gale's Court of the Gent.* part i. lib. iii. c. vii. p. 81, 82; part ii. lib. ii. c. viii. p. 189. *Phocylides*, v. 98—101. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 365—367; p. 372—374. edit. 11. *Boat. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 278—306. *Leland on Revelation*, vol. ii. p. 436—441. *Jackson on Mat. and Spirit*, p. 39, 40.

SCHOLIUM 7.

The Atheist cannot be infallibly certain that there shall be no future state, even though he should believe the existence of the soul to depend on that of the body, or *thought* to be no more than a power resulting from matter so disposed; since that omnipotent chance which according to his principles formed the whole world, may possibly throw together into one body the particles of which he now consists, with such alterations, as to make him capable even of eternal misery, from which no virtue can secure him.

Gurdon at Boyle's Lect. p. 151—163. *Fiddes of Mor. Pref.* p. 12—16.*

LECTURE XCIV.

DEFINITION LXV.

The MIND may be said to be CONFORMAL, if *thought* arise from, and be inseparably connected with, a certain system of matter; so that if such system so arranged exist, *thought* must exist with it, though no distinct being should be produced; or if that system were to be dissolved, or the arrangement of its particles to be altered, *thought* must immediately and necessarily cease with it, unless God were instantaneously to produce some new being which did not before exist.

PROPOSITION LXXXII.

To inquire into the most considerable arguments brought to prove the immateriality of the soul.

DEMONSTRATION I.

Prop. 23. *Cor.* 1. *Prop.* 26 and 41. 1. God is an Immaterial and Almighty Spirit.

1. 2. There is no absurdity in supposing the existence of an immaterial spirit produced by him.

3. If the soul be material, its faculty of thinking must either necessarily arise from the nature and arrangement of its particles, or it must be superadded by God to a system of matter.

Prop. 24. 4. It is in the nature of things entirely inconceivable and incredible that thought should necessarily arise from matter, however figured or moved.

5. To say that a power of thinking is superadded by the Divine Will, is unintelligible, or in effect granting the proposition; for there cannot be a

* Dr Edward Synge's Attempt to prove the Christian Religion from the Light of Nature only, and Dr Sykes's Essay on the Connection between Natural and Revealed Religion, are both upon the same subject, and the second and third volumes of the latter contain a vindication of the moral arguments made use of in the former. Dr Clarke's Boyle Lectures, Dr Bentley on the Immateriality of the Soul, Ibbot's Posthumous Sermons, Nye's Reason, Dr Sturges's Dissertations, Nye's and Dr Ibbot's Essays, Dr Jackson's Elements of Moral Science, and Dr Balguy's Sermons, are likewise learnedly written upon the same argument. Dr Watson's Apology for Christianity, and Dr Leland's View of the Deistical Writers, are also very useful.

power of thinking where there is not a thinking being, and the superaddition of this to matter is nothing more than the annexing an immaterial being to a body, which none who assert the immateriality of the soul (granting what is here supposed, the real existence of matter) pretend to deny. *Def.* 6.

3, 4, 5, 6. There are insuperable difficulties attending the supposition that the soul is corporeal.

2, 6, 7. It is reasonable to believe it incorporeal. *Q. E. D.*

Dutton on the Res. p. 130—160. *Chapin's Prov. of Nat. Rel.* c. ii. § 13. p. 36—40. *Tillots.* vol. iii. p. 127—129, 130. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 186—189. *Abernethy*, vol. i. Serm. iv. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 156—160, 186—192. *Dr. Price's Sermon at St. Thomas's*, Jan. 1, 1766, p. 1—12. *Burlamaqui Elementa Juris Naturalis*, c. xiii. § 2—10. *Collyber on the Soul, Ess.* i. § 3, 4. *Ramsay's Principles*, vol. i. p. 230—233.

SCHOLIUM.

To this it is objected, That it limits the Divine Omnipotence, to say that God cannot make matter think.—It is generally replied, That it is no more so than to say that God cannot make a square circle. God may unite a soul to a system of matter, but then the matter to which it is united can only be said to think, as our body is said to feel, *i. e.* by the divine appointment, though without any necessary connexion it may become an organ of sensation and motion to that spirit: and it will be difficult to form any scheme by which thought may be supposed to result from matter any how modified and agitated by an Omnipotent Being, on which it might not be asserted to arise from it without the action of such a Being, and consequently by which all religion might not be overthrown.

Locke's Ess. lib. iv. c. iii. § 6, with notes. *Rel. of Nat* p. 189—193. *Howe*, vol. i. p. 52, 53. *Living Temp.* vol. i. c. iii. § 14, 15. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 192—195. *Jackson on Matter and Spirit*, p. 1—3, 12, 16. *Rams. Princ.* vol. i. p. 235, 236.

DEMONSTRATION II.

1. Matter is divisible, and consists of parts actually distinct.

1, 2. Whatever system of matter can be supposed to be conscious, it is capable of being divided into several lesser parts; and they will be as really distinct when laid or cemented together, as when separate, and removed to a distance from each other.

2, 3. If any system of matter be conscious, it must either have a distinct consciousness in each lesser particle, or one consciousness resulting from the union of its several parts.

4. There cannot be in each system a number of distinct consciousnesses; for that would suppose a vast and unknown multiplicity of souls in every soul. *Q. E. D.*

5. An assemblage of various unthinking parts can never be supposed to make one thinking mass, so that thought should arise from the whole, and yet not exist in any given part.

3, 4, 5, 6. The soul is not material. *Q. E. D.*

Clarke against Dodwell, p. 1—3; p. 73, 74, fifth edit. *Jacks. on Mat. and Spirit*, p. 4—11, 32—36. *Rams. Princ. Prop.* 32. *Baxt.* ib. p. 227—239.

SCHOLIUM.

To the fifth step it is objected, That one indivisible power may reside in a system consisting of divisible parts, as sweetness in a rose; but it is replied, That sweetness is only a *secondary* power, (*Def.* 18.) and not, properly speaking, in the rose at all; and as for those *primary* powers or qualities, they do proportionably reside in every particle.

Clarke, ibid. p. 8—15. *Letters between Clarke and Collins.*

DEMONSTRATION III.

Prop. 82. 1. The soul is immortal.

2. What is immaterial has no internal tendency to corruption and dissolution; and is incapable of being hurt by a variety of accidents, which may destroy any material system known to us.

3. It is unreasonable to believe that God would make a being, which he intended for an immortal duration, with a tendency to corruption, or obnoxious to dissolving accidents.

1, 2, 3, 4. It is unreasonable to suppose that God has made the soul material; even supposing it possible that matter might think. *Q. E. D.*

Baxt. ibid. p. 239—247. *Law's Theory, Discourse on Death, and Appendix against the Natural Immortality of the Soul.*

LECTURE XCV.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it may be replied, That neither is matter obnoxious to dissolution, nor does any immaterial substance tend to continue in existence any otherwise than as God shall act in and upon it (*Prop.* 32); so that the whole demonstration is founded on a mistake; and it is said, that allowing the soul to be material, does no more disprove its immortality, than owning the body shall be so, after the resurrection which Christians expect, will be a sufficient objection against its perpetual duration.

Locke's Third Letter to Still. p. 420—429. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 176—179. *Works.*

vol. i. p. 565—568. edit. 3. *Reason of Religion*, part. ii. Conclusion. *Baxt. on the Soul*, 2, 5. *Jacks. on Mat. and Spirit*, p. 11, 12. *Rams. Princ. Prop.* 18.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Nevertheless, we allow that, if the immateriality of the soul were proved, it would something strengthen our natural argument for its immortality; as it would certainly show us that the destruction of the body does not imply the extinction of the mind; and would be a probable intimation that God intended it for a longer duration; as we have reason to believe, that though marble and freestone be equally dependent upon him, he intended the former should continue in its form longer than the latter.

Grove's Thoughts on a Future State, c. iii. *Baxter on the Soul*, c. iii. p. 11.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have argued much to the purpose of *Dem.* 2. that an indivisible power cannot subsist in a divisible subject: but the power of thinking is an indivisible power, therefore the soul in which it exists is indivisible, and therefore immaterial.—But the foundation of this argument is liable to much dispute, and some attempt to retort it thus: "The idea of two feet is a divisible idea; but it exists in the mind, therefore the mind is divisible." But though we conceive of two feet as divisible, it is not proper to say that the *idea* of two feet may be divided into two ideas, each of which shall be half the former, as the *archetype* of it may.

Hallet on Script. vol. i. p. 216—219.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Much of the same kind is that argument taken from the limited nature of bodies, which are incapable of being extended beyond certain degrees; whereas the mind is continually opening itself to receive more and more knowledge, and never complains that an idea is too long, too broad, or too wide; but this goes on the supposition that ideas are material things, otherwise they could not crowd or stretch a material mind.

Serm. de Superville, vol. iii. p. 10, 11.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Some plead that the spirits and particles of the brain are in a continued flux, and therefore cannot be the seat of consciousness, which is a fixed thing. It is answered, That consciousness may inhere in some stable, solid, and unchanged piece of matter, such as the *stamina vitæ* are by many philosophers supposed to be. *Hallet*, ibid. p. 215, 216.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Against the proposition it is objected, That if thought infer immateriality, and immateriality immortality, then, as brutes may reasonably be supposed to have perception, (*Prop.* 2.) which is a species of thought, they must be immortal. It is answered, That we know not what may become of them. God can no doubt put a period to their existence at their death, since immateriality cannot necessarily infer immortality.—Vid. *Schol.* 1. As for Ramsay's notion, that brutes are degraded intelligences, which were once *Seraphim*, and are now doing penance in so base a state,—it depends on so many uncertain principles, and is in itself at first appearance so improbable, that we shall not now stay to examine or confute it.*

Ramsay's Princ. part. i. vol. i. p. 374—387. *Tillots.* vol. iii. p. 127—129. *Clarke against Dodwell*, p. 26—28; p. 88, 89. edition 5. *Burnet on the Art.* p. 34. *Edwards's Exercitations*, part i. p. 125—129. *Baxt. on the Soul*, ii. 36—38. iii. 11. *Reyn. Lett. to the Deist*, p. 61—68.

SCHOLIUM 7.

That the faculties of the mind are sometimes impaired by the decay of the body, will no more prove the soul material than mortal.—*Prop.* 82. *Dem.* 5. *Sch.* 3.

Burn. on the Art. p. 35. *Baxt. on the Soul*, v. 6—20. *Rams. Princ.* p. 233—235.

SCHOLIUM 8.

From comparing the arguments on both sides, it appears that allowing it not to be *demonstrable* that the soul is immaterial, it is at least *possible* it may be so, and even highly *probable* that it is.—Vid. *Dem.* 1. *gr.* 2.

Blount's Orac. of Reas. p. 185, 187—190. *Locke's Essay*, lib. iv. c. iii.

SCHOLIUM 9.

Should the soul be immaterial, it is nevertheless possible that it may be always united to some *vehicle*; our not seeing it go off at death can be no argument against it,—since many things known to be corporeal are to us invisible, particularly the air, which is so extremely forcible; and the magnetic and electrical effluvia.

More's Immort. of the Soul, lib. iii. c. i. § 2, 3. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 197, note. *Watts's Essay*, No. vii. p. 173, 174. *Baxt. on the Soul*, ii. 31. iv. 1—9. 17—21. *Jacks. on Mat. and Spirit*, p. 11—17. 51—56. *Clarke on Souls*, i. 5. iv. 1, 2. *Cheyne's Essay on Regimen. Discourses at the end.*

SCHOLIUM 10.

As to the opinion which the Heathen philosophers entertained on this subject, there is considerable debate,

* [illegible]

but it seems the greater part concluded that the soul consisted of, or was inseparably united to, some system of matter, excepting those who held it to be an ἀποσπασμα from the Divine Substance, and held that substance to be incorporeal.

Locke's Third Lett. to Still. p. 331—341; *Works*, vol. i. p. 570, 571. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 263—267. *N. Taylor of Deum.* p. 131, 132. *Plato's Phæd.* § 20. *Wesl's Demon. Leg.* vol. i. book iii. § 4. p. 403, 404, second edit. *Campbell's Necessity of Revelation*, p. 132—144.

LECTURE XCVI

PROPOSITION LXXXIV.

To inquire, Whether, supposing the soul to be immaterial, there is reason to believe that it is extended? *i. e.* limited to some certain quantity of space, so that it may be said to fill it?

SOLUTION.

There is no reason to believe that if the soul be immaterial, it is extended.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. If the soul be extended, seeing all acknowledge that extension must be limited, it must be of some shape or figure.

1. 2. If the soul be extended, we may conceive of it as losing a part of its shape; and if it be supposed commensurate either to the whole or to any part of the body, a bullet, sword, or any thing else, which tends or cuts off a part of the body with which the soul is so extended, may, for aught appears, also carry off a part of the soul with it,—unless we are to suppose it, when in such danger, to shrink up into smaller dimensions.

2. 3. This discerption of the soul, on the one hand, or condensation on the other, would imply some degree of solidity, *i. e.* corporeity, *Def.* 4. contrary to the hypothesis.

4. If the soul be extended, it may touch the body, or be touched by it; but it is utterly inconceivable

[illegible] Lord Mon[illegible]

[illegible] p. 28—44. [illegible]

[illegible] particular notice.

that there should be any contact between an immaterial being and matter.

5. Whatever absurdity could be supposed to follow, from granting the *soul*, if immaterial, to be unextended, would follow from supposing God to be so; yet, on the other hand, insuperable difficulties would arise from supposing *him* extended. *Prop.* 11. *Schol.* 2.

3, 4, 5. 6. There is no reason to believe that if the soul be immaterial it is extended. *Q. E. D.*

Watts's Ess. No. vi. § 2. p. 146—152. *Rems Princ.* vol. i. *Prop.* 27. *King's Original of Evil*, p. 31—33.

SCHOLIUM.

To this it is objected, That nothing acts but *where it is*; therefore, if the soul were not extended, it could not act at all.

Ans. All matter acts upon other matter at a distance by gravitation; and it is inconceivable how the soul should move the nerves inserted in the brain, any better by being near, than by being further off, unless we suppose it material; and we before observed that, in whatever sense it is supposed to be seated there, it is impossible to explain the manner of its perception and action.—*Prop.* 1. *Schol.* 2. *Prop.* 8. *Schol.* 3. God could no doubt give a soul a power of moving a stone, or even a mountain, at several yards' distance from the body to which it is united, *i. e.* he might appoint that ordinarily the motion of such a distant body should follow on the volition of that mind (vid. *Prop.* 32.); which he could not, if the hypothesis in the objection were just; seeing, if such a proximity were necessary, this could not possibly be effected, without such dilatation and contraction as seems inconsistent with immateriality. It is moreover plain, that it is not this proximity which gives the mind a consciousness of bodily motion; since the mind is least conscious of some things, which on that hypothesis must be nearest to it,—being entirely unacquainted, otherwise than by foreign observation and analogy, with the structure of the brain, and the cause of its disorders, and not being able to determine by inspection or consciousness where the common sensorium is.—Vid. *Prop.* 4. *Schol.* 1.

Howe's Works, vol. i. p. 45. *Living Temple*, part. i. c. iii.; 8vo, vol. i. p. 127, 128. *Sir Isaac Newton's Third Letter to Dr. Bentley*, 8vo. 1756. *Watts*, ibid. p. 152—161. *Essay* vi. § 3.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That what is not extended is *nowhere*; and what is nowhere has no existence; but though this has been generally allowed as a maxim, it is not self-evident; and indeed it is no other than taking the whole question for granted.

Watts, ibid. p. 161—164. § 4. *Jackson on Matt. and Spirit*, p. 3, 4.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, when God has united a spirit to any body, so that it shall be to that spirit an organ of sensation and action, the soul may in a less proper sense be said to *be there*, where the body is; and spirits in general may be said to *be* where bodies are on which they are capable of acting.—Vid. *Def.* 15, 32. *Watts*, ibid. p. 165—167. § 5.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The objection, That if the soul were not extended, it could have no idea of an extended substance, is taking the matter for granted; and has been considered in the only view in which it is worthy of consideration, *i. e.* as an objection against its immateriality.—*Prop.* 83. *Schol.* 3, 4.

Cudw. Int. Sys. p. 824—826. *Ralphi Epist. Misc.* 5, *ad finem.*

LECTURE XCVII.

PROPOSITION LXXXV.

To propose and examine the principal hypotheses relating to the original of the human mind.

SOLUTION.

The three chief hypotheses are those of *pre-existence*, of existence *ex traduce*, and of *immediate creation.*

HYPOTHESIS 1.

Some suppose the human mind existed at first without this gross body in which it now dwells; but whether without any body at all, is not universally agreed. Some of the ancient philosophers, particularly Plato, supposed it *eternal*, or as the Latins emphatically express it, *sempiternal*, as being a necessary emanation from the Divine Mind; but most of those who have embraced this doctrine of pre-existence, supposed it to have been created at some far distant period of time; and they all agreed that in some unknown moment between generation and birth, perhaps, say some, the middle space, it was sent to inhabit this body. The principal argument to support this hypothesis, is taken from the justice of God, with which it is supposed to be inconsistent that a pure and innocent spirit should be so incommodiously lodged; they say that this embodied state seems to be an imprisonment, to which it is condemned for crimes committed in some better state of existence.

To this it is answered,

1. That the Divine Justice may admit that an innocent creature in the first stage of its existence should be exposed to some inconveniences, if they be counterbalanced by the advantages of its state, and especially by an opportunity of securing a more perfect happiness hereafter,—which the patrons of this hypothesis allow to be our case.

2. If, as the generality of Christians believe, the first parents of our race were in a happier state of existence, and were also under such a constitution as made them the representatives of their whole posterity, and they in that state offended their Maker,—it is possible that the whole family might fall under some marks of his displeasure, which they would not otherwise have been subjected to; and this may perhaps be the easiest way of accounting for those phenomena on which the hypothesis is built.

3. That Divine Justice seems to require, that if a creature were punished for its own personal offence committed in a former state, it should have some consciousness of its guilt; our present calamities, therefore, not being attended with such consciousness, cannot be a punishment for sins so committed.

SCHOLIUM.

It is a great objection against this hypothesis, That it is merely *gratis dictum*; forasmuch as no man can remember any such pre-existent state as is pretended, or the adventures that befell him in it.

Bransett's Journal, p. 221—223.

Plato answers, That we have not entirely forgotten them, but that all our knowledge is entirely *remembrance*; and that without it no knowledge could be obtained; but that is evidently inconclusive, because at this rate the argument might be carried on *ad infinitum*, and an eternal, immutable, and self-existent Being could know nothing. It is much more reasonably replied, That it is the law of our present state of being that we should remember only by the assistance of the brain, in which it is impossible that any traces of our former adventures should be drawn.

Plato's Phæd. § 16—18. *Burn. Theory*, vol. ii. lib. iv. *Pref.* p. 3—5. *Phœnix*, vol. i. No. i. p. 16—30. *Ramsay's Princ.* Prop. xlvii. vol. i. p. 147—156. *Jenk. of Christian.* vol. ii. p. 243—245. *Trav. of Cyrus*, vol. ii. p. 115—132. 8vo edition; p. 248—282. 12mo. *More's Immort. of the Soul*, lib. ii. c. xii. xiii. *Cudw. Int. Syst.* lib. i. c. i. § 31, 32. *Watts's Ruin and Recov.* quest. ii. p. 94—105. ed. 2.; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 221—225. *New Practice of Piety*, 12mo. p. 41—44. *Barrow's pre-existent Lapse of Human Souls, passim. Price's Dissertations*, No. i. p. 159. *Lux Orientalis, præs.* c. 5, 6, 10. with Annot. *Collibet on Souls*, Essay iii. *passim. Stonehouse on Univ. Restit.* Lett. x. p. 213. *No Pre-existence*, by E. W. *passim.*

HYPOTHESIS 2.

The hypothesis of the soul's existence, *ex traduce*, is this.—From the observations made chiefly by

Leuwenhoek of the animalcula existing in *semine maris*, some have supposed that the first elements of the soul as well as the body were contained there; which gradually grow up to sense with the ripening *fœtus*, and to reason in the advance of life. Of the patrons of this hypothesis, some suppose that these animalcula are produced from the food of the immediate parent; others, that the elements of them are to be found in the body of an infant, and that all those from whom all mankind have arisen, besides an immensely greater multitude that have perished, were contained in the body of the first man, each generation being enclosed in the former, as the coats of an onion within each other, or, as perhaps it might be better illustrated, the kernel of a nut. The chief arguments to prove this are,

1. The existence of these animalcula.

2. The absurdity of supposing a kind of *equivocal* generation in the body of the parent.—*Prop.* 21. *Sch.* 1.

3. The resemblance between parents and children, which seems to imply such a derivation or traduction of the *body*, which on principles of analogy may prove that of the *soul*.

SCHOLIUM.

To this it is replied,

1. That there is some reason to doubt whether there really be such animalcula as Leuwenhoek talks of,—few but himself have ever been able to discover them with his glasses; and it is very possible the motion might arise from some spirituous particles of the fluid, as it was only observed while the fluid was in a degree of gentle warmth, but soon ceased, *i. e.* as it seems those particles evaporated in the heat.

2. That if it be allowed that animalcula are really seen, it may be questioned whether they are originally in the seed or in the water, since they must be diluted with water before they can be discerned.

3. That if they be in the seed, it may still be questioned whether they be the stamina of the human body; not only as it is doubtful whether they can pass the two teguments of the *ova*, but also considering how unlike the animal growing in an impregnated egg, as observed and delineated by Malphigi, is to that observed in the seed of the cock.

4. That allowing such animalcula in the seed of every adult male, and also allowing them to be the stamina from whence the next generation proceeds, it is groundless to assert that they contain the stamina of all future generations. It is allowed indeed, that the exquisite smallness of those removed at the greatest distance from the present, is no objection against the possibility of their existence, since Omnipotence could, no doubt, in the compass of a grain of sand, make a system similar to our solar system; but there is no necessity of supposing this to be the fact here, since we are sure that the same Omnipotence can, and perhaps does, by some settled law of nature to us unknown, produce animal bodies from particles of matter before existing under another form; and it is the more probable, as it seems hardly consistent with our views of divine wisdom, to form such multitudes of animal bodies for certain destruction, and to answer no imaginable purpose; for it is evident, that not one of many millions of them is ever born into the world; and if it be true with regard to *men*, it is so likewise with respect to *fishes* and *insects*, where this objection is vastly greater.

5. If such bodies were allowed, it would be unreasonable to suppose them all endued with souls; such low degrees of life as in proportion we must have had at the distance of many generations, being hardly conceivable; nor can we imagine that God would, for so many thousand years, continue human minds in so mean and contemptible a state of existence.

6. This hypothesis is most suitable to the *materiality* of the soul,—the traduction of one *spirit* from another being inconceivable, and but poorly illustrated by the simile usually brought,—of lighting one taper by another.

7. The destruction of a multitude of souls to every one that grows up or has life, is a still stronger objection against this doctrine than the destruction of bodies, *gr.* 4.; and that these subsist in a future state none maintain.

Baker on Microscopes, c. xvi. p. 152–167. *Leuwenhoek Epist.* vol. i. p. 1–12, 149, &c. *Nieuwent. Rel. Phil.* vol. i. *Contemp.* xvi. § 9, 11. p. 341–344, 345–348; p. 305–308, 310–313, in another edit. *Lux Orientalis*, c. iii. *Rel. of Nat.* p. 88—91. *Watts's Phil. Ess.* No. ix. § 2. with Append. p. 201—208, and p. 307–311. *Dennes's 2nd Serm. of Veget.* Pref. *Drake's Anat.* vol. i. c. xxiv. *Baxt. on the Soul*, vol. i. p. 198—202. *Chamb. Dict. on the word* Generation.

HYPOTHESIS 3.

The hypothesis of *immediate creation* is, That at a certain time, generally supposed between conception and the birth, perhaps twenty weeks after the former, but some say in the birth itself, the soul is created; and from the first moment of its existence united to the body. The weakness of the former hypothesis seems the principal strength of this. It is indeed objected that this supposes God to be always creating new souls; but it is not easy to see the force of that objection. We are sure he always acts. (*Prop.* 32.) and acts with infinite ease (*Prop.* 31.); nor is continual new creation any reflection upon him. What if we should acknowledge that his

works may be ever growing, both in number, extent, and perfection? It is difficult to see how it would blemish either his wisdom or power.

Gale's Court of the Gent. part ii. p. 344—346.

§ 3. p. 382—384. 2d edit. *Lux Orient.* c. ii.

SCHOLIUM.

On the whole, it seems that this last hypothesis is rather the most probable; but it does not become us to be confident in so dark and dubious a matter.

Le Clerc's Pneum. part. i. c. viii.

LECTURE XCVIII.

PROPOSITION LXXXVI.

It is highly probable that there are some created spirits, which were, in the first constitution of their nature, superior to human souls.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. When we consider the vast variety there is in the inanimate, the vegetable, and the animal creation, and how one class and order of beings rises above another, almost by imperceptible degrees, it seems highly probable that we, who are in part allied to the beasts that perish, and who are placed in so imperfect a state of being, are not the highest order of spirits, and the most glorious creatures of our almighty Creator; but rather, that the scale of created beings rises abundantly higher.

Baxter's Matho, vol. i. *Conf.* v. p. 248—257. 275—290.

2. Astronomers generally grant, and strongly prove, that some of the planets are abundantly larger than the earth. We can hardly think they were made merely to afford us that little light and benefit we derive from them: it is much more probable that they are habitable worlds, especially considering what discoveries have been made of the satellites of Saturn and Jupiter, and those varieties in the face of our moon that seem like seas, land, and mountains; and it is highly probable that some of these inhabitants may be spirits superior to us,—not to mention the possibility there is that the interstellar spaces may be inhabited; not to insist on Wells's conjecture, That there may be more planets than we commonly reckon revolving about our sun.

Swind. of Hell, p. 287. *King's Orig. of Evil*, 4. i. 1, 2.

3. Most nations have believed the existence of *demons*, *i. e.* created spirits superior to human souls; and the accounts that have been given of their intercourse with men might probably have some foundation in fact, though no doubt the greater part of them are fabulous.*

1, 2, and 3. 4. *Valet propositio.*

Spect. vol. vii. No. 519. *Locke's Ess.* lib. ii. c. xxiii. § 13; lib. iv. c. iii. § 24, 26; lib. iv. c. xvi. § 12. *Wilkins's World in the Moon*, Prop. vii—ix. xiii. *Matho*, vol. ii. p. 55. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 55, 56. *Hier. in Pyth. Carm.* ver. 3, 4; vid. *Dacier's Not.* ib. *Euseb. Prep. Evan.* lib. xv. c. xliii. *Voltaire's Misc. Of the Doctrine of the Genii. Night Thoughts*, p. 173, 174, 8vo edit.

SCHOLIUM 1.

If it be objected, That perhaps those beings, now superior to us, were at first on a level with us, though perhaps something different,—we answer, That the reasoning of the *first* step lies strongly against this;—and as for what is objected against the *third* step (though it must be acknowledged, according to Dr. Sykes's assertion, that many of those, whom the Heathens called both *good and bad demons*, were supposed to be human souls)—yet it is very evident they had a notion of some demons, who were originally in a state superior to humanity, and never had dwelt in human bodies.—Compare Hierocles and Eusebius, quoted above.

Inq. into Demoniacs, p. 1—4. *Twells's Ans.* p. 5, 6. *Further Inq.* p. 2—20. *Answer to it*, p. 8—24. *Pegge of Demon.* p. 1—25. *Just. Mart. Opera*, p. 28. Col. edit. *Pope's Iliad*, lib. xix. ver. 93. Not. *Still. Orig.* lib. iii. c. iii. § 17. p. 514—516; fol. edit. p. 322. *Euseb. Prep.* lib. viii. c. xiv. p. 387; lib. xiii. c. xi. p. 663. *Gale's Court of Gent.* lib. ii. c. viii. § 11, 12. p. 186—188, and 337. 196—198, 375.

SCHOLIUM 2.

However, it may be granted that the perfection and happiness of those spirits are growing and increasing, as (if we suppose them not subject to forgetfulness, which the extraordinary memory of some men makes probable) it is certain their stock of knowledge must always be; with the increase of which much pleasure is connected.

Locke's Ess. lib. iii. c. x. § 9. *Watts's Impr. of the Mind*, p. 253, 254.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, that whatever their perfection be, or can be at any imaginable most distant space of time, with any imaginable degree of continued improvement, they will still continue inferior to the Divine Being in knowledge and in power, and will still be equally dependent on him for their existence, and every degree of their happiness; in which respect the noblest and meanest of his creatures are on a level.

* The various publications of Mr. Farmer and his antagonists, with regard to Demons, will be noticed hereafter. In the mean while, we content ourselves with referring to his Treatise on the Worship of Human Spirits in the Ancient Heathen Nations, and to Mr. Bell's Idolatry of Greece and Rome, distinguished from that of other Heathen Nations.

and so are to him as nothing; and this, by the way, is a strong argument for the infinity of the Divine Being.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Let it be observed, that the proposition is to be taken only in a general sense: for we have not any assurance by the light of nature, that no human soul shall ever arrive in its improvement to an equality with the most excellent of those superior spirits. On the other hand, that there are some spirits now superior to what those of men are in this imbodied state, is in effect no other than a corollary from *Prop.* 82.

Republic of Letters, vol. vi. p. 282—284.

LECTURE XCIX.

PROPOSITION LXXXVII.

More fully to prove that it is the interest of every man to cultivate virtue through the whole course of his life, and in every particular action. Vid. *Prop.* 44. *Cor.* 2.

DEMONSTRATION.

Ax. 15. *Cor. Schol.* 1. 1. There is a secret and immediate pleasure attending virtuous actions, especially those of a benevolent kind, or those in which there is any remarkable degree of gratitude and piety towards God; which pleasure is of a very sublime and delightful kind, vastly preferable to any sensual gratification, as those who have tried both experimentally know; and pious philosophers will acknowledge that the immediate pleasures of virtue are superior to those of science.

2. In reflecting upon all virtuous actions, and particularly those which are attended with the greatest difficulty, there is a high satisfaction of mind.

3. Human nature and life are so constituted, that, generally speaking, health, reputation, and interest in the world, and, in a moderate degree, the possessions of it, may be most effectually secured by a virtuous course; at least it is seldom or never injurious to any of these.

4. A good man has or may have a source of happiness distinct from all these, in the present views of the favour of God, a confidence in his care, and the prospect of a future state of happiness after death,—by which he may be delightfully supported under those calamities which are common to all; so that the painful sense of them may sometimes be swallowed up in vastly superior pleasure.

5. On the contrary to all this, a wicked man often finds a great deal of uneasiness in his vicious affections and actions, especially in his reflections upon them: he often brings upon himself diseases, infamy, poverty, and various kinds of distress in life, greatly aggravated by the apprehensions of the divine displeasure, and the fears of future evil to arise from it, in this life and in the next.

1, 5. 6. If we consider only the present life, it appears that virtue does ordinarily, on the whole, tend to promote its happiness.

Prop. 82. 7. Though it be granted that, in some extraordinary cases, it may be otherwise than has been represented in the former steps, (vid. *Prop.* 82. *Sch.* 1.) yet the future state will abundantly overbalance all the advantages which there may, in any imaginable circumstances, be on the side of vice; even where the most gloomy fears have clouded the virtuous mind on the one hand, or, on the other, the vainest hopes have been entertained by the bad man, his conscience ever so much deadened and perverted, or where his course of prosperity in life has been ever so great.

6, 7. 8. It is on the whole the interest of every man to cultivate virtue in every action. *Q. E. D.*

Wishart's Ref. Serm. p. 17—29. *Hutch. on the Pass.* c. 5. *Wilk. Nat. Rel.* lib. ii. c. i—viii. *Gast. Nat. Relig.* p. 129—136. and p. 178—181. *Puff. de Jure*, lib. ii. c. iii. § 14, 15. *Shaft. Inq. after Virtue*, part ii. *pass. Self-Love and Virtue reconciled by Relig. Pope's Ess.* Epis. iv. *præs.* ver. 309—360. *Balg. Serm.* vol. i. No. iii. *Serm. at Boyle's Lect. on the Certainty and Necessity of Relig. Night Thoughts*, vol. ii. p. 95—125. No. viii. *Beattie's Elements of Moral Science*, vol. ii. p. 8—41.

COROLLARY 1.

It must be the interest of every one to prosecute and cultivate the proper means of virtue.

COROLLARY 2.

It must be the interest of every person heartily to repent of every instance in which he has acted contrary to virtue. Vid. *Prop.* 81. *Cor.* 4.

SCHOLIUM.

Some have argued the necessary connexion between virtue and happiness from this consideration, That the Divine Being, who is perfectly virtuous, is perfectly happy; so that in proportion to the degree in which any inferior being resembles him in virtue, he must also resemble him in happiness: but so far as this argument is distinct from that stated in the preceding demonstration, it is inconclusive; for if it would prove any thing, it must be, that every virtuous man is, in every moment of his existence, happier than any vicious man is or can be; which seems evidently contrary to fact.

Clergyman's Letter to Dr. Clarke, pass.

LECTURE C.

PROPOSITION LXXXVIII.

It is on the whole for the benefit of societies to cultivate virtue.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 87. 1. It tends to promote the happiness of every individual member; and therefore by consequence of the whole.

Prop. 51. *Schol.* 2. Virtue teaches each to consult the good of all, and to be willing to resign any private interest of his own to the interest of the society, when it comes in competition with it; so constituting each man in his sphere the guardian of the public happiness.

Prop. 80, 81. 3. Virtue must ordinarily tend to bring down the favour and blessing of God upon societies, to which they must owe their surest foundation and best prosperity; and his interposition may the more reasonably be expected, since societies, as such, have no existence in a future state.

1, 2, 3. 4. *Valet propositio.*

Clarke's Serm. vol. vi. No. xiv. p. 207—210. 12mo edit.; *Works*, vol. i. p. 626, 627. *Butler's Anal.* part i. article 5. c. iii. p. 85—96. edit. 2d. 8vo.

SCHOLIUM.

To this Mandeville has objected, That private vices are often public benefits; and that an universal reformation would necessarily produce the ruin of multitudes of persons and families, who subsist upon the public luxury and debauchery;—but it may be replied,

1. That though some good may arise to particular persons from the vices of others, it does not thence follow that greater might not arise to the whole from common virtues.

2. That virtue would allow the free use of many things, not absolutely necessary to the support of life, yet tending to make it more agreeable; as wine, tea, &c.

3. That public temperance and reformation would prevent the ruin of multitudes of persons and families, which is often aggravated by former splendour, and the consciousness of those extravagances by which they have been reduced, as well as by the additional infamy attending poverty when occasioned by such means.

4. That, during the time that the prosperity of families continues, we shall judge very wrong if we estimate their happiness by their external circumstances, without allowing for the inward temper of their minds,—the happiness of which virtue would always promote, and thereby be a noble equivalent for rendering them something less opulent and magnificent.

5. That the community would be better defended from foreign and domestic enemies by poorer citizens, that were temperate, generous, and courageous, than by the effeminate, debauched, and mercenary; besides all that extraordinary protection, which an universally virtuous people might justly promise itself from Divine Providence.

6. If the history of the most celebrated ancient or modern states and kingdoms be examined, it will be found they have risen by virtue, and fallen by vice, agreeably to our argument in the proposition above, and contrary to those principles which we here oppose.—See (besides *Persian Letters* referred to, *Prop.* 51. *gr.* 1.)

Fable of the Bees, pass. Warb. Div. Legat. lib. i. § 6. vol. i. p. 76—84. *Innes on Virtue*, p. 99, &c. *Browne's Ess. on the Charact.* No. ii. § 5. p. 146—158. *Law's Theory*, p. 135—239. *Pinto's Ess. on Luxury, pass.*

PROPOSITION LXXXIX.

To take a survey of the state of virtue in the world.

SOLUTION.

1. A great part of the world is overrun with Pagan idolatry and superstition; many of their rites are impious, obscene, or cruel; and as new countries are discovered, new scenes of wickedness are discovered with them; and it is by the way observable, that several of those writers who speak most favourably of the morals of newly discovered countries, have, in other respects, most of the air of a romance.

2. Though it is to be acknowledged that the religious institutions of Christians, Mahometans, and Jews, contain many excellent lessons of morality in all its branches,—yet it evidently appears that, under all these professions, the greatest part of mankind are strangers to real virtue.

3. Those who cultivate it with the greatest care are, in many respects, defective; and far from that perfection which they themselves desire.

DEMONSTRATION.

The proof of all this is too evident, from all the opportunities we have of knowing the moral characters of our fellow-creatures, by reading, travelling, or observation at home.

Watts's Rom. and Rom. quest. 1. 5. p. 32—41. *Barrow on the State of Primitive Christians*, c. vi. second edit.*

SCHOLIUM.

That the state of things in former ages, even amongst the most polite, learned, and celebrated nations of antiquity, was generally much the same,

* Great additional light has been thrown upon the condition of [illegible] and of all philological materials, in consequence of the [illegible] of voyages and travels to the Chinese empire, and to the [illegible] which have been made and published within the course of the last thirty years.

appears from all the strain of ancient authors: and further from the known lewdness and cruelty of many of their religious rites, the custom of exposing children, and the public spectacles: besides many other things illustrated in

Jenk. on Christ. vol. i. p. 353—364. *St. Real*, vol. i. *England's Morals of the Ancients*, c. *ult.* *Leland on Revel.* vol. i. particularly c. i. 18. 20; vol. ii. part ii. c. iii. &c. *Law on the Theory of Relig.* part ii. p. 116—124.

COROLLARY 1.

There is great reason for adoring the divine patience, that the earth is still preserved, and made the seat of so much pleasure, considering the exact and circumstantial manner in which God knows all crimes, and the almighty power with which he is always armed to punish them.

COROLLARY 2.

Those who are themselves truly virtuous, have great reason to exert themselves to the utmost to stem the torrent of vice, and to support the interests of virtue, which, humanly speaking, are so weak.

COROLLARY 3.

There seems a great deal of reason to suspect that mankind is degenerated from some better state, in which it may be supposed the race first came out of the hands of so holy and good a Being as the blessed God is; and accordingly, we may observe, among some ancient as well as modern nations, remarkable traditions on that head; which will be more fully considered hereafter.

Howe, vol. i. p. 150, 151. *Living Temp.* part ii. c. iv. § 7. *Cyr. Trav.* part ii. Ap. p. 93—99.

COROLLARY 4.

Some further discoveries from the Divine Being seem very desirable, to lead us into the paths of more perfect virtue and happiness;—but the fuller discussion of this will be the business of the next Part of this work.*

* Though many of the books hereafter mentioned have already been referred to in authorial notes, it may not be amiss to give all those in the Lectures on the several branches of Moral Philosophy, to make a general reference to some which would be useful to the student to become acquainted with as far as they go, in the course of his academical studies, and after it more at his leisure and pleasure. The more diligently to prosecute the best sources of information, the more will it be useful to be directed how to read and what to read: things however of this sort are endless, and vast. It is not of so small importance to be master of what the ancients have written on ethical subjects, as of the Greek Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Cicero Senior, Epictetus Marcus Antoninus, and Plutarch, will deserve to be closely studied. The great body of Christian writers will furnish a vast fund of information concerning almost every moral question, and every part of human conduct. Among foreign authors, it may be sufficient here to mention Grotius, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac, Bynkershoek, and Vattel. The Lectures produced wherein we are immediately concerned, are to Grotius — Rutger Wes-kius on the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion, Dr. Henry More's Enchiridion, Ralph Cudworth on the Laws of Nature, Shaftesbury's Characteristicks, Wollaston's Religion of Nature delineated, Hartley's Observations on Man, Hutcheson's Compendium, and his System of Moral Philosophy, Fellowes Jacob's Demonstration of Christianity from Grotius's Moral Principles of Puffendorf, Cumberland on Natural Religion and Social Virtue, Turnbull's Treatise of Moral Philosophy, Sermons on Virtue and Happiness, Hume's Principles of Morals, Lord Kaimes's Principles of Morality, Tucker's Light of Nature pursued, Priestley's Institutes of Natural Religion, Hutcheson's Dialogues on Happiness, Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, Dr. Price on Morals, Beattie's Elements of the Science of Ethics, Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Gisborne's Principles of Moral Philosophy investigated, Beattie's Elements of Moral Science, and Dr. Ferguson's Principles of Moral and Political Science.

PART V.

OF THE REASON TO EXPECT AND DESIRE A REVELATION; AND THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCE WITH WHICH WE MAY SUPPOSE IT SHOULD BE ATTENDED.

LECTURE CI.

DEFINITION LXVI.

THEOLOGY or DIVINITY is that branch of *Pneumatology* which relates in general to the knowledge of God, but especially to those extraordinary discoveries which he is supposed to have made of himself to mankind; and considers the probability, the certainty, and the contents of them.

SCHOLIUM.

Forasmuch as *miracles* are generally urged in proof of such extraordinary discoveries, it seems proper here to inquire into the nature, use, and importance of them.

DEFINITION LXVII.

When such effects are produced as *(cæteris paribus)* are usually produced, God is said to operate *according to the common course of nature*; but when such effects are produced as are *(cæt. par.) contrary to* or *different from* that common course, they are said to be MIRACULOUS.

Campbeare on Mir. p. 6—12. *Fleetw. on Mir.*

p. 2—5; 8vo ed. p. 22, 23. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 374—376. *Clarke and Leibnitz*, p. 89. § 17. p. 113. § 43—46. p. 149.

COROLLARY 1.

Nothing can be known to be miraculous till the course of nature has been observed.

COROLLARY 2.

If two opposite effects *(cæt. par.)* were to be alternately produced, neither of them would be properly miraculous; but the alternate succession of both would make up the course of nature: *v. g.* if the sun were to arise one morning in the east, and the next in the west.

COROLLARY 3.

When the course of nature can be but imperfectly known, in particular instances we may be incapable of pronouncing in many respects concerning certain remarkable events, whether they be or be not miraculous.

COROLLARY 4.

A miracle contains no greater exercise of divine power than an operation according to the course of nature. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 371, 372.

COROLLARY 5.

Miracles are possible in general, (*Cor.* 4.) and possible in any given instance, when the wisdom of God does not require that the course of nature should be preserved; which it is impossible for us to know that it always does.

It has indeed been asserted, that it is most honourable to God to suppose that he at first lays down the best possible laws, from which therefore it would be a defect of wisdom to deviate: but it may be answered, That, at least for any thing we know, the best possible scheme may be that in which there shall be some deviation from the stated rules, provided always that those stated laws be generally so far observed, as that men may know what it is their duty to do, and what consequences are generally to be expected from their actions, which is apparently the case.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 376, 377. *Conybeare's Serm. on Mir.* p. 12—17. *Butler's Anal.* part. ii. c. ii. *Macknight's Truth of the Gospel History*, c. iv. § 2. *Campbell on Miracles, against Hume*, part. i. *Price's Dissert.* No. iv. *pass.* *Douglas's Criterion.* *Hartley on Man*, vol. ii. *prop.* 28. *Adams on Miracles*, part 1. *Hume's Essays*, No. x. part. 1.

PROPOSITION XC.

To consider some other definitions which celebrated writers have given of miracles.

SOLUTION.

1. Mr. Locke defines a miracle to be "A sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, is, in his opinion, contrary to the course of nature, and taken by him to be divine."

Locke's Works, vol. ii. p. 270. fol. ed.

But on this account of the matter, every juggling trick which I cannot understand, will, while my ignorance continues, be a miracle to me. In answer to this, Locke urges, that if this definition be not taken, we can never know what a miracle is; because no man is acquainted with the whole course of nature; but though we acknowledge that great part of it is unknown, yet so much may be known, as that some instances may plainly appear to be above it; *v. g.* recovering the sight of the blind, or the life of the dead, by a word speaking, or multiplying bread, so that one loaf should serve a thousand men, and more be left at last than there was at first. Besides this, the extraordinary works apprehended to be done by evil agents would not be miracles on this definition.

Locke's Post. Pieces, p. 217—220. *Chandler of Mir.* p. 9—11.

2. Many others define a miracle to be "An extraordinary operation, above the power of all created beings, and performable by God alone."

But this definition either goes on the false supposition of such a proper agency in the creature, as is inconsistent with *Prop.* 32.; or else supposes, contrary to fact, that we know the utmost limits of the power of created agents, allowing that to be called *their power* which is usually communicated to them.

Limb. Theol. l. i. c. ii. § 17. *Chand. on Mir.* p. 11. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 372.

3. Dr. Chandler says, "A miracle is an action done, or an operation visibly performed, by any being, which is really and truly above the reach, natural power, and capacity of that being who does it of himself, and likewise without the assistance of some superior agent to perform."

This definition seems liable to the following objections:—

1. It supposes created beings capable of doing something of themselves, and without the assistance of any superior agent, contrary to *Prop.* 32.

2. It makes it impossible for God to perform a miracle without the interposition of some creature.

3. It supposes that it would be no miracle for God to send an angel to relieve a starving man, to open the prison doors, or even to roll back the sun in his course, supposing I know the angel so employed to be ordinarily capable of producing such an effect; whereas in truth, here would be a miracle, in suffering an angel in such a manner to act out of his usual sphere, though not beyond his common strength. *Chand. of Mir.* p. 13—19.

Dr. Hutcheson's definition, "That it is a work far exceeding human power, yet performed by the command or upon the volition of a man," nearly

coincides with this of Dr. Chandler's; and is equally liable to the 2d and 3d objection.

Hutch. Mor. Synops. p. 89: p. 222, 223. 2d ed.

1. Dr. Clarke's definition of what he calls a *theological miracle*, includes several particulars in it, which may more properly be examined hereafter.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 382, 383.

5. According to Dr. Sykes, "A miracle is a designed effect, sensible, unusual in itself, beyond the art and power of man to do;" and he expressly declares against defining it an event contrary to the course of nature: but to this it may be objected,

1. That if he does not by the word *unusual*, mean as much as *beyond the course of nature*, its being unusual is of no importance at all to prove any thing miraculous, as in the instance of the first *parhelion*.

2. If by *sensible* be meant something made known in consequence of a sensation excited by external objects, distinguished from the inward perception of impressions upon our minds, it is no way essential to constituting a miracle.

3. That the expression of *designed* is either superfluous or improper, since considering it as the work of God, every thing is designed; and if it might happen without *human* design, it might still be miraculous; as if health should unexpectedly be restored, while another person was praying for it.

Sykes of Mir. p. 16—28.

6. Dr. Chapman defines it, "An unusual and sensible event, most evidently either in the matter or manner of it, above the power of all natural material causes, and the art of man, to produce."—To this it may be objected,

1. Against the words *sensible* and *unusual*, as in the last step, No. i. ii.

2. That an event may really be a true miracle, though it is not *most evidently so*.

3. That it seems to intimate a distinction between *natural* and *supernatural* material causes; not to urge that a *material cause* can only be a passive power, nor to insist upon it, that it may be questioned whether *dreams* be not miracles upon this supposition; so that here, as well as in other instances, what is superadded to our definition appears to be an incumbrance rather than an advantage.

Chapman's Essaies, vol. i. p. 72—76.

LECTURE CII.

DEFINITION LXVIII.

A DIVINE REVELATION is a discovery of some proposition to the mind, which came in not by the usual exercise of its faculties, but by some miraculous divine interposition and attestation, either mediate or immediate.

SCHOLIUM.

We shall endeavour in the following proposition to prove that a revelation is possible, (*Prop.* 91.) that it is desirable, (*Prop.* 92.) and that there is some reason to hope that God will grant it (*Prop.* 93.); and then shall more particularly examine with what kind of internal and external evidence we may reasonably suppose that it should be attended.

PROPOSITION XCI.

A divine revelation is a possible thing.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. God may, for any thing we can certainly tell, think proper to make some discovery to his creatures of what they did not before know, or what by the use of their faculties they could not find out.

Prop. 31. 2. Since God is almighty, we may assure ourselves, that he who has given us a power of communicating our ideas to each other, cannot be at a loss for some proper method to make it apparent to his creatures that it is he who speaks to them.

3. The pretences that have from time to time been made to divine revelation, and the ready reception they have many of them met with, plainly show that the greater part of mankind have thought it not impossible.

1, 2, and 3. 4. A divine revelation is at least a possible thing. *Q. E. D.*

Tillots. vol. iii. p. 441, 442. *Conybeare on the Credib. of Rev.* p. 17. *Leland's Advant. of Rev.* vol. i. p. 17—27. *Farmer on Miracles*, c. i. § 2. p. 24.

SCHOLIUM.

It would be most absurd to object, That God's goodness will oblige him to give his creatures by their natural faculties the knowledge of all that it is *necessary* for them to know, and that his wisdom will prevent his miraculous interposition to discover *unnecessary* things; for both these propositions universally taken are false. For since it is as easy for God to communicate knowledge to us by revelation as by the use of our natural faculties, we cannot say universally that he must make man in such circumstances as that no revelation should be necessary; much less, that he can never suffer him to fall into such circumstances. On the contrary, on the first formation of mankind, (when that experience which now instructs us in so many things of the greatest importance could not possibly be our guide,) it seems that some revelation was necessary with relation to his food; for surely, unless human nature were then vastly different from what it is now, appetite would have been but a very uncertain

and dangerous rule: and it is certain, that the giving necessary intimations by revelation rather than by reason, would in some views be an additional favour, as it would so much the more sensibly illustrate God's care of his creatures, and inspection over them; which, though it might be solidly reasoned out on principles laid down above, might become more obvious in this case, at least to weaker minds. Nor is it, on the other hand, true that God bestows on his creatures nothing that is unnecessary; if by *unnecessary* be meant, what in the present connexion it must mean, only something without which they might have enjoyed some considerable degree of happiness sufficient to overbalance the evils to which they are exposed,—nothing is more evident than the contrary, *i. e.* that God has consulted our convenience and delight in numberless instances.

Delany's Rev. Examined, vol. i. p. 2, 3. *Leland against Tind.* c. i. ii. iii. *Ditto on the Advant. and Necess. of Rev.* vol. i. p. 48—51. 4to edit. *Hartley on Man*, vol. ii. *Prop.* 27.

LECTURE CIII.

PROPOSITION XCII.

The circumstances of mankind are such, as to render a divine revelation highly expedient and desirable.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. In the generality of mankind we too plainly see such indolence with regard to the things of religion, such strong passions, such early prejudices, and inveterate habits of vice, as render them very unfit for an impartial inquiry after divine truth.

2. The greater part of mankind, even those whose morals are least vitiated, are so entangled in secular cares, that they have little leisure for long and laborious inquiry.

3. It appears by the preceding parts of this work, that it is a very laborious and difficult task to trace out the great principles of natural religion in their due connexion and evidence.

1, 2, 3. 4. It is not to be expected that many will undertake it for themselves, or that if they do, they will succeed in it.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 273—278.

5. There are some points, which the most diligent and impartial inquirer will find it hardly possible to clear up to himself, especially those relating to the pardon of sin, and the complete happiness of a future state. *Prop.* 82. *Schol.* 3. *Prop.* 83. *Schol.* 5.

6. Of those things which such an inquirer may be able to clear up to *himself*, there will be many which it will be difficult to communicate to *others*, considering how abstruse many of his arguments will be, on the one hand, and on the other, that indolence, prejudice, and secular cares, will in their degree hinder the generality from inquiring into truth proposed by others, as well as from discovering it for themselves.—Vid. *gr.* 1, 2.

7. Could the great doctrines of religion and rules of morality be settled, and proposed, and taught ever so plainly, and inculcated ever so frequently, it would nevertheless be exceedingly difficult to *enforce* the *practice* of them. The credit of the person proposing them would do little, considering the pride of the generality of mankind, and the difference which might probably happen among those who should undertake to instruct others: and we have before (*Prop.* 77.) proved it not to be the business of the civil magistrate to establish religion by force; and it is certain, if he should attempt it, he could not by his secular power produce any single action truly virtuous, considering how much depends upon the temper and intention with which an action is performed. *Prop.* 49. *gr.* 1, 2.

4, 5, 6, 7. 8. A revelation seems in *theory* highly expedient, and in a manner necessary to bring men to the knowledge of natural religion, and the practice of virtue. *Comph. Scrm. on Rev.* p. 1—28.

Prop. 89. 9. If we consult *fact*, we shall find the ancient and modern world overrun with error, superstition, and vice.

10. Though there have been in the Heathen world some excellent teachers of morality, yet the number of those who have in good earnest set themselves about it has been but small; and some of those few have been entirely ignorant of some things necessary to be known, and very dubious about others, concerning which they had some glimmering of knowledge: where they appear to have been certain themselves, they have often been unable to advance a clear and distinct proof; and even where proofs have been most clear and distinct, they have wanted authority to enforce their instructions and precepts, so that they have availed but little to reform those parts of the world where they dwelt; of which the remarkable wickedness of Greece, in the age of Socrates and Plato, is a very melancholy instance; as that of Rome, in the days of their best moral philosophers, also was.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 281—302. *Jenk. on Christ.* vol. i. p. 364—376. 384—389; in edit. 5. part iii. c. v. p. 367—379. 387—392. *Duc. Plato*, vol. i. Intr. p. 7—9. *Fiddes on Mor. Virt.* c. xix. *Chandler of Mor.* p. 65—77. *Camph. on the Necess. of Revelation, passim. Leland on Life of Rev.* vi. ch. 10. 12. 21. *Prov. Syst.* vol. i. No. xx. p. 450—464. *Leland's View*, vol. ii. p. 192—195. *Monthly Review*, vol. xi. p. 99—105.

8, 9, 10. 11. Experience joins with theory, to prove a revelation so necessary to bring mankind to the knowledge and practice of virtue, that little is to be expected without it.

12. A revelation may make the knowledge of what the light of nature might discover to every man, more plain, easy, certain, and affecting; not to say that there may possibly be some things beyond the discovery of our unassisted reason, which might prove cogent motives to virtue.

Prop. 87, 88. 13. The knowledge and practice of virtue is necessary to the happiness of private persons and societies.

11, 12, 13. 14. A divine revelation is, in the present circumstances of mankind, highly expedient, and therefore greatly desirable. *Q. E. D.*

Fost. against Tind. p. 12—24. *Camph. Necess. of Rev. pass. prax.* c. v. vi. *Watts's Strength and Weakness of Human Reason: Works*, vol. ii. *Hodges's Sermons*, No. xiv. p. 297—309. *Leland's Advant. of Rev.* vol. ii. p. 27—39.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The proposition may be illustrated (and especially *pr.* 10.) by observing, that the most celebrated *lawgivers* of antiquity have thought it necessary to profess some intercourse with Heaven, in order to enforce their laws, though many of them were armed with secular power; as appears, not only in the instances of Moses, but also of Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Solon, Lycurgus, Seleucus, Numa, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Suphis the Egyptian, Minos, Zamolxis the Getan, Woden the Saxon, Melesagoras the Eleusinian, Zathraustes the Arismaspian, Mango-Copal the Peruvian, and Phoe the Indian; to which we may also add, Amasis, Mncvis, Radamanthus, Triptolemus, Zaleucus, Lycaon, Romulus, and Sertorius.

Shuckford's Conn. vol. i. p. 319—323. *Temple's Misc.* part ii. Ess. ii. p. 87—89. *Lucas's Inq.* vol. i. § 2. c. iii. p. 108, 109; p. 79. 7th edit. *Customs of Ind. and Jews compared*, p. 56, 57. *Collier and Bayle in Nom. Warb. Div. Leg.* vol. i. p. 101—109.

It may not be improper to observe, by the way, that whereas the rise of superstition is generally ascribed to the *priests*, it appears in fact, that *princes* and *legislators*, under pretence of inspiration, as well as by other methods, were the chief agents in introducing it into the world, as is with great accuracy and learning shown at large by

Chand. against Morg. part ii. § 15. vol. i. p. 556—580. *Phil. to Hydaspes*, part iii. p. 48, 54.

LECTURE CIV.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To the reasoning in the demonstration above, it is objected, by the author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, That natural religion is so *plain*, as to need no explication; and so *perfect*, as to admit of no addition. *Tind. of Christianity*, c. ii. vi.

SCHOLIUM 3.

To the *first* of these assertions it is answered, That the differences there have been between many learned philosophers, about many branches of natural religion, do evidently prove it not to be so *plain* as is here supposed: and indeed this hypothesis would entirely supersede all *human* as well as divine teachings: and as to what is said of the *perfection* of it, we reply, that if *natural religion* only mean that which in the most extensive sense may be called the *law of nature*, *i. e.* the obligation on a rational agent arising from the whole nature of things, (*Def.* 62. *Schol.*) though the assertion be true, it is nothing to the present purpose; but if we mean by it merely the *light of nature*, (*Def.* 62.) then the assertion is evidently false, being contrary to fact; but if it be a sort of medium between both these, *i. e.* that rule of life, to the knowledge of which men might attain, if they would in general use their faculties well,—then it seems that it is neither so perfect nor so plain as to supersede the usefulness of a revelation, though it should, on the other hand, be granted not to be so imperfect and obscure as to render it universally of absolute *necessity*.—On the whole, Tindal is very little consistent with himself, when, shifting between these different ideas, he sometimes insists on such a *perfection* of it, as is inconsistent with any tolerable degree of *plainness*; and sometimes on such a *plainness* as must suppose it very *imperfect*.

Camph. against Tind. p. 134—138, *or Leland against Tind.* p. 4—10. vol. i.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is objected further, That it seems injurious to the divine goodness, to suppose that God has suffered mankind to fall into such deplorable circumstances as the proposition represents. We answer,

1. That the proposition does not assert mankind to be left under an absolute *impossibility* of obtaining virtue and happiness.

2. That to leave men in great danger of error and vice, and that in such a degree, as will in *fact*, though *not necessarily*, prove fatal to many, is certainly consistent with the divine perfections, because we plainly see it to be done; and is a difficulty by no means peculiar to those that believe revelation, but common to all that believe the goodness of the Deity; and what Tindal says of the great evil of *superstition*, which he supposes

worse than Atheism, joined to the charge of superstition which he brings against the whole *Christian* world, serves yet more to illustrate and confirm this reply.

3. To suppose the light of nature ever so perfect, will not infer the circumstances of mankind to be less deplorable: for the degree of wickedness, and consequently misery, prevailing in the world, being in other respects the same, will be aggravated in proportion to the degree in which their light and advantages are supposed perfect.

Tind. Christianity as old, &c. p. 173, 174. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 64—70, 73—77.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is objected nearly to the same purpose as before, That if a revelation were thus expedient, it must have been *universal*,—there being no imaginable reason why God should give it to some rather than to others. Reserving this to be more fully considered elsewhere, we here answer,

1. Since, on our principles, God was not obliged in strict justice to give it to *any*, he could not be obliged to give it to *all*.

2. That though we cannot tell why one nation should have it rather than another, there is no reason to be surprised at such a distinction, considering in how different, and to us unaccountable, a manner, all must acknowledge the means of virtue and happiness to be dispensed among the children of men.

3. That it is a very supposable case, that if ever God gave a revelation at all, suited to the general use of mankind, it was with such circumstances, that its not having an universal spread, was owing to the folly and wickedness of men: nay, it is a very possible case, that God may already have given an universal revelation; *i. e.* a revelation made to the human family when very small, the tradition of which has been lost through their own folly, though their happiness might have been greatly promoted by keeping up the memory of it.

Blount's Orac. of Reas. p. 211, 198, 199. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 315—318. *Fost. against Tind.* c. ii. p. 78—86. *Butler's Anal.* part. ii. c. vi. *Sykes on Mic.* p. 217—229. *Law's Theory of Religion*, part i. *Balguy's Tracts*, p. 324—334. *Second Letter to a Deist.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

Those who assert a revelation to be so absolutely necessary, that every man, how well soever he uses his reason, must inevitably perish without it, generally ground that assertion, not on principles of natural religion, but on those passages of *Scripture* which relate to the necessity of *faith in Christ*, which cannot here be properly examined.

Jenk. Reas. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 2—14.

LECTURE CV.

PROPOSITION XCII.

There is some reason to hope that God will grant a revelation.

LEMMA.

It is to be observed, that we are far from saying that a man could have any *certainty* in this point; but a *probable hope* might be produced by the following considerations.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 92. 1. The circumstances of mankind greatly need it.

1. 2. The general goodness of the Divine Being may lead us to expect it; and it seems probable that God would not have suffered mankind to have fallen into so great apostasy, unless he had intended them such an assistance.

3. The provision which God has made in the natural world for removing *bodily disorders*, gives us some additional reason to hope that he will not be altogether regardless of the much more dangerous diseases of the *mind*.

Prop. 92. *Schol.* 1. 4. The pretences to a Divine Revelation, which have been often made, and one and another of them so readily received, even sometimes upon very slender evidence, plainly show that men have thought a revelation probable; and perhaps we may add, that there would not have been so many counterfeits if there had been no true coin.

5. Some of the ancient philosophers, and especially Socrates and Plato, though they did not believe the pretences to revelation made by their priests, yet hoped that such a favour would be given to mankind, and express their comfortable expectation of it.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 1. *Ut proposition.*

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 304—310. *Jackson's Chronology*, vol. ii. *sub finem. Apud Monthly Review*, vol. vii. p. 47, 48.

SCHOLIUM.

It may perhaps be objected, That since mankind brought themselves into these deplorable circumstances by their own fault, there is the less reason to expect any extraordinary assistance.

Ans. We allow that no particular person can have any assurance that God will favour him in this manner; but since it is certain that God confers many unmerited favours upon his creatures, and that in the natural world many remedies are provided for evils which men bring upon themselves by their own folly, this objection will not overthrow the preceding argument.

DEFINITION LXIX.

That MIRACLE is said to be UNCONTROLLED, the apparent design of which is not evidently contra-

ducted, either by the *absurdity* of the thing it is intended to prove, or by some at least *equal miracle* opposed to it.

Chand. on Mir. c. iii. *Sykes on* p. 130—134.

SCHOLIUM 8.

A man may be said to perform miracles *in proof of a doctrine*, when he asserts the doctrine, and then works the miracle as an immediate confirmation of it; or when he does publicly and frequently assert himself to be a teacher sent from God, and appeals to a train of miracles to show that he is so: for in that case such miracles (if they be allowed to be any proof at all) do prove particular facts or doctrines asserted by him, even though no miracle be distinctly applied to such particulars.

Fleetwood of Mir. p. 120, 121, 220—228. *Works*, p. 144, 159, 160. *Farmer on Mir.* p. 515—521.

PROPOSITION XCIV.

When a man performs evident and uncontrolled miracles as a proof of any doctrine, virtue requires those who have sufficient evidence of the reality of such miracles, to admit of the doctrine as true.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 91. 1. God may see fit to reveal some things to his creatures, not discoverable by their natural light.

1. 2. God's wisdom will require him to reserve to himself some certain *criteria*, by which his own testimony may be known and distinguished by us.

Prop. 32. and *Def.* 67. 3. A miracle cannot be performed without an extraordinary divine interposition, either mediate or immediate.

3. 4. If God would confirm the truth of a proposition to one man, by the testimony of another to whom it was immediately revealed, we can think of no method by which he could do it in so effectual a manner as by giving him a power to work a *miracle* in confirmation of it.

Def. 69. 5. When a miracle is *uncontrolled*, we can imagine no circumstance by which it can be distinguished from a miracle wrought to confirm a truth.

4, 5. 6. If God were to suffer an uncontrolled miracle to be wrought in confirmation of a falsehood, it seems he could have no criterion by which his testimony could be distinguished.

2, 6. 7. It is inconsistent with the wisdom of God, to suffer an uncontrolled miracle to be wrought in confirmation of a falsehood.

6. 8. It would also be inconsistent with his goodness,—seeing it would leave his creatures in a perpetual and melancholy uncertainty as to the truth of any pretended revelation from him: an uncertainty that would be most painful to the most virtuous and religious part of mankind.

7, 8. 9. Seeing God is both wise and good, we may depend upon it that a proposition attested by uncontrolled miracles is attested by him.

Prop. 79. 9. 10. Seeing God is true, virtue will require us to admit of a proposition so confirmed. *Q. E. D.*

Barrow's Works, vol. ii. p. 214—216. *Locke's Post. Works*, p. 219—222. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 453. edit. 3. *Chand. on Mir.* c. ii.

SCHOLIUM 1.

We have not mentioned that additional confirmation which may arise to the proposition, from the regard which men in all ages and nations seem to have paid to miracles, as the surest proof of a Divine Revelation; that fact having been disputed, especially of late, by the learned and ingenious Mr. Weston, though some considerable stress is laid upon it by Bishop Atterbury, in the place quoted below; and Mr. Comber has laboured to show that miracles were greatly regarded by the Gentiles. It is observable, that few of the legislators mentioned above, (*Prop.* 92. *Schol.* 1.) though they pretended to revelations, (which by them must have been supposed miracles, see *Def.* 68.) ventured to prove the truth of them by professing a power to work miracles. Nevertheless, though the pretended miracles of the Heathens were seldom proposed as in proof of any doctrine, (as will be further noted,) yet there was a sort of accidental credit derived to Heathen establishments by such pretensions to them, which occasioned the multiplication of those pretences in opposition to Christianity; and is a proof, after all, that miracles were not disregarded by the Pagans in general; as, considering the constitution of human nature, it would be strange if they were, at least by those who were themselves eye-witnesses of them, and that in instances where the facts could not be disputed. *Attack. Post. Serm.* vol. i. p. 207—210.*

LECTURE CVI.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To this it is objected, That if we believe the Bible, we shall find that it is not only supposed there that miracles *may be* wrought in proof of a falsehood, but it is expressly asserted to *have been fact* in one case, and foretold as what *shall certainly be* in others. Deut. xiii. 1—5. Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. Exod. vii. and viii. To these texts it has been answered by some, That they, especially the first, may be only *hypothetical* by others, That all the wonders here spoken of are *tricks*, and not real miracles.

* Weston, chapter xiii. on the Cause of the Reverence of the Ancients for Miracles. In the Heathens it was, what can [illegible] the Case of the Egyptians, but in some measure [illegible] The [illegible] were generally esteemed to be [illegible] [illegible] the Egyptian Sorcerers, a book of fables.

which may be true of 2 Thess. ii. 9.; but the justest answer seems to be, That none of these are supposed to be *uncontrolled* miracles, but to be sufficiently confuted, either by the apparent absurdity of the thing they attempted to prove, or by other more and greater miracles wrought on the contrary side; and it is to be remembered in this view, that Matt. xxiv. 24. refers to the apostolic age; so that all the miracles of those false Christs were directly opposed by the sum of all those wrought in the very same time in proof of Christianity.

Tillots. Serm. vol. iii. p. 499, 500; *Serm.* 175. edit. 4. p. 476, 477. *Limb. Theol.* lib. iii. c. xvii. § 2. *Electus. of Mir.* p. 173—209. *Works*, p. 152—157. *Chapman's Eusebius*, vol. i. p. 119—127. *Sykes of Mir.* p. 170—179. *Jortin's Rem. on Eccles. History*, vol. ii. p. 32—36.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Bishop Fleetwood's singular solution of the miracles of the Egyptian *Magi*, may be seen at large in *Fleetwood*, ib. p. 52—61; *Works*, p. 134, 135. *Shuckf. Connect.* vol. ii. p. 412—433.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Others assert that by stating the case as in the proposition above, we fall into a round of proving the doctrine by the miracles, and the miracles by the doctrine; but the contrary is plain: for though we readily allow that nothing apparently contrary to the light of nature can be proved by a miracle, yet we maintain that many doctrines, of which the light of nature could give us no information at all, and in which, even when proposed, we can see no innate mark of truth, may be proved by miracles: it being sufficient in this case to render the proof valid, that no apparent absurdity attend the doctrine to be established by them, where there are no contrary miracles to be compared with them; nor could miracles, according to us, in any imaginable case, be proved by the doctrine, be it ever so apparently true.

Electus. on Mir. p. 169—173. *Works*, p. 151, 152. *Hoadly's Tracts*, p. 26—28. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 383—385. *Bishop Sherlock's Discourses*, vol. i. p. 303, 304.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is further pleaded, That any one miracle is as good a proof of Divine interpositions as a thousand; and that all miracles are as to their evidence equal, since no work can to the Divine Power be greater or less than another. We answer, Though all things be equally easy to God, yet there are some of his works which appear to us more grand and magnificent than others, and more indubitably miraculous: and the story of the Egyptian *Magi*, before referred to, plainly shows there may be circumstances by which one miracle may appear evidently to triumph over another; in which case, it seems that all the evidence arising from the opposite miracle is in a manner even transferred to the victorious side.

Electus. ib. p. 30—37, 81—85, 211—214. *Works*, p. 131, 132—138, 157, 158. *Hoad. Tracts*, p. 5—16. *Locke on Mir.* p. 233—241. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 453, 454. edit. 3.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It must be granted that the evidence of miracles seems so strong, as to render it highly probable that God will not suffer it to be applied in proof of a falsehood, without appearing by miracle to turn the balance on the side of truth: for should he suffer them often to be profaned, to confirm what is evidently contrary to the principles of natural religion, or common sense, they would gradually grow into such suspicion and contempt, as we can hardly suppose his wisdom would permit; and the more illustrious any miraculous fact in question appears, the stronger will this argument be.

Champ. Euseb. vol. i. p. 89—93, 96—116.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It is further objected, That this method of stating the doctrine of miracles renders them of no use; but not to repeat what was said in answer to the objection in the 4th *Schol.* which is nearly equivalent to this, it is most evident they may, on this hypothesis, serve to awaken attention: to illustrate the goodness of the Deity, when they are of a benevolent kind, and in all instances, his power, and thereby impress the consciences of men with sentiments of religious reverence and awe; to command respect to the person speaking, who might otherwise, especially if in circumstances of external meanness, appear pragmatical and usurping; to increase the evidence of some things which may be less certainly known by natural light; and to discover many others, which though not contrary to reason, are not discoverable by it, nor capable of receiving immediate evidence from it.

Foster against Tind. p. 56—63. *Lardn. Past. Serm.* vol. i. p. 210—216. *Jortin's Remarks*, vol. ii. p. 3.

SCHOLIUM 8.

It appears from the survey we have now been taking, that the question, Whether evil spirits, if such there be, may work miracles? is not of so great importance as some have represented it; since it is certain that, on the principles of the proposition, God will not suffer them to work unconfuted miracles; and if any such should be wrought in proof of a falsehood, changing it upon an evil spirit would by no means remove the difficulty, since such a spirit could act no otherwise than by a divine

* We should here distinguish, says Mr. Mercier, between miracles we *perceive* by ourselves, viz. those of revelation, and those we *hear* of, by which we beg miracles, viz. those of natural religion.

energy communicated to him (*Prop.* 32.) Nevertheless, if a miracle were ever wrought which was controlled by the absurdity and wickedness of the doctrine to be proved by it, or by a series of opposite and greater miracles, in that case, it seems more congruous to the Christian scheme (if there appear to be reason for admitting it) to ascribe such miracles to the power of evil spirits, than to speak of them as the work of God. Vid. 2 *Thess.* ii. 9. *Acts* xiii. 10. *Job* ii. 7. compare *Rev.* xiii. 2, 14. Vid. *Prop.* 32. *Schol.* 3.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 318—322. *Jortin's Remarks*, vol. ii. p. 3. *Farmer on Christ's Temptation*, p. 25—27. *

LECTURE CVII.

DEFINITION LXX.

That is called the INTERNAL EVIDENCE of any revelation, which is drawn from the consideration of those declarations and doctrines which are contained in it; and that is called its EXTERNAL EVIDENCE, which arises from some other circumstances referring to it, *v. g.* predictions concerning it, miracles wrought by those who teach it, its success in the world, &c.

PROPOSITION XCV. †

To inquire what kind of internal evidence we may probably expect to find in a divine revelation. ‡

LEMMA.

Let it be observed, that the divine revelation of which we here speak, is supposed to be one intended for the benefit of mankind *in general*, and introduced as that in which the whole scheme of revelation *terminates*; for otherwise it must be acknowledged that there may be particular revelations on different occasions, which may be very credible, though not attended with all those internal evidences: nor could it be expected that every discovery which God makes of himself to any particular person or nation, should answer all these characters.

SOLUTION.

1. We may be sure it can contain nothing apparently contrary to the light of nature,—because that is the law of God, (*Def.* 61.) and he is too wise and too faithful to contradict himself.

2. It may be expected that it should further confirm some important truths known by the light of nature, and clear up the difficulties which hang on some articles in which our happiness is much concerned; particularly, that it should give us firmer assurance of the pardon of sin in a way consistent with the divine justice, and that it should discover more of a future state of happiness, perhaps also of the entrance of sin and calamity into the world.

3. It may very probably contain a discovery of some doctrines as well as facts, which, though not inconsistent with our natural light, are not discoverable by it.

4. As it is very probable that much of it will relate to the Divine Being and his operations, it is to be expected that, though some additional light may be given us as to many things concerning him, yet these discoveries may be connected with further hints relating to what is yet unknown; so that there may be many things in it beyond our adequate comprehension, or, in other words, some things mysterious. Vid. *Prop.* 18. *Cor.* 3.

5. Nevertheless, we may conclude that the most important things will be plainly revealed; so that every honest inquirer may come to a full satisfaction about them.

6. The end of all must be to subserve virtue, and so to promote the happiness of mankind; and those additional discoveries beyond what the light of nature could have found out (supposed *gr.* 3.) will no doubt centre in this, and not tend merely to amaze our minds and excite our curiosity.

7. Considering how greatly and how universally *pride* prevails in the minds of men, how detrimental it is to almost all the branches of virtue, and how much it taints and debases many actions which would otherwise be the most excellent, as likewise how ill it becomes any creature, and especially a mortal and a sinful creature, it is exceedingly probable that the whole series of a divine revelation will evidently tend to exalt God and to humble man.

Tillots. vol. iii. p. 442, 443. *Dod.* x. *Serm.* No. viii. p. 203—211. *Duchal on the Presumptive Evid. of the Christ. Relig.* p. 111—118. *Butler's Anal.* part. ii. c. iii.

* Most of the considerations to which these words refer are amply collected by Mr. Farmer in his Dissertation on Miracles.

† This and the seven following Propositions seem much to illustrate each other. It would, perhaps, have been better to have united them in one discourse; but as I had formed them into distinct lectures before I was aware of the connection, and especially as I thought the subject of Inspiration deserved a more particular consideration than it could have had, if it had been only a part of a discourse, I chose to let them stand as they were originally delivered. I hope that the reader will not think the repetitions which are found in them too frequent, because the same things are often introduced in the illustration of different propositions. Some of the considerations in the following lecture have been taken from Dr. Sykes's Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, and from Leland's View of the Deistical Writers, and Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; but the greatest part of the whole is entirely my own.

‡ See note on Dr. Sykes's book on the external and the external evidences to be supposed in a divine revelation, with additional observations on Dr. Leland's book on Divine Inspiration, part the second.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is objected, That on these principles a revelation must be needless,—since a man must understand the principles of natural religion before he can judge of a revelation; and if he can judge of these, he does not need a revelation.

To what is said in *Prop.* 94. *Schol.* 7. we may here add the following remarks:—

1. We allow that the being and truth of God must be known, before we can judge of the internal evidence of a revelation as above.

2. That nevertheless a revelation may improve what is known, correct mistakes, and excite men by proper motives to the practice of virtue, which they generally need more than merely to be instructed in its nature.

3. That a revelation may be a means of leading a person into the knowledge and belief of those doctrines which must be believed before that revelation can be admitted; *v. g.* miracles may convince an Atheist of the being of a God.

4. That the report of a revelation, and some probable external evidence of its truth striking the mind, may lead into more attentive reflection on the principles of natural religion; and thereby further promote the knowledge of them, and make way for a rational admission of the revelation itself, with a regard to its internal evidence as now better understood.

5. That the evidence with which a revelation is attended may further convince even a wise and good man of those things which he before believed, and on the belief of which he admitted the revelation as probably true; *v. g.* remarkable appearances of God may further prove his particular providence; and the accomplishment of prophecies and threatenings may introduce a further and more lively conviction of his truth. To which we may add,

6. That the whole objection is founded upon an evident mistake; since it lies against all methods of instruction whatsoever, and might be applied even to mathematical treatises; as it might be said they cannot improve reason,—since we must by reason judge whether the arguments are conclusive.

Tind. of Christianity, p. 369. edit. 1. p. 77—82; 2nd edit. former part of c. xiv. p. 335. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 41—51. part i. *Leland against Tind.* vol. ii. p. 95—100. *Butler's Anal.* part. ii. c. i.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may be questioned, Whether a revelation is to be admitted, which commands an action forbidden by the general rules of morality, *v. g.* to kill an innocent child, or put a whole nation of men to the sword.

Ans. 1. That cannot be a divine revelation which requires any thing which, all things considered, is in present circumstances evil.

2. It is difficult for us to say that such actions as those here mentioned are in all cases and circumstances unlawful, or even that human sacrifices are universally so; because it is possible they may be for the public good; and God, whose views are infinitely more extensive than ours, might see them to be so in circumstances when we could not possibly discern it.

3. Upon the whole, therefore, we must judge by comparing the evidence on both sides; and if, in any given instance, we have a stronger evidence that God requires a thing, than we have, on the other hand, that in present circumstances it is an evil,—we are then to believe it good, and to obey the revelation requiring it; depending upon it that God will, one way or another, interpose, to prevent such an issue of the affair, as it would be contrary to his perfections to permit.

Chubb's Prem. Quest. pass. Butler's Anal. part ii. c. iii. p. 267, 268, 8vo edit.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Considering how liable the human mind is to mistake, great care should be taken that we do not admit any principle as certain which may really be doubtful, with respect to natural religion; lest, trying revelation by this complex notion as a standard, we should reject any thing that is really authentic, and sufficiently proved to be so by external evidence. This therefore is to be diligently attended to upon the principles laid down above, and one part of the internal evidence weighed against another, as well as the sum of both with the external, in order to form a right judgment.—See *Prop.* 120. § 1. 5.

LECTURE CVIII

PROPOSITION LXXI.

Those are called POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS OR PRECEPTS, which are not founded upon any reasons known to those to whom they are given, or discoverable by them, but which are observed merely because some superior has commanded them.

COROLLARY.

It is plain that *positive* precepts may be distinguished from *arbitrary* precepts, *i. e.* those which are founded upon the mere will of the commander, and for which he himself can see no reason.

Clough against Tind. p. 155—157. *Mann* 1-9. p. 15, 16. *Heliet on Script.* vol. iii. p. 187—191.

PROPOSITION LXXII.

There may be positive institutions in a religion of which God is the Author.

OBSERVATIONS.

1. There are various relations of things unknown to us, and beyond the discovery of our natural faculties.

1. 2. It is possible those unknown relations may render some things fit to be done by us, which we cannot see ourselves under any obligation to.

Prop. 33. 3. These are most clearly known to the Divine Mind.

1, 2, 3. 4. God may have sufficient reasons, to us unknown, for appointing such particular actions, which we could not otherwise see ourselves obliged to.

5. There may be, in other instances, a general reason for appointing some test of our obedience, when there is no peculiar reason for preferring one to another.

6. Humility, and consequently virtue, may be, in some circumstances, more effectually promoted, when we are required to obey commands founded on reasons unknown to us, than if those commands carried their own apparent reason along with them; and it may be with this view that God sees fit to conceal from us the foundation of the commands in question.

7. Civil governors may make laws founded on reasons unknown to their subjects, and proper to be concealed from them.

8. God, as our Creator and constant Benefactor, has a right to command us incomparably superior to that of any civil governor.

9. Circumstances of worship will appear more solemn, when considered as matters of divine institution, than merely as matters of human invention; and a greater solemnity may thereby be added to the worship itself; by which means they may have a remoter tendency gradually to promote those several virtues, which such acts of religious worship are intended to subserve.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. 10. There may be positive institutions in a religion of which God is the Author. *Q. E. D.*

Caugh. p. 158—170. *Fost. against Tindal*, p. 281—284.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, That forasmuch as God is unchangeable, (*Prop.* 30. *Cor.*) his will and our duty to him must always be the same.

Ans. Our *general* duty will always be the same; but the *particular expressions* of it must vary as our circumstances vary: nor is there any change in the divine will implied in such a variety, or in his giving new commands to us, when these new circumstances arise, more than there is in his producing new creatures.

Tind. ib. p. 20. Sect. p. 118. c. x. *Caugh.* ib. p. 170—174. *Fost.* ib. c. iv. p. 288, 289.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is also objected, That it is inconsistent with the divine wisdom to command *indifferent* things as *necessary*. It is answered, They are not commanded as necessary, *i. e.* as *morally* and *universally* so, though in the present circumstance they may be *expedient*; and if they could never in any instance be expedient, they would not be indifferent, but universally and morally evil, contrary to the hypothesis.

Tind. ib. p. 131, 132. *Caugh.* ib. p. 174—177.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is said to be inconsistent with the goodness of God to fetter our liberty, and thereby impair our happiness, by requiring things under certain penalties, which we might else have been excused from; and that this will turn a revelation into a curse instead of a blessing.

To this it is replied,

1. It is not granted that every positive institution as such does necessarily impair our happiness, whether by restraining our liberty, or by multiplying our care in observing them; for the pleasure a pious mind will have in resigning to God's will some of its enjoyments, and in finding itself continually employed in his service, may upon the whole make the observance of such positive precepts more delightful than a freedom from them.

2. The tendency these things may have in their consequences to promote virtue, may, on the whole, be vastly more than an equivalent for present pleasure forborne, and labour and difficulty incurred.

3. If, on the whole, these positive precepts did diminish our happiness, a revelation, of which they are a part, might contain such advantages of another kind, as on the whole to make it a great blessing; nor can it by any means be proved that every thing which God *requires* of us must *immediately* promote our happiness, any more than that all he appoints in the course of his *providence* must have this effect.

Tind. ib. p. 123 and 131. c. xi. *Conybeare*, ib. p. 177—182. *Limb. Collat. ap. Specт.* vol. iii. No. 243.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is objected, That it is self-contradictory to suppose God should *forbid that* by a revelation, which he has *allowed* by a natural law.

Ans. 1. No natural law allows it in *such circumstances*, as those in which it is by a revealed law forbidden; *i. e.* when God has expressly determined a case, in itself indifferent.

2. On the same principles, all those civil laws are to be condemned, by which things are forbidden which are not directly contrary to the law of nature.

Mass. Disc. p. 52. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 285—288.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is also objected, That positive precepts overcharge the mind, and so lead to the neglect of moral virtue; and that if people come to believe these things good for any thing, they will soon suppose them good for every thing; *i. e.* place the whole of their religion in them, considering how prone men are to superstition. *Prop.* 76. *Schol.* 7.

Ans. 1. There is no arguing against the use of a thing from the possibility of its being abused; for then all the entertainments and supports of human life must be condemned.

2. It is reasonable to believe, that if God gives a revelation in which positive precepts are contained, he will take proper care to distinguish them from the great precepts of moral virtue.

3. A few positive precepts, given in a revelation, declaring the rule of faith and practice, may more effectually prevent the increasing and idolizing such observances, than if none at all had been appointed.

Tind. of Christianity, p. 123, 124. *Gough against Tindal*, p. 182—193. *Mann Arg.* p. 48—51. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 282—303.

COROLLARY.

It appears from this survey of the subject, that the insertion of some positive institutions, in a proper manner moderated, and declared subordinate to the precepts of moral virtue, is so far from being an objection against such a revelation, that it is rather to be considered as an additional part of its internal evidence; especially considering, that as a divinely instituted religion will probably require some association of its professors, there must, in the nature of things, be some form of entering into that association, and of maintaining a profession of continued adherence to it; which will have evident advantages, if supposed of divine appointment.

Butler's Anal. part ii. c. i. p. 215—217. 8vo edit. *Lett. to Wallace*, p. 8—11. *Answer*, p. 27—33. *Leland against Tindal*, vol. i. p. 51—92. *Lett. of Posit. Inst. prefixed to Leland*, vol. ii.*

LECTURE CIX.

PROPOSITION XCVII.†

To inquire into the external evidence which may probably attend a revelation.

LEMMA.

It is to be observed, That we do by no means limit the Divine Being to all the circumstances here mentioned; but only remark, that if a revelation offered should seem to be attended with such circumstances in conjunction with the above-mentioned internal evidences, each of these circumstances would concur to recommend it to our candid and diligent examination.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. We might reasonably suppose, that at least *most* of the persons chiefly employed in the first publishing the revelation would be persons of piety and virtue; otherwise, we could neither imagine that God would favour them with such extraordinary discoveries of himself, nor could we depend upon their veracity in reporting them to us: yet we cannot say that it is necessary that *all* the persons so employed, if there be a considerable number of them, should be good men, and much less that every one of them should be freed from every degree of sin, though perhaps, if any one person is to bear a much greater part in the revelation than the rest, he may be so distinguished.

Tind. ib. p. 8 and 244; 8vo. p. 219. *Foster against Tind.* p. 113, 114. c. iii. p. 112, 113. *Leland*, ib. vol. ii. part ii. c. ii. p. 36—38, 42—53; 2d ed. p. 28—31, 39—43.

2. It is possible that some *superior spirit* (vid. *Prop.* 86.) may be employed as a messenger from heaven to bring this revelation; and if he should not only make a transient appearance on earth, but take up his abode here for a considerable time in a human form, giving an example of the most perfect virtue, we must acknowledge the circumstance extremely well chosen, and worthy the divine wisdom, though we cannot pretend it to be of absolute necessity.

3. We may reasonably depend upon it, that the *chief* messenger, if such there be, or others commissioned by him, will, at the first publishing of such a revelation, be endued with a power of working evident, uncontrolled, and probably, most of them beneficial, *miracles*,—they being not only a very solid proof of a divine mission, (*Prop.* 94.) but, upon many accounts, the most plain, popular, and convincing, and best suited to the bulk of mankind,—for whose benefit no doubt a revelation would be calculated.

Atterb. Serm. vol. iii. p. 217—222.

4. It is probable that the chief persons employed in opening such a revelation may appear in plain and low circumstances of human life, rather than with princely grandeur; since in this view their testimony might be less suspected of being a political contrivance, and their example would be more instructive to the generality of mankind. Nor is it on the whole incredible that such persons, notwithstanding their own virtue, should be despised and persecuted, and perhaps put to death, for their attempts to reform the world: if this were the case,

* Rather affixed to volume the first, but it is not in the second edition. S

† See the note on Prop. 95.

they would give a most edifying example of suffering virtue, and an evidence of the integrity of their character and testimony to all ages, beyond what we could conceive in other circumstances. And though, for this reason, God might probably leave some of them to die by their enemies' hands, yet it is not unlikely, but in some remarkable instances he might interpose for the delivery of his servants in their extremity, either rescuing some of them by miracle, in order to their further usefulness, or perhaps raising them from the dead.

Plato de Rep. lib. ii. *ap. Dod.* x. *Sermon*, p. 206, edit. 1: p. 131, edit. 4. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 317, 318. *Elem. Christol.* vol. ii. p. 51—53, 76—85.

5. It is not improbable that a revelation should be *gradually* introduced, and the expectation of mankind awakened by *predictions* and previous miracles, before the greatest scene of all be disclosed: this is analogous to the usual method of divine operation in the works of nature, and would lay a foundation for a very convincing additional evidence of the truth of the revelation, if it should appear that a variety of different persons, of different ages, and perhaps different countries, had been led by the providence of God and his influence on their minds, to carry on their proper distinct parts of one harmonious design, the connexion of which was unknown to each of them.

Barrington. Ess. on Div. Disp. Pref. p. 22—28. *Butler's Anal.* part ii. c. vii.

6. It is probable that God may bear further witness to such a revelation, by giving it at first remarkable success, notwithstanding strong opposition, and though it may be destitute of human support; and by making it visibly effectual for reforming the characters of its professors. Such facts might be capable of most convincing proof to future ages; on which account they seem peculiarly proper.

7. Forasmuch as miracles would lose much of their force, if they were frequently to be repeated for a long succession of ages, it is not reasonable to conclude that such a revelation would always be attended with the same degree of sensible evidence with which it was at first introduced into the world: it is more natural to imagine that God would take care that the first publishers of it should deliver in *writing* the history, purposes, and contents of the revelation, and that their books should be transmitted to posterity with such kind of evidence as other ancient records have.

8. It is probable, that if this method of transmitting a revelation be taken, Providence may so order it, that the evidence of the main facts on which it is built shall, at least in part, be drawn from the testimony and confession of those by whom it was opposed: at least we must confess that this would be a strong additional medium of proof.

Dod. x. *Sermon*, No. viii. p. 215—218. edit. 2: p. 206—208, edit. 1.

LECTURE CX.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The principal objections against the preceding solution, are those which affect the *seventh step* of it: we shall therefore, in the following *Scholia*, give a view of the chief arguments brought against the supposition of such a *traditional* revelation, (as Tindal, though with some partial ambiguity, has affected to call it,) and propose the most obvious answers to them.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is objected, That forasmuch as the credibility of any testimony is impaired by passing through a number of hands, all the evidence which any traditional revelation can be supposed to have, must in time be utterly worn out.

Ans. 1. Where the testimony of any traditional witness gives *indubitable persuasion*, the credibility of the thing testified suffers *no diminution* by passing through his hands; and the credit universally given to many facts in ancient history, proves that the decrease is exceedingly small, even in a long succession of ages, when the intermediate witnesses are faithful, careful, and knowing.

2. That a tradition preserved by *writing*, is evidently less liable to corruption than that which is merely *oral*; since when the facts are once recorded, there is no room left for a failure in memory,—to which alone the mistakes of honest men will be owing in transmitting a testimony.

3. That the agreement of various witnesses, and many of them in separate interests, concerning such a revelation, may be more than an equivalent for the little defects mentioned above.

4. That the success of a revelation, or the accomplishment of some prophecies contained in it, and the illustration of many other branches of internal evidence, relating to the characters of historians, mutual connexion, and correspondence of facts, &c. on the principles of the *fifth* step, may give it such an increase of evidence as shall abundantly overbalance all that it can be supposed to lose, by being transmitted through many hundred years.

Tind. ibid. p. 185. 4to: 8vo, p. 163. 12mo, p. 165—168. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 92—96. *Leland.* ib. vol. ii. p. 113—119. *Wash. Div. Leg.* p. 1—3. vol. i. *Comber against Weston. Append. Jennings Log. Prep.* xvii. xviii. *Ditt. on Resur.* part. ii. *Prop.* xv. xvi. *Elem.*

ming's three Monuments, confirming three plain Facts, passim.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is also objected, That there are so many forgeries of books pretended to be ancient, that it is a difficult matter to distinguish the genuine from the spurious; and that since the bulk of the common people have neither leisure nor ability to manage an inquiry of this nature, if they receive a traditional revelation, it must be by an implicit faith in the testimony of those who are the teachers of that religion; so that in reality they believe not GOD, but the *priest*.

Ans. 1. It is universally allowed, that learned men may have sufficient evidence as to the genuineness of ancient books, and therefore of those which contain the substance of a supposed revelation: and as it is highly probable, in the nature of things, that books of this kind would early pass into many hands, and be examined with the utmost rigour, and preserved with the greatest care, the evidence of their being genuine might *(cæt. par.)* be much greater than could be obtained as to any other books of equal antiquity.

2. Though the common people cannot of themselves enter minutely into the proofs, yet they may have some opportunity of gaining rational satisfaction, by consulting persons of learning and seeming integrity, not merely among the priests, but the *laity;* and by reading books that give a view of the argument, in which they may reasonably take it for granted, that especially in a learned and inquisitive age, no man will cite vouchers notoriously false.

3. They may compare writers on both sides, if the revelation be opposed; and perhaps may see, from the manner in which the opposition is made, what may greatly confirm them in the truth opposed.

4. A person that cannot read himself, may get some valuable treatises read over to him, perhaps again and again by different persons, whose partiality he has no reason to suspect, and concerning whom he might be confidently sure they read what was before them.

Tind. ib. p. 232—234. 4to; p. 209—212. 12mo. *Fost.* ib. p. 171—174, 178—182. *Main Arg.* p. 67—72. *Dodd. First Lett. to the Author of Christ. not founded, &c.* p. 52—56. *Benson's Reas. of the Christ. Rel.* part ii. *Dial.* 4. *pres.* p. 144, 145, 153—155.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is objected, That the common people cannot be sufficient judges of the faithfulness of a *translation*, which yet is necessary in order to their understanding a traditional revelation depending on books, and designed for the use of various nations. We reply,

1. That though we acknowledge they cannot be so entirely satisfied as those who understand the original language, (which should recommend the study of the original to those who can conveniently engage in it,)—yet the unlearned may very cheerfully depend upon the testimony of persons of acknowledged ability and known integrity, who have diligently compared the version with the original, and declare it as a fact on their own knowledge, that it is in the main agreeable to it.

2. Such a testimony acquires a very strong additional degree of evidence, when persons of different parties and sentiments in religion agree in allowing the same version; and when the originals are in the hands of those who are its greatest enemies.

Main Arg. p. 73. *Dod.* x. *Sermon.* No. viii. p. 228—231. edit. 1.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is further objected, That there will be difficulties in the most literal and faithful translation of any ancient book, and in the original itself, arising from the different genius of languages; and especially if it be an oriental book, from the strong figures with which it will abound.

Ans. 1. Figurative language is not always obscure.

2. It is reasonable to suppose, that if God sees fit to communicate a revelation by books, he will take care that the most important things shall be expressed in such a manner, as to be very intelligible in a literal translation.

3. The objection here urged would equally affect all ancient books.

Fost. against Tind. p. 186—191, 194. *Main Arg.* p. 74, 75. *Leland against Tind.* vol. ii. p. 232—246.

SCHOLIUM 6.

To get clear of all these objections against a traditional revelation, some have asserted, That we may reasonably suppose that, if God communicates a revelation from age to age, every particular person will have the truth of a revelation so proposed immediately discovered to him by some divine agency on his mind; though perhaps this may be an argument only for his own use.

It cannot be denied that such an immediate impulse on the mind of each individual is possible to Divine Power: but this manner of stating the case supposes the revelation to be a *personal* thing; so that those who have never experienced any thing of this kind, would probably look upon it as an enthusiastical pretence. Yet we may perhaps reasonably admit, that where men lie under great disadvantages for receiving the ordinary proofs, God may by some secret influence so dispose their minds, as that the *internal* evidence of a revelation, and its visible effects, shall produce a very strong

degree of assent, though they are forced to take up with very slender *external* proofs: to which we may add, that God can, if he pleases, order such a correspondence between certain events in his providence, and certain impressions on the mind made in consequence of the supposed truth of a revelation, as shall greatly confirm the faith of the inquirer, and be almost equivalent to miracles wrought for his conviction; though he may not be able to make these things out fully to another. And if, on the whole, the belief of any revelation produces a virtuous temper, the great end of it is answered, even though the person so influenced and reformed by it may not be able to give a rational account of the grounds of this assent, or may build it upon some weak arguments.

Lett. to Wallace, sub fin. Christianity not founded on Arg. pass. Dod. Ans. No. i. *pass.* p. 11—32. *Law's Theory*, p. 18—23.

SCHOLIUM 7.

On a survey of the whole argument, we must confess that a traditional revelation will be attended with some difficulties and some defects; and that those who have it, will not enjoy altogether the same advantages with those to whom the revelation was originally given: nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude,

1. That strong degrees of internal evidence, and an experience of the reforming power of any religion upon the minds of its professors, and especially on our own, will make up the deficiency of some degree of external evidence, which might otherwise be very desirable: more especially when, on the one hand, it concurs with some remarkable *personal experiences*, (as above, *Sch.* 6.) and, on the other, there are no strong circumstances of suspicion attending what external evidence there is; *v. g.* the vices of the author of that revelation, its being first introduced by sanguinary methods, its acknowledging the want of miracles, or pretending to such as are palpably ridiculous, &c.

2. That if God gives a traditional revelation, he will give such evidence of one kind or another, as shall be sufficient to convince every honest and candid inquirer.

3. That it by no means becomes us to prescribe to God what further degrees of evidence, beyond what is barely sufficient for this purpose, shall be given to any revelation.

4. That a mixture of obscurity, either in the proof or contents of a revelation, may perhaps have its use; particularly to humble men's minds, and to serve as a *touchstone*, by which their true character may be distinguished.

Grot. de Verit. lib. ii. c. xix. *Dodd. Third Lett.* ib. p. 57—59. *Butler's Anal.* part ii. c. vi. p. 226—235. 4to; 333—344. 8vo.

SCHOLIUM 8.

In this argument, it may be very proper to review that excellent abstract of the controversy between Tindal and his antagonists, which is given in

Main Arg. p. 77—86.*

* The Main Argument, (the whole of which I have read and recollect, as I passed that way in my childhood,) is a piece of real merit, and well worthy a careful attendance. The time of its appearance, I do not exactly know; the preface is dated [illegible]. A considerable number of answers were published to it, both in prose and verse, and the controversy was a considerable one. See *Biog. Brit.* [illegible]

PART VI.

IN WHICH THE GENUINENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT ARE ASSERTED AND VINDICATED

PROPOSITION XCVIII.

Christianity is not a modern religion; but was maintained and professed by great multitudes quickly after the time in which Christ, its supposed founder, is said to have appeared, *i. e.* in the days of Tiberius Cæsar.

* See a good view of this argument, and of the various objections to it, in Dr. Jortin's Reflections on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study of History, p. 102—129. 8vo. Also Jortin's Tracts.

LECTURE CXI

DEMONSTRATION

1. There is a series of books written by Christian authors, who are said to have lived, some in the first, some in the second, century, besides a multitude in those that follow; concerning the genuineness of which we have as much satisfaction as concerning that of any other ancient writers, whether Jewish or Pagan; particularly Clemens Romanus, Ignatius,

and Polycarp, in less than a hundred years after the time mentioned; Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus Antiochenus, in less than 200 years; for accounts of whom see any historical dictionary;—not to mention a great many others whose books are now lost, but whose writings are mentioned by Eusebius and other ancients, by whom also some considerable fragments of them are preserved; of whom see *Prop.* 101.

2. Some of the most ancient Jewish books, said to have been written about these 1700 years, expressly mention the Christians, and bitterly inveigh against them.

Lardner's Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. i. c. vii. § 1; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 187—189.

3. It plainly appears that Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, Julian, and many other heathen writers, assaulted Christianity with great bitterness; and several fragments of their writings are preserved in those of the Christian apologists, by whom they were answered, and whose pieces are allowed to be genuine, though many of the heathen originals are unhappily lost.—Their antagonists were Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Cyril.

Lardner's Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. ii. c. xvii. vol. iii. c. xxxvii. § 9; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 1—5, 220—226.

4. Tacitus assures us, that in Nero's days there was a multitude of Christians, not only in Judea, where he tells us that religion began, but in Rome; against whom Nero raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty, as moved the compassion of their enemies; intimating also that this was not the first attempt to crush that sect.

Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. c. 44. *Lardner*, ib. c. v. § 2; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 253—255.

5. Suetonius also expressly mentions the punishment inflicted upon the Christians by Nero.

Sueton. Nero, c. xvi. *Pfitsc. Innot. in Loc.* *Lardner*, ib. c. viii. § 3; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 266—268.

6. Pliny, junior, informs Trajan at large of his proceedings against the Christians in Bithynia; and after having borne a very honourable testimony to the morality and virtue of their character, says, "That multitudes of both sexes of persons of every rank were infected with this superstition, which was got into villages as well as cities; so that, till he began to put the laws in execution against them, the temples of the heathen deities were almost deserted, and few could be found to buy victims for them. *Plin. Epist.* lib. x. Ep. 97.

To which we may add the answer of the emperor to him, forbidding the Christians to be sought out, —but commanding them to be punished if they presented themselves (ib. Ep. 98.); and also the epistle of Tiberianus, governor of Palæstina Prima to Trajan, on the same subject, and nearly parallel to this of Pliny, which is preserved by John Malala, in the second book of his Chronicles, and published by Archbishop Usher, in his *Appendix Tiberiana*, to the genuineness of which nothing can be reasonably objected; so that it is strange that so many who collect testimonies of this kind, should have entirely omitted it.*

Nearly akin to this also is the letter of Serrenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, to Adrian, with the rescript of Adrian himself, in favour of the Christians, mentioned by Justin Martyr, and also by Melito, as quoted by Eusebius.

Bisco at Boyle's Lect. p. 449, 450. *Euseb. Hist.* lib. iv. c. viii. ix. and xxvi. *Just. Mart. Op.* p. 99, 100. *Lardner*, ibid. c. ix. § 3. c. ii. § 2, 3; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 291—294, 358—364. *Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 82, 83.

7. Lucian expressly mentions the Christians, as performing some extraordinary works, as resolutely bearing some extreme sufferings, as expressing a great contempt of heathen deities, and as remarkable for their mutual charity, as well as for the prophets and the missionaries of their churches; and though the author of the *Philopatris* be not certainly known, it is undoubtedly a very ancient piece, in which Christians and their affairs are expressly mentioned in a great variety of circumstances.

Moyle's Works, p. 261—263. *Powel. Works*, vol. i. p. 285, &c. *Huet. Dem. Evang.* p. 41, 42. *Prop.* 101. § 20, *ad fin.* *Lucian de Mort. Peregr. ap. Op.* vol. ii. p. 365—367. *Pseudomant.* ib. vol. ii. p. 419—423. *Bisco at Boyle's Lect.* p. 450, 451. *Lardner*, ibid. c. xix. *passim*. *Works*, vol. viii. p. 60—81.

8. Marcus Antoninus expressly mentions the Christians as examples of an obstinate contempt of death; and in his *Constitutions to the Community of Asia* (quoted from Melito, who wrote in this emperor's time, by *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* lib. iv. c. xiii.) speaks of the Christians as having for a considerable time been persecuted even to death. See also Justin Martyr's Apology to M. Anton. *ap. Op.* p. 101, 102. To which we may add, that Epictetus is generally supposed to have referred to them, when he speaks of the fortitude with which the Galilæans endured the severest torments; and Galen, the celebrated physician, in the second century, uses the obstinacy of the Christians in defending their tenets, as a proverbial expression.

* [illegible] *Lardner's Works*, vol. viii. p. 60—81.

Marc. Antoninus, lib. xi. c. iii. *Clerici Hist. Eccles.* p. 543. *Arr. Epict.* lib. iv. c. vii. p. 400. *Lard. Heathen Test.* vol. ii. c. xxi. c. x. § 6. c. xiv. § 3. c. xv. § 2; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 90, 91. vol. vii. p. 354—357. 390—393. 398—406. *Mosh's Post. Works*, vol. ii. p. 93—96. 243—255. *Mosh's Discourse, in the Theological Repository*, vol. i.

9. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, mentioning the practice of the Jews to curse the Christians in their synagogues, charges it upon them as a known fact, "That after the death of Christ, and while Jerusalem was yet standing, they sent out chosen men from them into all the world, to inform them that the new sect of the Christians was an atheistical sect; expressly to contradict the doctrine of Christ's resurrection and ascension, and to warn them in the most solemn manner against receiving it."

Just. Martyr. Trypho, p. 169—171. and 368. edit. Thirlb. *Lardner's Cred.* vol. i. lib. i. c. viii. § 2; *Works*, vol. i. p. 171, 172.

10. The same Justin Martyr, not much above 100 years after the death of Christ, declares it as a notorious fact, "That there was no nation of men, whether Greek or Barbarian, not excepting even those wild stragglers, the Amaxobii, and Nomades, who had no fixed habitation, who had not learned to invoke the One Father and Former of all things, in the name of Jesus who was crucified;" and though one may allow something hyperbolical in the expression, it must undoubtedly contain a most important testimony to the fact asserted in the proposition, parallel to which is a celebrated passage in Tertullian, referred to below.

Justin Martyr, Trypho, p. 388. Thirlb. edit. *Tertul. Apol. c.* XXXVII. *ap. Op* p. 30. *Lyc. Reeves's Apol.* vol. i. p. 323—326. *Macknight's Truth of the Gospel History*, book iii. c. iv. § 1. p. 189—195.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is observable, that most of these writers, at the same time that they mention the Christians as a body of men then in being, do also mention the persecutions they endured; an important fact, which is also further confirmed by the apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Athenagoras, and Origen; which are undoubtedly to be reckoned among the most valuable remains of antiquity.

Dodd. Ten Serm. No. viii. p. 226—230. *Cave's Primitive Christianity*, p. 17—30. *Macknight*, ib. § 2. p. 195—209.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It seems exceedingly probable, that when Seneca, *Caput Amicat. Cr. Dei* vi. 11.; Tacitus, Dio, Nicomatian, and other Pagan writers, speak of the vast increase of the Jewish sect, about their age, and of the severe punishments inflicted upon them for their religion, they do at least include, if not principally refer to, the Christians, whom they looked upon as a branch of the Jews; because the founders and first teachers of Christianity were by birth of that nation.* *Huet. Dem. Prop.* 3. § 21. p. 42.

LECTURE CXII.

PROPOSITION XCIX.

There was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of the Christian Religion; and he was crucified at Jerusalem about seventeen hundred years ago, *i. e.* during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 98. 1. There were a multitude of men who called themselves by the name of Christ, and professed the religion which he was said to have founded, a little after the time in which we assert that he lived.

2. We can never imagine they would have done this, especially at so great a hazard of their possessions and their lives, (*Schol.* 1.) if they had not been well assured that he was a real person, and not merely a fictitious name.

3. Tacitus expressly says, "That he was the author of the Christian name, and that he was put to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator for Tiberius Cæsar."—*Tacit. Ann.* lib. xv. c. 44.

And Pliny, in the passage quoted before (*Prop.* 98. *qr.* 6.) asserts, "That the Christians sang a hymn to Christ as to a God."

4. The primitive Christians appeal to the acts of Pilate, as giving an account of the innocence and death of Christ; and though we readily allow those now extant to be spurious, yet we can never think such writers would have made such appeals, especially to the very persons in whose keeping these monuments were, (if they were at all,) had they not been satisfied of their existence and contents.†

Justin Mart. Apol. p. 76. c. 64. e. *Tertull. Apol.* c. XXI. *Dissert. on the Resurrection*, p. 416—420. edit. 1732. p. 467—470. p. 354—362. of edit. 1720. *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* p. 608—624. *Fabricius, Cod.* vol. ii. p. 298—301. vol. iii.

* Mr. Mosheim has taken a most [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ...

p. 455—465. *Addison of Christianity*, c. i. § 7. *Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 2—4.

5. It is very probable that Suetonius refers to Christ, when he says, "That Claudius Cæsar expelled all the Jews from Rome, on account of the tumults which they raised, *impulsore Christo*," *i. e.* probably, on account of Christ, whom it is certain they often called *Christus*. – Compare Acts xviii. 2.

Sueton. Claud. c. xxv. No. xii. *Pitisc. Not. in Loc.* vol. i. p. 689. *Vand. de Orac.* p. 604—607. *Lardner's Cred.* vol. i. lib. i. c. ii. § 3; *Works*, vol. i. p. 246, 247. vol. vii. p. 266, 267. *Wits. Melctem. de Vit. Paul*, § 7. No. ii. iii. *Usher's Ann. Jul. Per.* 4767. *Dodd. on Acts*, ch. 18. ver. 2.

6. Ælius Lampridius assures us that the emperor Alexander Severus entertained such high thoughts of Christ, that he would have admitted him among the number of his deities, and built a temple to him, had not his Pagan subjects vigorously opposed it.

Spart. de Vit. Serv. c. xxix. and xliii. *Lardn. Heath. Testimonies*, vol. ii. c. ii. § 4. vol. iii. c. xxxv.; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 361—367.

7. Porphyry also, though an inveterate enemy to Christianity, not only allowed that there was such a person as Christ, but honoured him as a most wise and pious man, translated into Heaven, as being approved by the Gods; and accordingly quotes some oracles, referring both to his sufferings and virtues, with their subsequent rewards.

Euseb. Dem. Evang. lib. iii. p. 134. *Lardner's Heath. Test.* vol. ii. c. xxxvii. § 10; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 176—248. *præsertim*, p. 226—248.

8. Celsus likewise mentions numberless circumstances in the History of Christ, (indeed so many, that an abstract of the Christian History might almost be taken from the very fragments of his book preserved by Origen,) and never pretends to dispute his real existence, or the truth of the facts.

Ancient Univ. Hist. vol. xv. p. 247. 8vo edit. *Lardner's Heath. Test.* vol. iii. c. xviii. § 4, 5, 12, 13; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 5—69. *præsertim*, p. 18—43, 57—69.

9. Hierocles also, under the fictitious name of Philalethes, in a book which Eusebius has expressly quoted and largely answered, speaks of Jesus as extolled by the Christians as a God, for giving sight to the blind, and doing some other wonders of that kind; and also speaks of Peter and Paul, as crying him up in so extraordinary a manner: though he foolishly endeavours to show that Apollonius was equal and even superior to him; of which we shall afterwards treat.

Euseb. Dem. Evang. p. 512. *cont. Hier. sub init. Lardner*, ib. vol. iii. c. xxxix. § 2, 4. *Works*, vol. viii. p. 254—266. *See Proposition* 113. *Scholium* 5.

10. It is a most notorious fact, that (so far as we can learn) the enemies of Christianity never disputed the existence of such a person as Christ, nor his dying as his followers assert; but, on the contrary, upbraided them with it as their greatest reproach; the Jews calling him, in derision, תלוי, *i. e.* the crucified person, and his followers צבורי תלוי; and many of the Heathens, particularly Lucian, deriding him as a crucified impostor; and Julian himself, who was one of the most learned as well as the most inveterate enemies against Christianity, though he had himself been educated among the Christians, and therefore probably knew this religion thoroughly, never goes about to dispute this fact; but owns, not only the being, but, as we shall afterwards observe, the *miracles*, of Christ.

Buxt. Lexic. Tal. in תלה. *Lucian de Morte Peregr. ubi supra. Ditton on the Resurrec.* part iii. § 3, 8. *Chapm. against Mory.* vol. i. p. 364, 365. *Lightf. Hor. Heb. on Matthew* xii. 24. *Lightfoot, apud Opera*, vol. ii. p. 189. *Josephi Antiq.* lib. 18. c. iii. § 3.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. 11. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

We do not here argue from that celebrated passage, in which Josephus bears such a remarkable testimony to Christ.

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. iv. § 33; c. iii. § 3, p. 798, Hudson's edition.

It is most certain that it is to be found in all the manuscript copies of Josephus, and that it was very early quoted by the Christian fathers, particularly Eusebius and Jerom. The two chief objections are,

1. That neither Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, nor even Photius, in his extracts from Josephus, have cited it; but this negative argument against fact is not much to be regarded, especially considering that Justin argues only out of Scripture, and never mentions Josephus: that Tertullian, in his controversial writings, deals chiefly with Gentiles: that Cyprian does not professedly write in defence of Christianity; and that Photius's extracts from Josephus are very imperfect. It is with more weight objected,

2. That the encomium upon the character and miracles of Christ is so great, that Josephus must have been a Christian, or he could not have written as he did. To this Lardnerus answers, That his words are to be understood *comparably*, and really contain a severe sarcasm; and Mr. Whiston, that Josephus was a Nazarene, Ebionite, or Jewish Christian, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem; but Mr. Martin maintains that Josephus, being a pensioner of the Roman court, and seeing Domitian some

thing alarmed with the prophecy of the Jewish Messiah, for his own security and that of his people, chose rather to represent the matter, as if that Messiah had already appeared, but through the mistake of their priests been rejected: but none of these things seem, upon the whole, a sufficient account of it: so that if he really wrote it, he must have been inwardly convinced of the truth of Christianity; and wanting courage openly to profess it, left this testimony, perhaps in the last copies of his Antiquities, in some measure to quiet his conscience, for not having more generously and faithfully pursued its dictates.

As for the other passages in Josephus, relating to the death of James, the brother of Christ, *Antiq.* lib. xx. c. viii. it is of much less importance in the present question; but what Origen quotes as from him, concerning the death of that righteous man being the cause of the destruction of the Jews, it is nowhere to be found in Josephus, and seems to have been a slip of Origen's memory.—Vid. *Huds. Notes in Loc.* p. 896.

Hingt. Prael. ad Jos. Ed. Cal. prim. p. 25, &c. *Dutton on the Resurrect.* part iii. § 1—7. *Huet. Dem. Evang.* Prop. iii. § 11—18. p. 31—39. *Martin's Diss. pass. Whist. Jos. Diss.* i. and vi. *Chapman against Morg.* vol. i. p. 386—389. *Orig. cont. Cels.* lib. i. p. 35. *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* lib. ii. c. 23.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may be asked, Why facts of so great importance are not more frequently mentioned by ancient historians, whether Jews or Heathens? To this it is answered,

1. That many books written in that age are lost; in which it is very possible some mention of these facts might be made.

2. That of the few remaining historians, who wrote about that age, most of them were by their subject otherwise engaged.

3. That several of those facts relating to Christ and his miracles, coming from the Jews, would be slighted by the Gentile writers as fabulous, especially considering, on the one hand, how common prodigious and magical stories were, and, on the other, how superstitious and credulous the Jews were thought to be.

4. That the first appearance of the Christian scheme would shock them, as seeming so improbable, and so contrary to their received maxims, that it is no wonder if many of them cared but little to inquire into evidences and facts relating to it.

5. Many of those who did inquire, no doubt became Christians: and therefore their testimony is not here reckoned.

6. The facts mentioned above, as recorded by some, are such as on the whole it was most reasonable to expect that they, continuing enemies, should know, observe, and mention.

Addison on Christianity, c. i. § 2—6: c. ii. § 1.

2. *Jacks. Cred.* vol. i. c. xi. xii. *ap. Op.* vol. i. p. 38—44. *Lardner's Jew. and Heath. Test.* vol. ii. c. xxii. § 3; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 94—97.

LECTURE CXIII.

PROPOSITION 1.

The first publishers of Christianity wrote books containing an account of the life and doctrine of their Master: several of which bore the names of those books which now make the New Testament.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The great importance, of which the primitive Christians at least apprehended the facts and doctrines of their religion to be, (as appears by the extremities they endured for their profession of it.—Vid. *Prop.* 98. *Schol.* 1.) would engage them to take the most effectual care they could to transmit the memory of it to future ages.

2. The age in which they lived was one of the most learned ages of antiquity; nor was there any, in which books were more common in the countries where they flourished.

1, 2. 3. It is exceedingly probable, in the nature of things, that there were some such ancient books as the proposition asserts.

West on the Resurrection, p. 308—318.

4. Writers of great antiquity do expressly mention *four* books, written by the disciples of Christ, whom they call *Evangelists*, and some of them do particularly name Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the four. *Jones on the Can.* part iv. Introduction.

5. Eusebius, the most accurate historian among the ancient Christian writers, mentions it as a fact well known, and asserted particularly by Origen, a still older writer, that the *Four Gospels* of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the *Epistles* of St. Paul, and

of Peter, and *one* of John, were *universally* received by the church; and he calls them *ἀναντίῤῥητα ἀναντιῤῥήτως* and *ὁμολογούμενα*, as not being able to find they had ever been disputed; and though the *Acts* are not expressly mentioned in this catalogue by Origen, Eusebius himself, in the passage referred to in the next step, declares that he hath no scruple concerning it; and it is certain, from many passages in Origen's works still extant, that he paid the same regard to the *Acts* as to any other book of the New Testament: nay, in the close of the passage referred to below, he also mentions them incidentally as written by Luke.

Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. vol. ii. p. 507—509. *Euseb. Eccles. History*, lib. iii. c. xxiv. lib. vi. c. xxv. *Lardner's Cred.* part ii. vol. iii. p. 234—237. vol. viii. p. 90—96; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 165—168. vol. iv. p. 224—228.

6. Though the other seven books of the New Testament, *i. e.* the epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle to James, the 2nd of Peter, the 2nd and 3rd of John, Jude, and the Revelations, were disputed, (and therefore called by Eusebius *ἀντιλεγόμενοι*,) yet he tells us they were at length introduced into the *canon*, *i. e.* into the number of those books which Christians regarded as the rule of their faith and manners, and which they distinguish from other books, written by persons whom they thought less eminently under the divine direction, whatever their sanctity might be.

Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. xxv. *Jones on the Can.* vol. i. p. 23—27. *Jenk. on Christ.* vol. ii. p. 116—118. *Lardner's Cred.* vol. viii. p. 97—104; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 228—234.

7. We shall endeavour to show at large, in the following proposition, that at least all the most important of those books were either expressly quoted by name, or plainly alluded to by a series of primitive writers, several of them much more ancient than Eusebius; and indeed, that there is hardly any writer of Christian antiquity who has not either some express reference or allusion to some of them.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 8. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM.

Whereas Mr. Toland, in his Amyntor, and several other writers, have taken great pains to show that there were many ancient books; some of which are pretended to be still extant, but are evidently spurious, which yet are quoted by several writers of the primitive church with great regard; whence no doubt he will lead his reader to infer, that little regard is to be had to their opinion on this head; we shall not enter into the particulars here, but leave the reader to judge, by those passages referred to by Toland, compared with those enumerated below, as to the different manner in which they mention confessedly fictitious writers, and those of the New Testament: but the fullest and best account of this matter that I know of, is to be found in

Lardn. Cred. of Gosp. Hist. part. ii. vol. i. and ii. *pass*; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 11—363. *and in Jones's Hist. of the Can.* vol. i. and ii. *pass. Toland's Amyntor*, p. 28—68. *Nye on the Canon.*

LECTURE CXIV.

PROPOSITION CI.

To take a more particular survey of what the most considerable ancient ecclesiastical writers have delivered concerning the several books of the New Testament; at the same time giving a catalogue of those of the *three first centuries*, in the order in which they wrote.

SOLUTION.

1. Barnabas, contemporary with the Apostles, who is mentioned in Acts iv. 36, 37; xi. 22—24; xiii. 1—4; 1 Cor. xi. 6. is said to have written a general epistle in Greek; a Latin translation of which is by many maintained to be extant; though I think the arguments against its authority are so strong, as to leave little weight to any thing argued from thence; any further than that so far as we can judge by the manner of the writing, it is indeed very ancient.

Jones on the Can. part iii. c. 37—42. *Lardn. Cred.* part ii. vol. i. p. 23—30; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 10—15. *Wake's Prelim. Dis.* p. 69—72.

In this epistle several words of Christ are quoted, which are recorded by the evangelists; *v. g.* Matt. xx. 16; ix. 13; xxii. 43. Luke vi. 30. and many of those scriptures quoted from the Old Testament in the New, are likewise cited here. Many of the phrases and arguments used by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere, are also inserted; *v. g.* 2 Tim. i. 10; iv. 1. but not in the form of quotations, so that hardly any ancient work gives less assistance in this inquiry.

Lardner, ib. p. 31—48 *pass.* p. 49, 50. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 15—22. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. seculum* i. § 53. *Justin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* p. 329—332.

2. Clemens Romanus, mentioned Phil. iv. 3. who is said to have been one of the first bishops of Rome, wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, probably about the year 96.

Lardn. ib. p. 51—61; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 22—28.

He quotes by name no book of the New Testament, excepting the *first* epistle to the Corinthians, which by the way is one of the most important in the whole volume for proving the truth of Christ-

tianity, as will afterwards appear; and it is worth our notice, that it is here quoted by those who were the best judges of its being genuine, and quoted as of an authority acknowledged even by all the different parties among them: it is therefore not improbable that the *original* might then be in their hands.

Lardn. ibid. p. 61; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 29.

He evidently refers to some of Christ's words, which are also recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but we cannot lay much stress upon those passages, to establish the authority of these books, because Clement living so near the apostle's time, might have learned them by *oral* tradition, and the *evangelists* are not named. Yet, on the other hand, it may be remarked, that he does not introduce those things as new, but refers to them as well known to the Corinthians; which we could hardly have been so sure they were, unless they had some books among them (commonly also received among other Christians) in which those passages were inserted: nor will Acts xx. 35. invalidate this observation, since it does not appear that Clement had lived among the Corinthians, as Paul had done with the elders of Ephesus, and probably taught them those traditions with his own mouth.

Lard. ib. p. 65—68; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 29—31.

The following passages are transcribed with very little variation:—Rom. i. 29; xii. 5. 1 Cor. x. 24; xiii. 4, &c. Eph. iv. 4. Phil. i. 10. Col. i. 10. 1 Thess. v. 18. 1 Tim. v. 4. Tit. iii. 1. Heb. i. 3—5, 7—13; iv. 12; xi. 37; xii. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 8. He seems also evidently to allude to the following passages:—Rom. xiv. 1. 1 Cor. xii. 12; xv. 20. 2 Cor. iii. 18; viii. 5; xi. 24. 1 Tim. iii. 13. Heb. vi. 18. James iii. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 5; iii. 4.

Lardn. ibid. c. ii. *præs.* p. 102—105; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 34—47.

3. Hermas (mentioned Rom. xvi. 14.) is said to have been the author of several books, under his name: one is called his *Pastor*, in three parts; the first of *visions*, the second of *commands*, the third of *similitudes*. We have only a Latin translation of it, and a few fragments of the original. It is probably an ancient book; but strong objections are brought against its being genuine.

Wake's Prælim. Diss. c. viii. p. 79—87. *Mosheim's Hist. Eccles.* p. 51. Sec. i. § 54. *Jortin's Rem. on Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 337, 338.

There are no express quotations of any book, either of the Old or New Testament, by name, to be found in him: but there are many allusions to the latter, of which the most considerable are the following passages:—Matt. v. 28; x. 32; xiii. 5, 7, 31; xviii. 3; xxviii. 18. Luke xvi. 18. John xiv. 6. Acts v. 41. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. Eph. iv. 4, 30. Heb. xii. 17. James i. 5; iv. 7, 12. 1 Pet. i. 6; v. 7. 1 John ii. 27. Jude, ver. 21. There are also many visions resembling those of the Revelations; but no mention is made of that book.

Lardn. c. iv. *præs.* p. 144—146; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 50—65. *Mosheim, ubi supra.*

4. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who was martyred about the year 116, wrote several epistles, mentioned by Eusebius, Irenæus, Jerom, and many others: they are still said to be extant; but there are two different copies of them. Mr. Whiston has contended earnestly that the larger are genuine; but from comparing both, it appears much more probable that the larger are a paraphrase upon the smaller, than the smaller (as some suppose) an abridgment of the larger.

Whist. Prim. Christ. vol. i. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 62—67, 363.

Nor is it at all probable that the epistles to Tarsus, Antioch, and Hiero are genuine, since they are not mentioned by Eusebius, who was so likely to have discovered them, and would no doubt have been glad to quote them. We shall, therefore, only take notice of those quotations and allusions which are to be found in the *smaller* epistles, and which are as follow. He plainly quotes or alludes to Matt. iii. 15; x. 16; xii. 33; xv. 13; xviii. 19; xix. 12. John iii. 8; viii. 29; x. 9. Acts x. 41. Rom. xv. 7. 1 Cor. i. 10; v. 7; vi. 9; xv. 8. Eph. v. 2, 25. Phil. ii. 3. 1 Thess. v. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Philem. ver. 20. 1 Pet. v. 5.

Lardn. c. v. *præs.* p. 188—190; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 65—85. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 51—61.

To which we may add, that he speaks of the *Gospel* in such a connexion with the *Law* and the *Prophets*, as seems to imply that he meant *a book*.

Lardn. ib. p. 180—184; *Works*, ib. p. 84, 85. *Seed's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 294—299.

5. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, thought by some to be the *angel* of the church there, mentioned in the Revelations, was martyred about the year 169. Eusebius mentions a letter written by him to the Philippians, which probably was that excellent epistle bearing his name, which is now extant in a Latin translation, and most of it in the Greek original. In this epistle he quotes by name 1 Cor. vi. 2. as the words of Paul, and also Eph. iv. 26. as *a saying of Scripture*, and also mentions Paul's epistle to the Philippians with the highest respect, as written by a wisdom which nothing could equal: he likewise most evidently transcribes the following passages:—Matt. v. 3, &c. vii. 1, 2; v. 44; xxvi. 41. Acts ii. 24. Rom. xii. 9; xiv. 10. 1 Cor. vi. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 5; vi. 7; viii. 21. Gal. iv. 26; vi. 7. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Philip. ii. 10, 16. 1 Thess. v. 17, 22. 2 Thess. iii. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. vi. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 11; iv. 10. 1 Pet. i. 8, 21; ii. 11, 12, 17, 22, 24;

iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 5. 1 John iv. 3. Considering how short this letter is, the transcribing so great a number of passages in it from the New Testament, is an evident proof of the regard he paid to that book.

Lardn. ib. c. vi. *præs.* p. 202, 203. and 222, 223; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 86—100.

6. That epistle from the church of Smyrna, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, evidently refers to 1 Cor. ii. 9. and gives the title of *Gospel* to the History of Christ written by the Evangelists.

Lardn. ib. c. vii; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 100—105.

It may be observed, that the writings which have been enumerated under these six first steps, are those which are commonly called the works of the *Apostolic Fathers*, being published under that title by Cotelerius, in a very celebrated edition of them, and translated into English by Archbishop Wake, whose account of them all it may be convenient to peruse.

LECTURE CXV.

7. Papias, who is said to have been the companion of John, and who flourished about the year 115, wrote five books (now lost) called an Explication of the Oracles of our Lord, in which Eusebius says he often quoted our four Evangelists, and mentions some remarkable particulars both relating to the gospel of Matthew and Mark: Eusebius also says, he brings testimonies out of the first of John, and the first of Peter.

Lardn. ib. c. ix; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 106—115.

8. Justin Martyr wrote his two Apologies, and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. He died at the latest about 163. The epistle to Diognetus, and *Questions to the Orthodox*, though they do not seem to belong to Justin Martyr, (among whose works they are published,) are, however, undoubtedly writings of great antiquity.

There are in his genuine works the following quotations and allusions:—Matt. i. 20, 21; v. 28—32; xi. 27; xxv. 41. Mark viii. 31. Luke i. 31, 35, 38; x. 19. John i. 20; iii. 3; xiv. 24. He quotes also the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, which he adds are called *Gospels*, as containing the institution of the Eucharist, and Luke xx. 44. Matt. xxvi. 39. He introduces Trypho the Jew, speaking of the precepts delivered in the Gospel, as what he had read; and expressly declares, that the Written Commentaries, or Memoirs of the Apostles, as well as of the Prophets, were read publicly in all Christian assemblies for divine worship: which is a circumstance of vast importance.

Just. Mart. Apol. § 87. *Reeves's Apol.* vol. i. p. 111.

He either quotes or refers to Acts vii. 22; xiii. 27. 1 Cor. v. 7, &c.; xi. 18, 19; xii. 8—10. Gal. iv. 12. Eph. ii. 20. Col. i. 15. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Heb. v. 9, 10. 2 Pet. iii. 8. Rev. xx. 4, &c. Luke xx. 35, 36.

Lardn. ib. c. x. *præs.* p. 286—288; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 115—129.

9. The epistle to Diognetus, which Mr. Whiston wildly thinks to have been written by the evangelist Timothy, is certainly ancient, though it was not written by Justin; and there are evident quotations or allusions to the following passages:—Matt. vi. 25, &c. John i. 1; xvii. 14. Rom. v. 19. 1 Cor. iv. 12; viii. 1. 2 Cor. x. 3; iv. 8, &c. Phil. iii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 24. iii. 18. 1 John iv. 19. And he also speaks of the *gospels* and *traditions* of the apostles, in such a connexion with the law and the prophets, as seems plainly to intimate that he referred to books of that name.

Lardn. ib. p. 296, 297; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 129—133. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 342—348.

10. Dionysius of Corinth was a man of an excellent character, who flourished about the year 170. He wrote seven epistles, which are now lost; but in a fragment of one of them, preserved by Eusebius, he mentions the conversion of Dionysius, the Areopagite, by Paul, agreeably to the account given in the Acts of the Apostles; but it does not appear that he speaks of that book.

Lardn. ib. c. xii. p. 300; *Works*, ib. p. 133—136.

11. Tatian, who flourished about the year 172, wrote an elegant oration against the Greeks, which is still extant; and Eusebius (Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. c. 29.) tells us, he wrote the Harmony of the Four Gospels. In his *oration*, he quotes Luke vi. 25. John i. 3, 5. 1 Cor. xv. 22. besides some other passages, which Clement and Irenæus say he quoted from the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, in a work now lost; and Jerom says he allowed Paul's epistle to Titus.

Lardn. ib. c. xiii; *Works*, ib. p. 136—140.

12. Hegesippus, a converted Jew, wrote the History of the Christian Church about the year 170, of which only some fragments are remaining; in which the following scriptures seem to be referred to:—Matt. xxvi. 61. Luke xxiii. 34. Matt. xiii. 16.

Lardn. ib. c. xiv; *Works*, ib. p. 140—145.

13. Melito, bishop of Sardis, in the year 170, wrote an apology to Marcus Antoninus, and many other books, particularly a commentary on the Revelations: and as he expressly speaks of the Old Testament, he seems by that phrase to imply, that there was in his time a collection of books, called the New.

Lardn. ibid. c. xv.; *Works*, ibid. p. 146—148.

14. There is an epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, preserved in Eus. Eccles. Hist. vol. iv. and written about the year 177, to which there are

very express quotations from Luke, 1 Cor. John xvi. 2. Acts vii. 60. Rom. viii. 18. Eph. vi. 5. Phil. ii. 6. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Peter v. 6. 1 John iii. 16. Rev. xiv. 4. *Lardn.* c. xvi. *Works*, ibid. p. 184—188.

15. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, wrote, about the year 178, besides many other books, five of Heresy; which are yet preserved in the Latin translation, and some fragments in the original Greek. In one of these fragments preserved by Eusebius, as well as in the translation, there is express mention of the Four Gospels, under the names of their respective authors, and they are likewise mentioned together. In two other passages of his works, he professedly vindicates the genuineness of each, and sets himself to give an account of the occasion on which they were written. He often expressly quotes the book of the Acts, and in many places the epistles of Paul by name, and mentions all which our New Testament ascribes to him, excepting that to Philemon. He has many passages in sense parallel to several in the Hebrews, but he does not expressly quote that epistle; and Photius says he did not allow it to be St. Paul's. He has also passages in sense parallel to several of James, but no express quotations. The *first* epistle of Peter is quoted by him, and the *first* of John, and also the *second*, though by a mistake he calls it *the same with the former*. Jude is not quoted, though it would have been peculiarly proper to the occasion of his writing; but the book of the Revelations he very frequently and largely quotes.

Lardn. ibid. c. xvii. *prem.* p. 381, 382. and *Ind. ad Iren.*; *Works*, ibid. p. 153—180.

16. Athenagoras, who, before his conversion, was a philosopher, between 166 and 178, wrote an *Apology* for Christianity, and quickly after a discourse on *The Resurrection*; in which he expressly quotes, or evidently alludes to, the following passages:—Matt. v. 28, 44, 45. Luke xvi. 18. John x. 30, 38. Acts xvii. 25. Rom. i. 24, 27. 1 Cor. xv. 32, 54. 2 Cor. v. 10. Gal. iv. 9. 1 Tim. v. 1, 2; vi. 16. He seems also to refer to James iii. 13; v. 7. 2 Pet. i. 21. Rev. xx. 13.

Lardn. ib. c. xviii.; *Works, ib.* p. 180—187.

LECTURE CXVI

17. Miltiades is supposed to have written about the year 170, an elegant Apology, which is now lost. He is celebrated by Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist.* v. 17.) for his acquaintance with Scripture; but no fragments remain.

Lardn. ib. c. xix.; *Works*, ib. p. 188, 189.

18. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, wrote three books to Autolycus, yet extant, published about the year 181. His book against Hermogenes, in which Eusebius says he quoted the Revelations, is lost, as also that against Marcion, and *the Harmony of the Evangelists*, mentioned by Jerom, Ep. 151. but the Commentary upon them, which goes under his name, is spurious. In those of his genuine works which remain, he quotes Matt. v. 28, 32, 44, 46; vi. 3. Luke xviii. 27. John i. 1, 3. Rom. ii. 6, &c.; xiii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. 2 Cor. xi. 19. Eph. ii. 2; iii. 10. Phil. i. 10; iii. 20; iv. 8. Col. i. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Tit. iii. 5. Heb. xii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 18; ii. 13. Some of these passages he mentions as spoken by a divine word, and he seems to allude to 2 Pet. i. 20. Rev. xii. 19.

Lardn. ib. c. xx. *prem.* p. 147—149; *Works*, ib. p. 190—202.

To this work is added, particularly in the Cologn edition, a little tract of Hermias, called *Irrisio Gentium*, which is written with great elegance and spirit; which begins with an express quotation of 1 Cor. iii. 19. as *The words of the blessed apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians.*

Lardn. ib. c. xxv. p. 553, 554; *Works.* ib. p. 246, 247

19. Pantænus, once a philosopher of the Stoic sect, was President of the Catechetical School of Alexandria about the year 130, as Eusebius (*Hist.* v. 9, 10.) assures us: he wrote Commentaries on Scripture, which are now entirely lost; so that he is capable of doing no service in the present question, any further than as Jerom testifies, he brought back the Gospel of Matthew, written in Hebrew, from India, whither he was sent by Demetrius, his bishop, to preach the gospel.

Lardn. ib. c. xxi; *Works*, ib. p. 202—205.

20. Clemens Alexandrinus succeeded Pantænus; and wrote about the end of the second and beginning of the third century. His remaining works are his *Pædagogue* and *Stromata*, his *Admonition to the Gentiles*, and a homily of *The Salvation of the Rich*. He is mentioned with great honour by the most valuable ancient writers that succeeded him: Eusebius tells us, That he speaks of Mark's Gospel, as written from the account of things he had received from Peter, and in effect at least authorized by that apostle. (*Eccles. Hist.* ii. 15.) He also speaks of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as written in Hebrew by Paul, but translated by Luke. *Ib.* vi. 14.

Lard. ib. c. xxii. p. 468—474; *Works*, ib. p. 210—212.

He expressly mentions the Four Gospels of our Evangelists, the Acts, the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, first and second to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, first and second to Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, the first of Peter, and the first of John, by the name of the Lesser Epistles, and Jude and the Revelations.

but does not expressly mention James nor the second of Peter. We refer not to particular passages, there being great numbers of them from the several books above mentioned. It is true that he also quotes several apocryphal pieces; such as the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Egyptians, the Preaching of Peter, the Shepherd of Hermas; but not with titles of equal regard, nor in such a manner as to seem to lay any stress upon them.

Lardn. ib. c. xxii. p. 494—515; and *Index to Clem. Alex.*; *Works*, ib. p. 206—243.

21. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, about the close of this century, in an epistle of his, of which Jerom has preserved some fragments, refers to Matt. xix. 12. John xxi. 20. Acts v. 29. and speaks of the Scripture as *the rule of faith*.

Lardn. ib. c. xxiii.; *Works*, ib. 243—245.

22. Tertullian, presbyter of Carthage, was contemporary with Clemens Alexandrinus, and survived him: his works are known and numerous. In them he expressly quotes all the books of the New Testament but James, the second of Peter, the third of John: Hebrews he supposed to have been written by Barnabas. It is remarkable that there are more quotations from the New Testament in him, than from all the writings of Tully, in all the ancient books in the world. The same may be said of those of Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus.

Lardn. ib. c. xxvii.; *Works*, ib. p. 150—287.

23. Dr. Lardner has also mentioned a great many other Christian writers, of whose works only fragments are preserved, which serve to illustrate the present question, of which we shall not give so particular an account. The chief of them are *Serapion*, who speaks with great reverence of our Gospels, rejecting that of Peter (ib. c. xxvi.); Quadratus, Aristides, Claudius Apollinaris, and Symmachus, (ib. c. xxviii. *pass.*) Besides these, he also mentions several supposititious writings, forged in the second century, such as the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Sibylline Verses, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Recognitions, Homily and Epitome of Clement; but they bring little light to the present question; which is not to be wondered at, considering that most of them pretend to be written before the books of the New Testament: but it is observed, That in the three last of these there are several references to facts recorded in the Evangelists; and that phrases used especially in Paul's writings are introduced in these pieces.

24. The third century produced many famous Christian writers; *v. g.* Minutius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, and Arnobius; most of whose works abound with a vast many quotations from all the *uncontroverted* books of the New Testament, especially Novation on the Trinity; and it would be almost an endless task to enumerate them all: much less is it necessary to enter into the particulars of those quotations, brought from Lactantius, Athanasius, Eusebius, Optatus, Basil, Ephraim Syrus, Gregory Nyss, and Nazianzen, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Hilary, Jerom, Augustin, and other authors of less note, who flourished in the fourth century,—of whom see

Spanh. Eccles. Hist. Sæc. iii. § 10. *Sæc.* iv. § 12. *Lard.* part ii. vol. iii. *pass.*; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 247—249; ibid. p. 287—310; ibid. p. 310—363; ibid. p. 364, to the end of the volume.*

COROLLARY 1.

Hence we may easily collect and compare the evidence which there is of each particular book of the New Testament, to prove it genuine.

COROLLARY 2.

Hence we may see great reason to believe what is asserted in *Prop.* 100. at least concerning the books which are called ὁμολογούμενοι. Vid. *ibid. pp.* 7.

COROLLARY 3.

Hence it appears that the evidence of those books, which are called ἀντιλεγόμενοι, is comparatively very small, so far as it depends upon the fathers of the two first centuries, especially with regard to James, the second of Peter, and Jude.

COROLLARY 4.

Mr. Dodwell was grossly mistaken in asserting, That the books of the New Testament lay concealed till the year 130; and that there was nothing settled concerning the canon till the fourth century.

Dodw. Dissert. in Iren. p. 61. *Jackson on Christian.* vol. ii. c. iv. p. 118—128. *Lard. Cred.* vol. xii. p. 21—28, 30—126. *Works*, vol. v. p. 382—388. *Mashall's Truth of the Gospel Hist.* book iii. c. i. § 1, 2, 3.

LECTURE CXVII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may not be improper here to add, That Amelius, the Platonic philosopher, in the third century, mentions the writings of John,—and Dionysius Longinus, A. D. 250, those of Paul, with considerable applause.

Hist. Dom. Ep. Prov. i. 15. p. 21. *Euseb.*

* [illegible]

Præp. Evan. l. xi. c. xix. *Smith's Life of Longinus*, p. 23, 24. *Lardner's Test.* vol. iii. c. xxxiii. and xxxiv.; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 160—168.

And it is yet of greater importance to observe, That Celsus, who seems to have lived in the second century, and perhaps not later than the middle of it, (*Orig. against Celsus*, l. i. p. 3 and 8.) not only brings a great many citations from the New Testament, but founds the main stress of his argument against Christianity upon the supposed absurdity of that book; which is an illustrious testimony, not only to its antiquity, but to its high esteem among Christians in that early age.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may be added here, That some have thought Luke x. 7. is expressly quoted by Paul (1 Tim. v. 18.); and it is observable, that if it be so, then it is put upon a footing of equal authority with Deut. xxv. 4. quoted in the same passage.

Seed's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 292. *Macknight's Truth of the Gosp. Hist.* p. 391.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some may perhaps wonder that (considering how much Christianity prevailed, and in how great esteem the writers of the New Testament are supposed to have been in those early ages) there should have been no more quotations from them within the first 150 years. It may be answered,

1. That as most of the first Christians were persons of a low station in life (1 Cor. i. 26—28. James ii. 5.) the number of early Christian writers was small, and of those who did write, many of their works are lost, as evidently appears from Eusebius, Photius, and many more, who have given us some of their names and some account of them, and in part from several steps in the preceding proposition.

2. That several of the remaining pieces are but short.

3. That the subject of many of these was such, as to give little opportunity of quoting the writings of the New Testament; very few of them relating to any controversy of Christians with each other, and in their controversies with the Heathens, it is observed that they are employed more in demonstrating the falsehood of Paganism than the truth of Christianity, as that was the point most necessary to be laboured, considering the *sociability* of the Heathen superstitions.

4. Several of the writers whom we have mentioned were so early, that it is exceedingly probable they had not an opportunity of seeing some of the epistles; which could not circulate in the world so soon as papers now do by the assistance of printing.

5. Those books not being then divided into chapters and verses as now, quotations from them were not altogether so easy; not to say that, considering to what extraordinary divine assistances many of the primitive Christians pretended, they might not seem to have so much need of a written rule; so that, on the whole, it is wonderful that we can trace so great evidence in such circumstances.

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. i. l. ii. § 6. p. 292—284, edit. 2. p. 278—295. edit. 4. vol. i. part ii. p. 36—56. *Macknight's Gospel History*, p. 408, 409.

PROPOSITION CII.

To inquire more particularly into the evidence there is that the ancient Christians had books among them, which went by the name of those which Eusebius calls ἀντιλεγομενοι. **Vid.** *Prop.* 100. *qu.* 6.

SOLUTION.

1. With regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews, many parallel thoughts and phrases are to be found in Clemens Romanus, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus. Clemens Alexandrinus quotes it as the words of *the divine apostle*, and elsewhere of Paul. Origen frequently speaks of it as Paul's; and Eusebius mentions it as received with great pleasure by the Hebrews, who were the most capable of judging whether it were genuine or not.

Lardn. Cred. part ii. vol. i. p. 87—95, 368—373; vol. ii. p. 470—472, 501, 502; vol. iii. p. 234—238, 248—261; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 39—43, 211, 212, 224, 467, 472—478. *Whitby's Comment. on Heb. Pref. New Transl. of New Test.* p. 838—840. *Twells's Exam.* part ii. c. ii. § 1. *Lardner's Supplement*, vol. ii. c. xii. § 3, 4. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 391—415. *Hallet on the Heb. Introd.* § 1. *Sykes on ditto, Introduction, passim.*

2. As for James, passages at least parallel to it are to be found in Clemens Romanus, Irenæus, and Athenagoras, and it is acknowledged by Origen, Eusebius, and Jerom, though the last tells us it was long doubted in the Latin church.

Whitby Comment. on Jam. Pref. Lardn. ib. *ye rem. Clem. Ignat. &c. New Translation*, p. 873—875. *Twells*, ib. § 2. *Lardner's Suppl.* vol. iii. c. xvii.; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 502—509.

2 The Second of Peter seems to be quoted by Justin Martyr, and is ascribed to Peter by Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus.

Whitby on 2 Pet. Pref. New Trans. p. 903, 904. *Twells*, ib. § 2. *Benson on the Second of Peter*, p. 1—9. *Lard. Suppl.* vol. iii. c. xix. § 1; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 563—566.

4. The second epistle of John is quoted by Irenæus, and by the Council of Carthage in the year 256. Clemens Alexandrinus speaks by way of distinction of the *larger* epistle. Origen likewise

mentions the second and third epistles, though something dubiously; and Epiphanius has some reference to them, speaking in the plural number of John's epistles.

Whit. in Loc. *Benson on the Epistles of John*, p. 177, 178. *Lardner's Suppl.* vol. iii. § 4, 5, 6; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 593—607.

5. Jude is expressly quoted by Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian; but by no earlier writers.

Whit. on Jude, ver. 1. *New Transl.* p. 943. *Twells*, ib. § 4. *Benson on Jude*, p. 114. *Lardn. Suppl.* vol. iii. § 21; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 607—627.

6. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clemens Alexandrinus, allow the Revelations to have been an ancient book, and ascribe it to John the apostle; and if we may believe the testimonies of Eusebius and Jerom, who had in their hands the writings of many of the ancients which are now lost, Papias, Melito, Theophilus of Antioch, and Apollonius, all in the second century, received and quoted it; and it appears to have been allowed by Origen, Cyprian, Victorius, Methodius, and Pamphilus, besides Hypolitus, earlier than any of them in the third; though it is certain some rejected it, as the work of an unknown and heretical writer.

New Transl. p. 1019—1022. *Mills's Prolog. ad Nov. Testament*, p. 24—28. *Twell's Ev.* part iii. *pass. præs.* part i. c. i. § 2. c. ii. p. 11—15. *Republic of Letters*, vol. vii. art. 9.[a]

COROLLARY 1.

It evidently appears, from comparing this demonstration with that of *Prop.* 101. that the evidence of the genuineness of the six former of these books is not equal to that of the rest; nor are they all equal to each other in this respect.

COROLLARY 2.

Nevertheless, it seems more reasonable to admit than to reject them, if we consider,

1. That several of these epistles, not being written as most of Paul's were, either to particular churches, or even particular persons, whose names and abodes are recorded in them, it could not be so easy to find out the originals.

2. That some of them are so short, and the contents of them so general, that there was *(cæt. par.)* less reason to expect quotations from them.

3. As they were more inquired into, they came to be generally received; and at last all opposition against them ceased. To which we may add,

4. That the accomplishment of many remarkable prophecies in the Revelations, especially those relating to the Roman and Papal empire, in proportion to the degree in which it appears, must, to those that see it, be one of the strongest demonstrations that can be imagined, not only that the book itself was genuine, but that it was written by some extraordinary assistance and illumination from God; and when this is granted, and the external evidence considered, and compared with that of the rest of these seven pieces, it will further prove that a book not more frequently quoted by the earliest writers than this, may yet be both genuine and divine.

Blackhall at Boyle's Lect. Serm. iii. p. 9—12. *Jenk. of Christian.* vol. ii. p. 106—116.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Whatever be thought of the preceding arguments, it is to be remembered, that the agreement between these books and others of the New Testament is so great, that we need not be very solicitous about them; nor, if the others should hereafter be proved to be of Divine authority, need we be apprehensive of any dangerous consequences attending our referring to them in public discourses. This is especially observable with regard to those whose external evidence is the weakest; in which number the second and third of John and Jude are to be reckoned.

Fest. against Tind. p. 143—147. *Sherlock on Proph.* Dissert. i. p. 199, &c.

SCHOLIUM 2.

With relation to the books mentioned by Toland in his Amyntor, (compare *Prop.* 100. *Schol.*) such as the Acts of Paul; the Revelation of Peter; the Gospel of Peter, Andrew, and Matthias; the Acts of Peter and John, &c. it is evident that Eusebius, in the place before quoted, *(Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. § 25. p. 119.) mentions these as νοθοι; which (though Dr. Twells maintains the contrary) is plainly different from the αντιλεγομενοι as well as the ομολογουμενοι; and it will appear, as was hinted above, that even when they are quoted, which they seldom are, by ancient writers, it is in such a language as plainly to show that the regard to them was far inferior to that which they had for the sacred books; and it is further remarkable, that though Celsus has, one where or another, given us a kind of abridgment of the history of the evangelists, (see *Prop.* 101. *Schol.* 1.) yet he has hardly, if ever at all, mentioned a single fact recorded in any of those pieces, though many of them would have afforded matter for much more plausible objections than those which he endeavours to ground upon the facts recorded by the evangelists (compare *Evang. Infant. ap. Fabric. Cod. Apocryphus*, vol. ii. p. 163—165, 182—185.) which makes it probable that he was not acquainted with those pieces; for his candour was not so great as to have waved any opportunity of aspersing Christianity; and it is highly probable several of

[a] M. Abauzit, a learned gentleman of Geneva, but a Freethinker by birth, in a discourse on the Apocalypse, hath strongly denied the authenticity of the book. See his Miscellanies on historical, theological, and critical Subjects, translated by Dr. Harwood, in 1774. p. 283—376. On the other side of the question is Lardner, Suppl. vol. iii. c. xxii., Works, vol. vi. p. 627—638.

those forgeries were later than his time. We may also add, that Tertullian tells us (*de Baptis.* c. xvii.) that John the apostle discovered the Acts of Paul and Thecla to have been forged by a presbyter, and degraded the author on that account; which, if true, is a very remarkable circumstance.

Seed's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 209—311.

LECTURE CXVIII.

PROPOSITION CIII.

The New Testament, as we now have it in the original, is *genuine*; *i. e.* it is in the main such as it came out of the hands of those by whom the several pieces contained in it are said to have been written.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 100. 1. The primitive Christians had books among them said to have been written by those authors whose names are prefixed to those of our New Testament.

2. The primitive Christians had as good opportunities of satisfying themselves as to the genuineness of them, as other ancients had with regard to the genuineness of their books; especially considering that several of those epistles were written to numerous societies of men, or to persons of a very public and sacred character; and those of Paul, if not written by his own hand, were *signed* by him, to prevent, as far as could be, the very possibility of imposture, 1 Cor. xvi. 21. 2 Thess. iii. 17. comp. Rom. xvi. 22. Gal. vi. 11.

3. The great concern which Christians had in these books, and the high value which they set upon them, (as appears in part already, and will hereafter more fully appear,) would no doubt engage them to be very careful and accurate in this inquiry.

Lardn. Cred. vol. i. p. 384, 385. vol. iii. p. 282—289. vol. viii. p. 197—203; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 172, 173. ib. p. 488, 492. vol. iv. p. 272—274.

4. We find there were many books, going under the name of the apostles, which were rejected by the primitive Christians; and thus a strict difference was made between those of the New Testament, and other books allowed to have been written by persons of great eminence in the church.—Vid. *Prop.* 100. *Schol.* and *Prop.* 102. *Schol.* 2.

Lardn. ib. vol. viii. p. 105—124; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 251—260. *Bucklaud's* or *Bayle's Lectures*, Sermon iii. p. 12, 13.

5. We do not find that either the Jews or the Heathens, with whom the Christian apologists were engaged, disputed the genuineness of their records. Julian the apostate, who was so well acquainted with them, and afterwards proved so inveterate an enemy to Christianity, does in some of his writings allow them to be genuine; as we before observed that Celsus doth earlier, especially the Evangelists. See *Prop.* 101. *Schol.* 1.

Macknight's Truth of the Gospel Hist. book ii. c. iv. p. 342—348. *West on the Resurrec.* p. 319—331. *Leland's View*, vol. ii. p. 335—337.

1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. 6. There is great reason to believe that the books of the same title with those of our New Testament, which were in the hands of the primitive Christians, *i. e.* those of the two first centuries, were genuine.

7. Considering the zeal which the primitive Christians expressed for the New Testament, and the sufferings which they were ready to undergo rather than they would deliver it up, as the *traditores* under the Dioclesian persecution did, we can hardly imagine that, if it had been in their power, they would willingly have corrupted it in any important instances; which would indeed have been introducing another religion, different from that for which they suffered such dreadful extremities.

Suic. Thesaur. vol. i. p. 800. *Lardn.* ib. vol. vii. lib. i. c. 66. p. 210—217; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 88—91.

8. If they had been ever so desirous of corrupting the New Testament, neither they, nor any in succeeding ages, could have effected such a design; considering how long the originals were preserved, how soon they were transcribed, and translated into various languages, how publicly they were read in their religious assemblies, so that wherever there was a Christian church, there must have been a copy, by which any that attended might examine and correct their own (vid. *Prop.* 100. *gr.* 8.); considering also how widely they were dispersed in a very few years after they were written; and what a variety of sects arose very early among Christians, who were all a guard upon each other, to prevent any material alteration in the books which they professed to make the rule of their faith, and from which each pretended to defend his own opinions.

King of the Prim. Church, part ii. c. i. § 2. *Tertull. de Præscr.* c. 36. *Adcock, Wetstein, ap. Bisco at Bagley's Lect.* p. 491—493. *Lardn.* ib. vol. iii. p. 289—293, 300—304. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 491—493, 495—497.

9. There are numerous quotations from the New Testament in Christian writers of all the latter ages, and even from the beginning of the third century; insomuch that if the books were to be lost, by far the greater part of them might be recovered from such quotations, and from the homilies and commentaries written upon several parts of it; and all these do in the main agree with our present copies.

in sense at least, if not in words. Compare *Prop.* 101. *gr.* 22.

7, 8, 9. 10. The New Testament, as we now have it in the original, is in the main agreeable to what it was in the first ages of Christianity.

6, 10. 11. The New Testament, as we have it in the original, is genuine. *Q. E. D.*

Limborch's Collatio. p. 16. *Script.* iii. *Judex Quæst.* iv. No. viii. p. 144—148. *Baxter's Works*, vol. ii. p. 119, b. 120, a. *Reasons of Rel.* part ii. c. vii. § 68—94. *Ditton on the Resurrec.* part iii. § 10—17. *Bennet on Script.* p. 302—306. *Fost. against Tindal*, p. 95—105, 161. *Wets. New Test. Prol.* p. 77—81. *Benson's Rems. of Christianity*, p. 62—75. *Macknight's Truth of the Gosp. Hist.* book iii. c. iii. p. 478—488. *Jortin's Rem. on Ecclesiastical Hist.* vol. i. p. 41—45. *Leland, ubi supra.*

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it appears, that the evidence we have of the genuineness of the writings of the New Testament, is abundantly greater than for that of any other book of equal antiquity; as may be seen by comparing the preceding argument with what could be said in proof of those writings which go under the names of Virgil, Tully, Cæsar, Suetonius, &c.

Blackhall at Boyle's Lect. Serm. iii. p. 6—8.

COROLLARY 2.

From comparing the several steps of the preceding demonstration, particularly *gr.* 3, 7, 8. it will appear that where the possibility of corrupting the books of the New Testament (if it had been desired) was greatest, *i. e.* in the time immediately following their being written, we have the strongest evidence of an aversion to do it; considering the known zeal and piety of the first professors and confessors of Christianity, and that as the character of Christians grew worse, the impossibility of changing these books increased; and it may not be unworthy of further remark, that with respect to those epistles, which being written to particular persons, might have been most easily altered, we have peculiar evidence that they were not; partly from the distinguishing piety of those persons, *i. e.* Timothy and Titus; and partly from the tenor of those epistles as they now appear, which is the very contrary to what dishonest, ambitious, and interested men, who alone would have been likely to have attempted a corruption, would have desired it should have been.

LECTURE CXIX.

SCHOLIUM 1.

If it be objected to *gr.* 7, 8. That the fathers accused the Heretics of corrupting the Scripture, and that it is possible that all the copies or versions now extant might be thus corrupted by them,—to this we answer,

1. The corruption of Scripture, to which they refer, was either by false interpretations, or at most by the alteration of a few particular passages.

2. The agreement between the doctrines of the fathers in some of those points, and the Scriptures as now extant, shows that we have not corrupt copies of those passages.

3. We may conclude from the reasons urged above, that if the Heretics made any such attempts, they must have been unsuccessful; and the protest of the fathers against them shows it.

4. The copies now extant came from such different parts; and many of the translations, especially the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate, were so ancient, that the hypothesis proposed in the objection is utterly incredible.—To which we add, that the fathers, who have several of them quoted the same passages of Scripture, lived in very distant countries, at or near the same time; *v. g.* Justin Martyr and many others in Asia, Irenæus in France, Clemens at Alexandria, Cyprian at Carthage, some of his correspondents at Rome, &c. at all which places Christian churches were founded, long before the time in which these authors respectively lived; yet these authors never in the least intimate any disapprobation of those anciently received copies, which greatly confirms the evidence drawn from this view of them: and whoever considers the alarm taken at the attempt of Pope Celestine I. about the year 425, to impose a forged canon, as established by the Council of Nice, upon the African bishops, whereas it was only a canon of the Council of Sardica, will be yet more sensible of the force of this argument.

Bower's Hist. of the Popes, vol. i. p. 370, &c. *Wetst. Prol.* to New Test. § 2. p. 29—48. 12mo. edit. *Fost. against Tind.* p. 149—165.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Nearly akin to this is that objection taken from the passages in Victor's Chronicon, in which it is said, "That when Messala was consul, at the command of the emperor Anastasius, the holy Gospels, as written by Idiotis Evangelistis, were corrected and amended;" which seems only to refer to the correcting *a few copies* at Constantinople, which were falsified by Macedonius, and were now restored to what the *plures emendatiores* [illegible]. It is certain no thought could be wilder than a universal corruption of all the copies of the New Testament at such an age, (A. D. 500,) and among so many diversities of opinions, as well as in the vast tract of land, where Anastasius had not the least power.

Collins on Freethink. p. 89, 90, edit. 2; edit. 1, p. 72, 73. *Bentley's Rem.* part ii. § 32. p. 81. *Sir Isaac Newton's 2d Letter to Le Clerc, as cited to Mr. Locke*, p. 196.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Many have objected the *various readings* which Dr. Mills reckons to be more than 30,000: but it may be replied,

1. That considering the bulk of the book, the vast number of copies which have been compared, the ignorance of many transcribers, and the nicety with which the least variations have been observed; and especially considering how many *versions* and *quotations* Dr. Mills brings into the account, we are rather to wonder there are no more; since in the few copies of Terence which have been compared, almost as many various readings have been found.

2. There are but very few of these various numerous readings, which at all affect the sense, at least in any important article, as appears by examining not only those of Mills, but those of Wetstein, which are by far the most significant of them.

3. That when copies come to be compared, there is often so great a number on one side against those of the other, that it is easy to settle the true reading, and to see what it was that led the transcriber into a mistake: and this is generally the case where the variation from the received reading is the greatest.

Canones Critici ap. Wets. p. 11—16. and *Pref.* p. 77, 78. *Collins*, ibid. p. 87—90. *Bent. Rem.* part i. p. 60—68, 74—81. *Ditton on the Res.* part iii. § 18, 19.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is objected, That it is improbable that the whole New Testament should have been written in Greek. We answer,

1. That many great critics allege, chiefly on the authority of Papias, as quoted by Eusebius, † Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. *cap. ult.*) that the gospel of Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews were originally written in Hebrew: † but if that should be allowed to be dubious, we may further add,

2. That great numbers of the Christian converts were Grecians born, and others Hellenists, who used the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

3. That the Greek language had spread so much beyond any other in those days, that on the whole it was most convenient for [illegible] for universal use; which also in part appears from the writings of several of the ancients, who though they lived in Asia and Egypt, used this language, as Josephus also did, though he wrote at Rome, and seems to have designed his books principally for the use of the Romans.

Beveridge's Inq. c. i. and vi. *Limb. Coll.* p. 144, 145, 183, 184. *Jones against Whist.* c. xvii. &c. *Hallet on Heb. Pref.* *Lardner's Sup.* vol. i. c. 5. § 5. ib. vol. ii. c. xii. § 14. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 60—65. ib. p. 381—415.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Mr. Whiston has endeavoured to prove the evidence of the genuineness of the *Apostolic Constitutions* to be equal to that of the New Testament. We own there are many curious and valuable articles, among many weak and ridiculous things, in that very miscellaneous collection. Nevertheless, when Whitson's arguments for them come to be compared with those in the proposition, it will immediately appear that they fall vastly short of them: and, indeed, these *Constitutions* contain many very evident marks of forgery; especially as they expressly determine the two grand controversies relating to the time of *Easter*, and the re-admission of those who had fallen away after *baptism*; yet their authority is never pleaded for the decision of these controversies, even when those persons were engaged in them, in whose hands he supposes the originals of these *Constitutions* to have been lodged: not now to insist upon the great improbability of keeping those things secret at first, which were intended to be a rule to Christians in all succeeding ages; which very ill agrees with the plain and simple genius of Christianity, or that courage in defence of the truth for which its earliest professors were above all mankind so eminent. There are likewise so many things in these *Constitutions*, different from, and even contrary to, the genius and design of the writers of the New Testament, that no wise man would believe, without the most convincing and irresistible proof, that both could come from the same hand.

Whist. Prim. Christianity, vol. ii. iii. *Sawrin's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 185—187. *Cont. Comm's Pref.* p. 3—7. *Grabe's Ans. to Whist. passim.* *Benvatieri Opera.* *Lardner's Cred.* part. ii. vol. viii. & *seq.* *Works*, vol. iv. p. 320—366.

† [illegible]

‡ Mr. Mansel has started a new objection to this way. "Concerning the quotations," he says, "from Justin Martyr and others in the genuine remains of the New Testament, there ought to have been a collation of the Arabick and Ethiopick, that were very early, and are now in the Cambridge, and in part in the Bodleian Libraries, &c." *Mansel's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 363—376. Not having Dr. Bentley's new Introduction to the Study and Knowledge of the New Testament in view, (for which having hitherto waited in order to apprize the learned world of it, and encourage it to the kind, liberal, and generous subscription, which the importance of the New Testament in particular requires, for the use of Students in Divinity) the New Testament in many languages, by Richard Mayer, B. D. vol. i. p. [illegible] to which may be added Mr. Mansel's Notes, p. 345—354. Remarks may likewise be had on Dr. Lardner's Letters to a Prebendary, if the Reverend Author of the same will favour Lardner's Credibility and Supplement, &c. with a complete new edition. Chronology, in the 11th and 12th chapters of the Doctrine and Fall of the Roman Empire. Many other

LECTURE CXX.

PROPOSITION CIV.

The Jewish religion has been of considerable antiquity; and, according to the common chronology, was founded by Moses nearly 1500 years before Christ's time.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. That there was such a people as the Jews about the time of the Christian æra, and that they were a little while after subdued by the Romans under Vespasian and Titus, is so apparent from the history of Tacitus and Suetonius, as well as many other ancient writers and monuments, that it has never been called in question, and therefore needs no more particular proof.

2. Philo and Josephus, the two most considerable writers who lived in that age, as well as a great many others of the same religion before and since, do expressly assert it as a notorious fact, that Moses was the author of their religion and polity, and that he lived about the time mentioned in the proposition.

3. There is reason to believe, that as the Hebrew language is of acknowledged antiquity, and does indeed bear many of the peculiar marks of an original, they had among them some written and credible account of the beginning of their constitution and nation; especially considering how much their laws differ from those of any other people on the face of the earth.

4. Several of the Pagan writers, of whom we shall give a more particular account in the Scholium, do mention Moses as undoubtedly the *lawgiver* of the Jews.

writers appeared in answer to Mr. Gibbon. A list of those publications is as follows: "Remarks on the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, in a letter to a friend. An Apology for Christianity, in a Series of Letters addressed to Edward Gibbon, Esq. by Dr. R. Watson, now Bishop of Llandaff, with separate publications and other Appendages to the Reader. Sermons and Tracts. Some Strictures on Mr. Gibbon's Account of Christianity and its First Teachers, by the Rev. W. Shepherd, B. D. in his translation of Bossuet's History of the Variations of Protestantism, compared from Laws, and Hurdis's Poetical Epistle. Bishop Hurd's Reply to the Remarks of Mr. Gibbon. Dr. Apthorp's Observations on a late History of the Decline of the Roman Empire, in the Letters on the Precedence of Christianity, before the Greek Philosophers. Davies's Examination of the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. A few Remarks on the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Dr. Chelsum's Remarks on the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Dr. Henry Taylor's Thoughts on the Nature of the Grecian Apostle. Reflections and Observations on the Two last Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. An Inquiry into the Secondary Causes which Mr. Gibbon has assigned for the rapid Progress of Christianity. A most very valuable though but little known.

In answer to Mr. Davis Mr. Gibbon published "Vindications of certain Passages in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." In answer to Mr. Davis's strictures, in the publications noticed by, and among the general observations and credibility of the Gospels are vindicated, and several controverted points of no small importance are considered.

The authority of St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, and St. Luke's Gospels has lately been attacked by Mr. Evanson, in his work, entitled "The Dissonance of the four generally received Evangelists, and the Authority of their respective Narratives examined." To this Dr. Priestley has given an answer, in the second part of his Letters to a Young Man. As the controversy is of a very recent date, I will not enter into productive of further publications.

5. We cannot find that there was any contest between the Jews and the neighbouring nations, concerning the antiquity of Moses and the origin of the Jewish religion, though several of them pretended their religious institutions to be much older; as appears especially by those two excellent books which Josephus has written against Appion, expressly on this subject.

1, 5. 6. There is reason to believe that the Jewish religion has been of considerable antiquity, and was founded by Moses about the time mentioned above. *Q. E. D.*

Grot. de Verit. lib. i. § 16. p. 63—66. *Jenk. of Chris.* vol. i. p. 95—109.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may not be improper here to illustrate *gr.* 4. by giving an account of several ancient authors among the Pagans, by whose testimony it is confirmed.

1. Manetho, Cheremon, Apollonius, and Lysimachus, besides some other ancient Egyptians and Greeks, whose histories are now lost, are expressly quoted by Josephus, as extant in his days; and passages are collected from them, in which they agree that Moses was the leader of the Jews when they departed from Egypt, and the founder of their laws; though some of these writers intermix with their story many ridiculous and infamous circumstances, which the Jews have always denied; but from the quotation of which we may assure ourselves, that the authors quoting the passages in question took them honestly and exactly as they found them.

Jos. against Appion. lib. i. § 26. p. 1352—1354. *Ed. Huds.* p. 1055, *Cologn.* Ibid. § 32. p. 1357, 1358; lib. ii. § 34. p. 1370, 1380.

And Eusebius brings passages to the like purpose from Eupolemus and Artapanus; but as for those long quotations he afterwards brings from the tragedies of Ezekiel and Demetrius upon the same subject, as the authors seem to have been Jews, if not Christians, they are placed with less propriety among the testimonies now under examination.

Eus. Præp. Ev. lib. ix. cap. 26—29. *Clayton's Vind. of the Old Testament.* p. 128.

2. Strabo (*Geog.* lib. xvi.) gives an account of the Law of Moses as forbidding images, and limiting divine worship to one invisible or rather universal Being; and in consequence of this, bears an honourable testimony to the Jews, as a pious and righteous nation.

Wanb. Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 417, 418. *Jackson against Mang.* p. 212, 213. edit. 2.

Celsus also refers to this passage of Strabo, and frequently mentions Moses and other persons recorded in the Jewish history, in such a manner as plainly to show he was familiarly acquainted with it.

3. Justin, from Trogus Pompeius, tells us that Moses, whom by mistake he calls the son of Joseph,

being driven from Egypt, and leading other exiles, encamped at mount Sinai, and there consecrated the seventh day as a sacred solemnity, or, as he ignorantly expresses it, a perpetual *fast*.

Just. Hist. lib. xxxvi. c. ii.

4. Pliny the Elder speaks of Moses as eminent among the magicians, probably referring to his power of working miracles.

Plany's Nat. History, lib. xxx. c. i. *Lardner's Test.* vol. i. p. 339, 340; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 250.

5. Tacitus mentions Moses as one of the exiles from Egypt, who persuaded the rest of them to commit themselves to him as a celestial guide: and takes further notice of their being conducted by him through the wilderness, relieved in their thirst, and receiving a set of laws from him, of which he gives a large though a very faulty account.

Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. iii—v. *Gord. Tac.* vol. iv. p. 476—482. *Clayton*, ib. p. 132—138.

6. Juvenal mentions Moses as the author of a volume, which was preserved with great care among the Jews, by which the worship of images and eating swine's flesh were forbidden, circumcision and the observation of the Sabbath strictly enjoined.

Juv. Sat. xiv. ver. 96—106.

Before him, Horace has mentioned Judæus Appella, or a circumcised Jew, as a sort of proverb of *credulity*, probably in reference to their believing so many miraculous events recorded in their sacred books (*Hor. Sat.* lib. i. § 5. *sub fin.* comp. *Sat.* ix. ver. 69, 70.); yet, as he does not expressly mention Moses, (however some have thought he referred to him, Od. ii. ver. 19. which we lay no stress upon, vid. *Delph. Not.* ib.) we choose not to add him to the catalogue of these writers.

7. Longinus cites Moses as the lawgiver of the Jews, and a person of no inconsiderable character; and adds, that he has given a noble specimen of the true sublime, in his account of the creation of the world.

Long. de Sub. § 9. p. 50. *Pearce's* edit. 1732. *Lardn. Test.* vol. iii. p. 105; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 166—168.

8. Numenius, as quoted by Eusebius and Origen, mentions Musæus, probably Moses, as a leader of the Jews, who, by his prayers, brought dreadful calamities on Egypt, which Jannes and Jambres, those celebrated magicians, were not able to resist: and Eusebius reports it as his saying, that "Plato was only Moses speaking Greek."

Euseb. Præp. Ev. lib. ix. c. viii. *Orig. cont. Cels.* lib. iv. p. 198, 199. *Lardner's Test.* vol. iii. c. xxxv. *Works*, vol. viii. p. 168—172.

9. Chalcidius speaks of Moses as a person of eminent wisdom, more than human eloquence, and as one who pretended to Divine Revelation: but it is much to be doubted whether he were a Pagan, or, as both Eusebius and Fabricius maintain, a Christian Platonist. Vid. *Budæi Phil. Hist.* c. iv. § 22. note p. 160, 161.

Lardn. ibid. vol. iv. c. xlii.; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 346—349.

10. Hermippus, an ancient writer of the life of Pythagoras, says that the philosophers did, in many of their rules, imitate the laws of the Jews; but I find not that he expressly mentions Moses as the author of them.

Jos. against Appion. lib. i. § 22. p. 1345. *Huds.*

11. The Orphic verses, which, though spurious, are generally reckoned of great antiquity, inculcate the worship of one God, as recommended by that law "which was given by him who was drawn out of the water, and received two tables of stone from the hand of God."

Euseb. Præp. Ev. lib. xiii. c. xii. p. 666.

12. Diodorus Siculus, in his catalogue of those lawgivers who pretended to have received the plan of their laws from some deity, mentions Moses, as ascribing his to that God whom he calls Joab, which is probably a corruption of Jehovah.

Diod. Sic. l. i. *sub. init.* English Trans. p. 49. *Gale's Court of the Gent.* part i. p. 308.

And in an extract out of his fortieth book, which is preserved by Photius, he gives a large, though in some respects erroneous, account of the Jews; in which he speaks of Moses as a man of illustrious prudence and courage, who settled the Jews in their land, and instituted their religion and laws, forbidding them images, as he pretends, on *pantheistic* principles, divided them into twelve tribes, established the priesthood among them with a judicial power, and adds several other particulars, which, though mingled with mistakes, are of great importance.

Diod. Sic. ap. Phot. Bib. No. 244. p. 2041. 2052.

13. Dion Cassius (lib. xxxiii.) speaks of the Jews as worshipping a Being of unutterable Majesty and of an invisible nature: but I find not that he mentions Moses as giving them those ideas of him.

14. Varro mentions the Romans as having agreed with the Jewish nation in that first worship of theirs without images, of which he declares his approbation. *Var. ap. Aug. de Civ. Dei*, iv. 31.

15. Philemon, in the days of Alexander the Great, has some verses which seem to be a kind of translation from part of the Decalogue; so that there can be no reasonable doubt of his being acquainted with it, though he says nothing of Moses. See the verses in

Reading on the Spirit. Serm. vii. p. 266.

And if Phocylides were indeed, as is generally thought, a Heathen poet, before Christ's time, he

may justly be joined to Philemon, as he has plainly translated many of the Mosaic laws, though he does not expressly mention their author.

16. Justin Martyr expressly says, That most of the historians, poets, lawgivers, and philosophers, of the Greeks, mention Moses as the leader and prince of the Jewish nation; and particularly enumerates Polemon, Appion of Possidon, Ptolemy Mendesius, Hellanicus, Philocorus, Castor, Thallus, and Alexander Polyhistor, besides those taken notice of above; and adds, what it is very important to observe, that they took their account of Moses, not from the Jews, but the Egyptian priests, whence it is well known they collected most of their learning.

Just. Cohortatio ad Gent. p. 9—11. *Huet. Dem. Pr.* iv. c. ii. p. 49, &c. *Calm. Dict.* vol. ii. p. 236—238.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may not be improper here to add, That Josephus has insinuated, that the shepherd kings, whom Manetho mentions as making so great a figure in Egypt, and at length expelled, were Israelites; and Dr. Morgan has grafted a great many false and absurd things relating to the Jewish history upon that supposition: but a late ingenious writer has entirely overthrown the foundation of that notion, as well as justly exposed Morgan's wild superstructure; and has advanced some reasons worthy of consideration, to prove that the shepherd kings were Arabians, and descendants of Ishmael.

Morg. Mor. Phil. vol. iii. p. 73. *Theophilus Cantabrigiensis Vind. of Anc. Heb. Hist. pass. præs. Rem.* xxv. p. 53—61. *Jos. Cont. App.* l. i. § 14—16.*

LECTURE CXXI.

PROPOSITION CV.

The ancient Jews, before the time of Christ, had books among them, bearing the titles of those which make up what we Protestants call *the Books of the Old Testament*; and a catalogue of which may be seen at the beginning of any of our Bibles.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The books of the Old Testament are still extant in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, with such marks of purity as prove them to be very ancient.

2. There was a Greek translation of them, in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus, which was laid up in the Alexandrine Library, collected by him.

Prid. Connec. vol. ii. p. 27—47. *præs.* p. 27—35. 44—47. *Jos. Ant.* l. xii. c. ii. *Eus. Eccles. Hist.* lib. v. c. viii. *Vales. Not.*

3. It is generally thought by learned men, that Onkelos published his *Targum*, i. e. the Chaldee paraphrase on the law, and Jonathan his on the Prophets, either before or very near the time of Christ, which plainly shows the original Hebrew to have been older.

Calmet Dict. in Onk. and Jonath. Prid. Con. vol. ii. p. 531—538. 542—545.

4. Josephus gives us an obscure kind of catalogue of the sacred books among the Jews, in which he expressly mentions the five books of Moses, thirteen of the Prophets, four of Hymns and Moral Precepts. Now, if we, with many critics, allow that Ruth was added to Judges, and Lamentations to Jeremiah, then this number will agree with those which make up our Old Testament.

Josephus ag. Appion, lib. i. p. 1036. Col. edit. p. 1333. *Huds. Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 331, 332. *Jennings's Jew. Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 373.

5. Both Jews and Christians, from the time of Christ, have generally agreed to receive those books which make up our Old Testament as genuine. As to the attempt that has been made to introduce others, called *the Apocrypha*, which will hereafter be examined, it does not affect the present question, any further than as the Jews rejecting these books, may be considered as an argument of their care in examining those they admitted.

6. The quotations made from the Old Testament in the New, which we have already proved to be genuine, do evidently infer the existence of those books from whence they were taken; and also show by the way, that the Jews did not only receive them as authentic, but *divine*,—as Josephus also, in the preceding reference, assures us that they did in the strongest terms; and it is observable, that all the books of the Old Testament are cited in the New, except Judges, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and perhaps Chronicles; insomuch that, on the whole, the express quotations from, or references to, the Old Testament in the whole volume of the New, are computed at about [illegible]. Vid. *Index to Mr. Leeser's edition of the New Testament.*

7. Melito, Gregory Nazianzen, Origen, Athanasius, Hilary, Epiphanius, Jerom, and several later writers, have given us catalogues of the books of the Old Testament; in which none of ours are omitted, excepting Ruth, which is left out in some, because perhaps included in Judges.

8. The Samaritans, who separated from the Jews

* Much has been said by chronologers concerning the number of kings, and different conclusions have been formed accordingly. The matter is not of great importance. Mr. Jackson [illegible] Lord Gaynsky to the Settlement of the Israelites in [illegible] Newton supposes the shepherds to have been Canaanites, and Mr. Bryant, it may remember, from them and [illegible] Americans. Mr. Brookes, in his Universal Gram. Use of Scripture, [illegible] expressions, coincides in opinion with Thompson. Cantabrigiensis, [illegible] Upon record, was Dr Squire, afterwards Bishop of [illegible]

many hundred years before the birth of Christ, have in their language a Pentateuch, in the main exactly agreeing with the Hebrew.

Prid. Con. vol. i. p. 416—418. *Dupin on the Can.* vol. i. c. i. § 2—5. *Calmet's Dict.* vol. ii. p. 599, 600. *Kennicott's Dissert. on the Hebrew Text*, vol. i. p. 337, &c. *Kennic. Account of his Collation*, p. 145.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 9. *Valet propositio.*

Lowsd. Diss. Phil. p. 54—62. *Jenk. on Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 84—94.

COROLLARY.

Sir William Temple's insinuation, That there are no Hebrew records now extant, older than the Augustan age, is most wild and arbitrary; and so contrary to strong and direct evidence, and indeed to common sense, that one would believe he intended to except the Old Testament, though he expresses himself in so unguarded a manner.

Temp. Misc. vol. ii. p. 36. 2d edit.

SCHOLIUM.

Nothing is said above of that Jewish chronicle called *Seder Olam Rabbah; i. e.* the Larger Chronicle, on which some have laid so great a stress, as the authority of it is disputed; but the regard which some very learned men have paid to it, makes one wish that the evidence of its authenticity, and the importance of its contents, may be set in a clearer and easier light than that in which it has hitherto appeared; for if it be indeed true that its author was master to the compilers of the Mishna, it must be worthy an attentive inquiry.

Prid. Con. vol. ii. Pref. p. 20.

PROPOSITION CVI.

The books of the Old Testament, which the ancient Jews had among them in Christ's time, were in the main genuine.*

DEMONSTRATION I.

From *external* evidence.

Prop. 104. 1. Considering what evidence there is that there was such a person as Moses, and that he was lawgiver of the Jews, there is reason to believe that he would write his institutions, since there was such proper and important occasion for doing it.

Prop. 104. *Schol.* 1. No. 6, 7, 9, 11. 2. Several of the authors enumerated above speak of Moses as a *writer*, as well as a lawgiver.

3. In the nature of things, it is very probable that, in a polity so founded as that of Moses appears to have been, occasions of writing histories and laws should have occurred, and that religious teachers, rising in different ages, should, by their writings, as those of other religions have done, endeavour to enforce an institution which they at least supposed to be divine.

4. The persons to whom the books of Moses and the succeeding writers were first proposed, were capable of judging whether they were genuine or no; and there is no reason to believe they would have received them with such extraordinary regard, as it is well known the Jews paid to them, if they had not been well satisfied on that head; and considering how highly those books were regarded by all the pious Jews, and how much even their civil affairs depended upon them, we cannot suppose that an entire change of them could have been attempted, without being discovered and rejected with the utmost indignation.

1—5. *Prop.* 105. 6. There is reason to believe that the books of the Old Testament, which the ancient Jews had among them, were genuine. *Q. E. D.*

DEMONSTRATION II.

Taken from *internal* arguments.

1. Many of the facts recorded in the Old Testament are of so extraordinary a nature, that if the books giving an account of them had been forged, the very circumstance of their being before unknown, would have been a sufficient argument against receiving any books that contained an account of them.

2. Many of the institutions contained in their laws were so burthensome, and some of them, humanly speaking, so hazardous, or rather so certainly ruinous to any nation not secured by an extraordinary providence correspondent to them, (especially those relating to the Sabbatical year, the resort of all the males to Jerusalem, and the prohibition of cavalry,) that forged books, containing such precepts, would probably have been rejected with the greatest abhorrence.

Bennet on Script. p. 72—74. *Sherl. on Proph.* Diss. iv. *Warb. Div. Legat.* vol. ii. p. 462, 463. *Discourse on the Proofs of the Books of Moses, at the end of Pascal's Thoughts*, French edition.

3. The great variety observable in the *style* of these books, makes it improbable they should have been the work of *one*, and the unity of design that they should have been the invention of *many*; for if these supposed inventors lived in different ages, they could not have consulted with each other; and if they lived in the same age, the largeness of their plan would only have subjected them to new difficulties, without being likely to answer any valuable end, and he who could be weak enough to embarrass a scheme with so many unnecessary articles, must probably have wanted a genius capable of managing them all so well.

Jortin's Rem. on Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 41—45.

* As a general reference on this subject see Leland's Answer to Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study of History, p. 41—56. *Farmer's Editor.* — See also Leland's View of Deistical Writers, vol. ii. p. 38—40. Farmer.

The same remark may also be applied to the New Testament, though the external arguments for the genuineness of it are so strong, that it did not seem necessary to insist upon this hint.

Mill. Prop. vol. i. p. 98.

4. The provision that was made for reading the law publicly every seventh year, at the Feast of Tabernacles, (when it is probable the copies kept in private hands might be compared with that laid up before the Lord,) Deut. xxxi. 9—13. 24—26. and the injunction on the king to transcribe it with his own hand, (Deut. xvii. 18—20.) would be a probable means of preventing corruption; and adds an evidence to the genuineness of these writings, much greater than can be found with regard to others of the most ancient authors.

The charge also given to private persons to make themselves familiarly acquainted with the contents of the law, and to teach it their children, deserves to be mentioned under this head, as an institution of the greatest importance for keeping it uncorrupted (Deut. 6—9, and *sim.*); and which indeed, according to the remark of Josephus in the preceding reference, had an extraordinary efficacy to this purpose.

1, 2, 3, &c. 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Nich. Conf. vol. iv. p. 17—22, 12mo edit.; 8vo edit. vol. ii. part iv. p. 10, 13. *Jenkins on Christ.* vol. i. p. 169—187.

LECTURE CXXII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, That the degeneracy of the Jews, according to their own history, and their disregard to the institutions of Moses, together with the scarcity of books in those early ages, and the various oppressions which they suffered under their enemies, might occasion the loss of authentic copies, and give some designing priests an opportunity of substituting others in their room; especially might this happen when the Book of the Law was said to be found in the reign of Josiah, (2 Kings xxii. 8, &c.) or during the time of the Babylonish captivity; but to this it is answered,

1. This at best is no more than a conjecture, without any positive proof of such a forgery.

2. It is uncertain whether, if such a fraud had been attempted, it could have succeeded at either of the times mentioned, though they are indeed the most probable which can be assigned; for, not to insist upon the possibility there is, that the writing found in Josiah's reign was only the last chapter of Deuteronomy, that awakening passage of Scripture,—were we to suppose it to have been the whole Pentateuch, perhaps Josiah might before have had some copy of the law, though not equally perfect with the original which had been found in the temple; and he might be more powerfully struck with hearing it read in the circumstances there described, though he had not been before an entire stranger to the contents of it, which it is certain he was not, considering the reformation he had before made, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, &c. There were probably some copies of the law remaining in other hands, as there certainly were during the time of the captivity. See Dan. ix. 11—13. to which may be added Ezra iii. 2—5; vi. 18—21. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22. Ezra i. 1. Neh. viii. 1—8. So that it appears to be an idle tale, which so many of the Christian fathers borrowed from the Jews, that Ezra, by divine inspiration, restored the sacred books, after they had been entirely lost.

Euseb. Eccles. History, v. 8. *Vales. Not. Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 329. *Jennings's Jewish Antiq.* vol. i. p. 172.

3. There is not the least probability that such laws as those which are now to be found in the Old Testament, were forged at any time, especially on such an occasion; since nothing could have been more imprudent, upon the principles of human policy, than such precepts as those mentioned in *Prop.* 106. *Dem.* 2. *gr.* 2. which would have been peculiarly liable to exception, when Israel was so surrounded with enemies, and straitened in their possessions, as they were both in the days of Josiah and Ezra. Nor can we imagine that to these Ezra would have added that precept, on which they were obliged to put away their strange wives, which was so tender a point, and might have produced such fatal divisions; considering how many had married such, and how considerable some of them were both by birth and alliance, and how many foreign families would be made their enemies by such divorces; some of them were also priests and Levites, who must have been privy to the forgery, if there had been any. So that, upon the whole, there is so little reason to suspect Ezra as the inventor of these precepts, that it is an instance of the impartial regard he had for the original, that he would retain them at so great a hazard; Ezra ix. x; Neh. xiii. 23—29. a remark also applicable in some degree to Josiah.

Bacon. on the Art. p. 83. 84. *Evans's Chris. Temp.* vol. ii. p. 375—377. *Millar's Prop.* vol. i. p. 88—94. *Allix's Refl.* vol. i. p. 32. 33. *Shuckford's Connexion*, vol. ii. p. 337. *Leland against Tind.* vol. ii. p. 123—142.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That it is impossible that Moses should have been the author of the Pentateuch, or Samuel, or Nehemiah, of those books

which go under their name: since many circumstances are recorded in them which did not happen till many years after their death. Vid. Gen. xii. 6. xxii. 14. xxxvi. 31. Exod. xvi. 35. (compared with Josh. v. 12.) Numb. xii. 3. Deut. ii. 12: iii. 11. 14. xxxiv. 5. &c. 1 Sam. xv. to the end of the 2d of Samuel. Neh. xii. 10. 11. where the catalogue of high priests is carried down to the time of Alexander the Great.

To that part of this objection which may affect the Pentateuch, some have replied, That Samuel might have been the author of those books which are called *The Books of Moses*, because they treat of him; as those of Samuel are named after that prophet, because his history made so considerable a part of them. Among others, Sir Isaac Newton and Lord Barrington suppose Genesis, and the other historical books before Moses's time, to have been written by Samuel, and for this purpose quote Acts iii. 21, 24. but this is so directly contrary to many other Scriptures, that it is strange that any should patronize the opinion, especially when comparing 1 Sam. ii. 10. and 2 Sam. xxiii. 3—5. which may afford so easy and beautiful an illustration of the above-mentioned text in Acts, on which Barrington lays his chief stress. (See Grey on the last words of David.) The Scriptures to which this hypothesis is most directly contrary, are 2 Chron. xxiii. 18. Daniel ix. 11. 13. Mal. iv. 4. Mark vii. 10: xii. 19. Luke xvi. 29, 31. xx. 28. 37. xxiv. 27, 44. John i. 45; v. 46, 47.

Berriman. Essays on Divine Dispensations. App. No. iv.; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 197—208. *Newton on Daniel*, c. i.

Therefore, waving this, it seems more reasonable to say (as the most ancient Jewish writers since the time of the Old Testament assure us) that Ezra published a new edition of the books of Moses, in which he inclosed those passages as *notes*, which perhaps afterwards crept into the text, by mistake of the transcribers; although indeed, with regard to many of the passages alleged, it is evident there is no absurdity at all in supposing them to have been written by Moses himself. Perhaps Simon the Just might also make some additions to those books which were written after Ezra's time.

Prideaux. Con. vol. i. p. 342. 345. 573—575. *Kidder on the Pent.* vol. i. Diss.

SECTION V.

As for Father Simon's hypothesis, That the Pentateuch was formed from some loose writings of the annals of Moses, and that many of the leaves were transposed, the reasons on which it depends are so inconsiderable, that it seems not necessary to give a more particular view of it.

Simon. Crit. Hist. Old Test. p. 86. &c. *Dupin on the Can.* vol. i. c. iii. § 1. p. 68—75. *Du Pin. Crit.* vol. iv. p. 26. 46. vol. ii. p. 9. 10. 8vo. *Marsh's Publication of the Four Books of Moses examined.*

SECTION VI.

Under the second step of the second Demonstration, we might have mentioned the omission of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, on which Dr. Warburton has insisted so largely in his learned work, called *The Divine Legation of Moses*; but as that argument is intended to prove not only the genuineness, but also indeed the divine authority, of those books, it may be proper to state it alone elsewhere. We shall only add here, That there is reason to suspect whether, allowing the argument to be valid, it be of so great importance as the ingenious author supposes, seeing it depends upon so many nice questions; *v. g.* how far it is certain that Moses has omitted it?—how far such an omission is peculiar to him as a legislator?—how far it proves its dependence upon an equal Providence?—what that equal Providence was?—whether personal or national?—and how far the expectation of it, or ground for that expectation, was a thing peculiar to the Jews? On all these accounts, the argument is much more complex, and seems less certain and less striking, than similar arguments, drawn from Moses's having laid it down as a fact certainly to be depended upon, That a treble crop should attend the sixth year of tillage from the Sabbatical (Lev. xxv. 21.) and that the family of Aaron, in its male line, should never be extinct, nor ever want an adult heir free from those blemishes that would have rendered him incapable of service: which nothing but a full consciousness of a divine legation, could have warranted so wise a man in making fundamental to his system.

Warb. Mos. Works, vol. i. p. 381—384.

LECTURE CXXIII.

PROPOSITION CVII.

The Old Testament, as now extant in the Hebrew, is in the main what it originally was.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 106. 1. The Old Testament, as extant in the time of the Jews who were contemporary with Christ, was genuine.

2. Such as it was in the time of Christ, it came early into the hands of the Christians, and has continued in their hands ever since; so that the Jews could not have been able to make any considerable

alteration in it, had they been ever so desirous of it while the Christians were such a guard upon them, in a matter on which so much of the evidence of Christianity has at least been supposed to depend; nor, on the other hand, could the Christians corrupt it without the discovery of the Jews, who would never have spared them, could they have proved such an attempt on records which they esteemed so sacred, by persons for whom they had such an implacable aversion.

3. There have been many ancient *versions*, which are yet extant in the Polyglot Bible, in which there is such an agreement in the main, both with the original and with each other, as we cannot suppose there could have been, had the original been corrupted after the date of those versions, of which some are of considerable age.

The most considerable versions to which we refer above, besides the Seventy, were the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases, which, if later than Christ's time, were yet very ancient; the Greek of Theodosian, Aquila, and Symmachus; the Syriac, the Arabic, Ethiopic, and Persian, besides the old *Italic*: of all which see Jones and Walton, referred to below.

4. In latter ages, the Masorites have expressed a great and even superstitious care in keeping the copy of the Old Testament as incorrupt as possible, numbering even the lines, the words, and the letters, in each book; and though this care may be said to come late, *i. e.* about the year 500, it is to be remembered, it extends to those ages in which Christians were most ignorant of Hebrew, and the Jews had some learning; so that, perhaps, had they been disposed to corrupt their Scriptures, they might have done it then with the greatest safety; in which view, there seems to be something very providential in this exact scrupulosity of theirs at such a period. See *Pref. to Van Hooght's ed. of the Heb. Bib.*

1, 2, 3, and 4. 5. The Old Testament, as extant in the Hebrew, is in the main uncorrupted.

Jones's Cri. Acct. v. iv. p. 70—74. c. xiii. xiv. xvi. xvii. xviii. *MS. Turret.* vol. i. *Loc.* ii. *quæst.* x. § 9—13. *Wetstein's Prol. to Proleg. Bibl. Dr. Gill's Pref. to his Dissc. on the Heb. Lang.* part. i.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this some object the difference which there is in many places between the Seventy and the Hebrew; some of which variations are of great moment, especially in chronology. To this we may reply,

1. That it is reasonable to believe the Seventy may have been altered in some places, or the Hebrew mistaken by the first translators, which may account for several differences.

2. If it be supposed that the Hebrew *points* were of later invention, a supposed difference in them will account for a vast number of variations in the Seventy; and the similarity of several Hebrew letters will account for many more.

3. The Seventy itself attests the truth and exactness of vastly the greater part of the Hebrew Bible, even if it should be granted that this translation is preferable to the original; which yet is a concession by no means to be made. Now the proposition does not assert, That there are no errors at all in the Hebrew copy; the contrary to which the difference between the *Keri* and *Kethib* does evidently show.

Prid. Conn. vol. i. p. 331. *Shuckford's Conn.* vol. i. p. 28—72. *Wonder's Hist. of Kennl.* vol. i. c. xvi. *Hallet's Notes on Scripture*, vol. i. p. 118—120.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That many passages quoted in the New Testament, and in the writings of the Christian fathers, are very different from the correspondent passages as they now stand in the Hebrew; and that some words are introduced as quotations, which are nowhere to be found. Now if with some we suppose, that those early Christian writers quoted from the Seventy, the objection will then coincide with the former; but as for reasons to be given elsewhere, we do not grant that:—we answer,

1. Perhaps they quoted from their memory; which is the more probable, as sometimes the same passage is quoted by different authors in very different words, even where the sense agrees.

2. The *sense* of the passages supposed to be lost is still to be found in the Old Testament, though the *words* be not, especially Matt. ii. *ult.* John vii. 38. Yet, if it were to be granted, That some of the verses originally belonging to the Old Testament are lost, it would not be at all inconsistent with the truth of our proposition, which only opposes general, material, and designed corruption.†

Dod. Chris. Exp. in loc. cit.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is further objected, That many of the Christian fathers complain that the Jews had corrupted the Old Testament, in order to weaken the proofs of Christianity from thence.

Ans. Justin Martyr, and some others who advance this charge, were only acquainted with some Greek

† [illegible]

versions, which, whether it were the Seventy or not, must be hereafter considered; and believing the divine authority of them, they charge all the variations which are to be found in the Hebrew, as the Jews quoted it, to be corruptions of their own; and sometimes they may mean only *false interpretations*.

Collins's Grounds, part ii. c. i. ii. v. *Whist. Ess.* &c. *Prop.* xii. *Carpzovius's Def.* &c. c. ix. *Jones's Crit. Lect.* c. iv. § 75—85. *MS. Middleton's Inq.* p. 41—43.

SCHOLIUM I.

Nevertheless, we may, consistently with the truth of the proposition, allow, That some alterations have happened in transcribing; many of which were undoubtedly undesigned, because they could answer no imaginable end. Sometimes a very small mistake in a transcriber would greatly alter the sense, as Psal. xxii. 17. and it seems, on comparing all the arguments, we may safely conclude, that if there have been any designed alterations in the Old Testament, they must have been made between the time of Christ and the rise of the Masorites, in the third century; and then the alterations would be of such a kind, as to be prejudicial rather than favourable to Christianity; so that, whatever arguments in proof of Christianity can be brought from the Old Testament, the force of them will not be at all diminished, should we allow some designed variations; but indeed it is not in the nature of things very probable, either that, leaving those important passages which yet remain, they would have corrupted the rest for so little reason, or that, believing (as we are sure they did) the divine original of the Scriptures, they would upon any terms have corrupted them designedly, *i. e.* have destroyed what they thought divine, so far as in them lay, to substitute something human in its stead. Compare Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Hallet on Script. vol. ii. p. 109, 110. *Leland's View of Deist. Writ.* vol. ii. p. 302—307.

LECTURE CXXIV.

PROPOSITION CVIII.

The history of the New Testament is in the main credible; *i. e.* there is as great regard to be paid to it as is due to other histories of allowed character and reputation.

LEMMA TO DEMONSTRATION.

It is reasonable to believe that the history recorded in the New Testament is, in the main, agreeable to those facts which were asserted by the first preachers, and received by the first converts of Christianity; for if there had been any remarkable inconsistency between them, those first converts could not have received the books of the New Testament as genuine, which yet we have already proved that they did.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 103. 1. The several books of the New Testament were written by those who were personally concerned in many of the facts they relate, and who had the best opportunities of being informed concerning the most important of those other facts which they have recorded. This especially appears with respect to Matthew, Peter, John, Paul, and Luke, at least so far as he wrote of several of Paul's journeys, in which he himself attended him.

1. 2. The authors of the New Testament were capable of giving us a true account of the facts they have undertaken to record,—and if what they have written were false, it must have been a designed forgery; for there is nothing which looks like lunacy in any of their writings; least of all can we imagine that such a number of madmen could have agreed in so consistent a story!

3. There are the greatest marks of integrity in their writings,—both in the simplicity of their style and the faithful manner they relate circumstances, which might bring reflection on their own character and their Master's.

Roll. Man. d'etud. vol. ii. p. 420—426. *West on the Resurr.* p. 344—363.

4. There are also in their writings the most genuine traces of a pious and benevolent temper, of a contempt of suffering and death itself, when they might be called to meet it in the cause of truth. Upon the whole, it seems the design of their writings,—to carry virtue in all its branches to the sublimest degree, even beyond what any of the Heathen moralists did or attempted; and, so far as we can judge by their strain and manner, they appear like good men, bringing out of the treasure of their hearts good things.

3, 4. 5. Their character seems, on the whole, such as may give us a probable expectation that they would speak the truth to the best of their knowledge; and there must have been at least some circumstances of strong temptation to engage them knowingly to deviate from it, especially in points of so great importance as those which by their writings they were labouring to carry; nor ought we by any means lightly to believe that persons, whose characters at first view appear so fair and honourable, would engage in a design so much to the dishonour of God and injury of men's souls and bodies, as theirs must have been, if their testimony were false; since they laboured to turn men's devotion into a wrong channel, and to engage the most upright of mankind, and those who were their best friends, in a cause which was likely to ruin both themselves and their families.

6. Considering how incredible their story seemed at the first hearing, and how contrary it was both to the passions and secular interests of mankind, they had no temptation to attempt a fraud of this nature in expectation of any worldly advantage; but might depend upon such persecutions and oppositions as many of the first professors of Christianity appear to have met with, and as they themselves in their writings tell us they both encountered and expected.—See the texts under *Sch.* 4.

5, 6. 7. There is no reason to believe that they would in this instance attempt to impose upon us.

8. The persons to whom they addressed themselves, would be inclined to do their utmost to discover the fraud, if there were room to suspect any; considering that the doctrines of the first teachers of Christianity evidently tended to fix an odium upon the Jewish rulers, to destroy peculiar privileges and emoluments both of the Jewish and Pagan priests, to oppose all the superstitious regard paid to deified emperors, and the idolatries which mingled themselves in their most pompous games and spectacles: that it poured contempt upon those things for which the Gentile orators and philosophers were ready to value themselves most; and, on the whole, required such eminent degrees of humility and universal virtue, as were exceedingly opposite to that pride and wickedness which so generally prevailed both among Jews and Gentiles. *West on the Res.* p. 110—128. *pras.* p. 420—423.

9. A fraud like this, if it were a fraud, might very easily have been detected,—seeing they bore their first testimony in the very place and age in which Christ is said to have been crucified, and to have risen from the dead (as appears from what was observed of the early prevalency of Christianity in Judea, *Prop.* 98. *gr.* 4.); and as the persons, whose character and interest were chiefly affected by it, had the civil power in their own hands, no doubt the thing would be thoroughly canvassed; and if it had appeared false, would have been immediately exposed. Besides, wherever they came, they attested facts of such a nature, as might easily have been discovered on the spot; not merely asserting that they had seen Christ and some of his followers work miracles, but that they themselves had such a power; nay, that they communicated extraordinary gifts of the Spirit to their hearers, producing so sensible an effect, as the speaking languages they had never learnt. Paul particularly appeals on this occasion both to the Corinthian and Galatian churches, and argues with them on these facts, even when his interest among them was beginning to decline; so that, on the whole, multitudes must immediately and certainly have known whether the great facts they asserted were true or not.

9. 10. Had the story which the apostles told been a forgery, it would, no doubt, have been quickly discovered, and rejected with the utmost abhorrence.

Prop. 98 and 103. 11. Nevertheless, it gained a very great degree of credit in Judea, Greece, Italy, and other places; and vast numbers of persons, in that very age in which these things are said to have been taught and done, were so fully persuaded of the truth of Christianity, that as it appears from the writings of the apostles to the primitive churches, as well as from other ancient monuments, they cheerfully ventured their estates and lives upon a confidence of the truth of those facts, which the first preachers of the Gospel taught.

2, 7, 10, 11. *Lem.* 12. Since the writers of the New Testament were neither liable to be deceived themselves in the facts they relate, nor would have been inclined to attempt imposing on the world by such a forgery; and since their history met with that acceptance and success in the world which, without the support of truth, it could never have found, there is abundant reason to believe it is true. *Q. E. D.*

Dod. Ten Serm. No. ix. per tot. *Gastrell's Certainty of Christian Rev.* p. 250—272. *Bp. Burnet's Four Discour.* p. 27—35. *Mass. Theol. Works*, p. 223—227. *Baxter's Works*, vol. ii. p. 110—113; part ii. c. vii. § 17—29. *Ditton on the Res.* part iii. § 21—34. p. 251—278. *Barnet on the Art.* p. 59—64. *Test against Tind.* p. 135—137. *Barrow's Works*, vol. ii. p. 304—312. *Sermons on the Creed*, No. xxix. *Bulkley's Economy of the Gospel*, i. 3. *Hodges's Serm.* No. viii. *passim. Macknight on the Truth of the Gosp. Hist* book iii. c. ii. p. 421—478.

LECTURE CXXV

SCHOLIUM 1.

To the credibility of the Gospel History, some have objected our Lord's not appearing in public after his resurrection, which might have been the most effectual method of convincing the Jews; but it may be replied,

1. It is not certain the Jews would have been convinced even by this, considering the great obstinacy that people showed in a variety of instances in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Compare *John* xii. 10, 11.

2. God is not obliged to give the highest possible degrees of evidence to any revelation; and these evidences which the New Testament affirms to have been given, were so considerable, both with respect

to the number of witnesses and the confirmation of their testimony by miracles, that there is no room to complain, merely because one may imagine how the evidence might have been carried yet higher; especially if we consider how incapable the enemies of Christianity seem to have been of producing evidence on the contrary side.

3. As the former obstinacy of the Jewish people, and their wicked treatment of Christ, abundantly justifies this conduct of God toward them, so if it were to be granted that they would generally have believed upon Christ's public appearance among them, it is difficult to conceive how the prophecies of their rejection for rejecting Christ could have been fulfilled; or that evidence for the truth of Christianity preserved, which now arises from the existence of the Jews as a distinct people, with the records of the Old Testament in their hands. On the whole, therefore, the conduct of Providence in this affair is to be thankfully adored rather than censured.

Woolston's 6th Disc. p. 26—28. *Ditton on the Res.* part iii. § 60—67. p. 338—352. § 69, 70. p. 361—368. *Bp. Burnet's 4th Disc.* p. 52—56. *Sykes of Christ.* p. 162—170. *Elem. Christol.* vol. iii. p. 494—498. *Blackall at Boyle's Lect. Serm.* iv. p. 25, 26. *Superv. Serm.* vol. iv. p. 9—12. *Atterb. Post. Serm.* vol. i. p. 182—190. *West on the Res.* p. 296—304. *Macken. Harmony*, p. 864—866. *Hodges's Serm.* No. ix. *Leland's View*, vol. i. p. 157, 158, and 295—298. *Miscell. Sacra.* vol. ii. p. 77, 78.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That there were but very few of the Jews who believed in Christ: and considering that they were the best judges of his claim to be the Messiah, there is reason to suspect that the evidences of it were not sufficiently convincing.

Ans. 1. According to the account given in the New Testament, there were some considerable numbers of the Jews converted on the first publication of the Gospel, and even some who were priests, and consequently lay under peculiar prejudices (vid. Acts ii. 41; iv. 4; vi. 7; xxi. 20.); and also those texts in the epistles, which evidently refer to the Judaizing Christians, and therefore prove that there were considerable numbers of Jewish converts.

2. That the Jewish nation in general lay under very strong prejudices, especially those arising from their expectation of temporal deliverance and grandeur from their Messiah, the peculiar dignity and privileges of their own nation, the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, and the sanctity of the Scribes and Pharisees, as well as the authority of their dictates in matters of religion, besides those arising from the wickedness and immorality of their own characters in that very corrupt age: so that it is not at all to be wondered at that they had a very strong aversion to that teacher and religion, which seemed so expressly levelled against those prejudices. To which we may add, that the force of the argument arising from Christ's miracles would be much diminished, considering the notion they had of the power of magic, and the supposition they thought they had some reason to make, that a false prophet might possibly work them; of which there also remain many traces in the rabbinical writings.

3. We are not to conclude that all who refused to embrace Christianity remained in their hearts unconvinced; for it is certain that the severity of persecution might engage many, who had not a deep principle of religion, to dissemble the inward conviction of their own mind; as it is expressly declared many did.—John xii. 42, 43, &c.

Woolston's 5th Disc. p. 48. *Whitby's Cert. of Christian Faith*, c. ix. § 9. *ad fin.* p. 276—280. *Burn. 4th Dis.* p. 38—41. 56—58. *Whitby on Rom.* ii. 1. Note b. *Lardn. Test.* vol. i. c. i; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 1—24.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is further objected, That the apostles had nothing to lose, and they might at least gain a subsistence, and the fame of being divine messengers, by such a forgery.

Ans. 1. They had at least their lives to lose,—which the poorest of mankind regard as well as others.

2. That if it could be supposed that persons of such low circumstances and education had the most eager desire of fame, they could not reasonably expect to raise their reputation by such an undertaking; but, on the contrary, to expose it to the greatest infamy, besides that the simplicity with which they refer the honour of all they did to their great Master, most evidently shows how far they were from that vain-glorious temper, which the objection pretends to have been so strong in them.—Acts iii. 12, 13; xiv. 15. 2 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 5—7.

3. That if they had been actuated by mercenary views, they might much more easily have raised their fortune, by renouncing the cause they had undertaken, and discovering the forgery they had invented.

Baxter's Works, vol. ii. p. 111. b. *Limborch's Collat.* p. 161—163.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is also objected, That the apostles met with but little persecution among the Gentiles; but we answer,

1. That though we acknowledge that the Romans, whose maxim it was to tolerate conquered nations in their own religion, were often a refuge to them at first, yet the Heathen populace in the several

cities of Greece and Asia to which they came, frequently rose up against them in a tumultuous manner, and exposed them to the extremest danger.

2. That considering how absolutely all Pagan superstitions were condemned by Christianity, the first preachers of it had great reason to believe, what was indeed fact, that in proportion to the degree in which their doctrines came to be known among the Heathens, persecutions would be raised by the magistrates, and penal laws enacted against them.—Vid. *Prop.* 101. *Schol.* 3. and *Warburton*, quoted there.

3. That the number and power of the Jews were very great in the apostles' days, not only in Judea, but also in other countries; so that, upon the whole, the persecutions of the primitive Christian preachers and hearers were very grievous; as evidently appears from the whole tenor of the New Testament, especially the following passages:—Acts v. 17, 18, 40; vii. 57—60; viii. 1; ix. 1, 2, 23, 24; xii. 1—4; xiii. 50; xiv. 5, 19; xvi. 22, &c.; xvii. 5, 6; xviii. 12, &c.; xix. 29; xx. 3; xxi. 27, 28; xxii. 22; xxiii. 14; xxvi. 10, 11. Rom. viii. 36. 1 Cor. iv. 9—13; xv. 29—32. 2 Cor. i. 8, 9; iv. 8—11; vi. 4, 5, 8, 9; xi. 23—27. Gal. vi. 17. Phil. i. 27—30. Col. i. 11, 24. 1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 14—16. 2 Thess. i. 4—7. 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 3, 9, 10; iii. 11, 12. Heb. x. 32—34. James ii. 6; v. 10, 11. 1 Pet. ii. 19—21; iii. 14—17; iv. 1, 12—16. Rev. ii. 10, 13; iii. 10.

Lard. Cred. part i. lib. i. c. viii. *præs.* p. 225—229, 250—264; *Works*, vol. i. p. 164—201.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Some may perhaps think that if such miracles as the Christians pretend had really been wrought in proof of their religion, it would have been impossible that it should not have met with an earlier and more general regard in the world. So far as the Jews are concerned in this objection, it has been considered above; and so far as it relates to the Gentiles only, it may be answered,

1. That it evidently appears in fact, that many of the pagans had at that time but a very low opinion of miracles, and paid but little regard to them. Mr. Weston has entered largely into several causes that might contribute to this; especially the many ridiculous pretences that were made to them by the professors of divination, and the pretences to oracles and magic; to all which the multitude and intercommunity of their gods would not a little contribute.

2. That where any regard was paid to them, (though if there had been a fair and candid examination, it must soon have appeared that those which were pretended to as countenancing heathenism, were by no means, in point of evidence, comparable to those by which Christianity was supported,) yet the strong prejudices that would lie against it as a *new* religion, and especially as a religion so opposite to men's secular interests and sinful passions, would prevent a careful and impartial inquiry; and so would dazzle their eyes, and make them prone to disregard the gospel, notwithstanding its miracles were allowed.

3. That the great discouragements under which Christianity lay, while the empire was in the hands of the Pagans, would no doubt engage many to smother the secret conviction of their minds in its favour; but when Constantine declared himself a Christian, most of the opposition against Christianity ceased; which might in many be owing to the dictates of conscience, as being persuaded of the truth of that religion, though in others it might be only a conformity to an establishment.

Weston's Inq. into the Reject. of Christian Mir. pass. præs. c. iii. p. 17—79.

SCHOLIUM 6.

As for those objections which Dr. Tindal has brought against the moral character of the Apostles, in some instances, they are circumstantially confuted by Dr. Foster, Dr. Leland, and others who have written on the other side the question.

Tind. on Chris. p. 220, 221. *Fost. ag. Tind.* p. 111—132. *Leland*, ib. vol. ii. c. ii.

SCHOLIUM 7.

The objections which Mr. Woolston has advanced against several miracles related in the New Testament, in his discourse on the miracles of Christ, have been sufficiently answered by almost all his antagonists; the most valuable of which are Mr. Stephenson, Dr. Lardner, Bp. Pearce, and the author of the *Trial of the Witnesses*. An abstract of their most curious and important thoughts may be seen in our notes on the Harmony of the Evangelists, on those texts which he has excepted against.

Stinehouse's Account of the Controversy.

LECTURE CXXVI.

PROPOSITION IX.

Many material facts, which are recorded in the Old Testament, are also mentioned by very ancient Heathen writers.

* [illegible] Woolston [illegible] Resurrection [illegible]

DEMONSTRATION

1. The Heathens had a tradition among them concerning the original of the world, which bore some visible resemblance to the account which Moses has given of it; particularly the Phœnicians, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and though they differ considerably from Moses, as to the time of the Creation, we have formerly shown their accounts to be in this respect extravagant and incredible. Vid. *Prop.* 21. *Dem. gr.* 2.

Cumberland's Sanchoniathon, p. 1—23. *Burnet's Archæol.* lib. i. c. i—vi. lib. ii. c. i. *Ray's* 3 *Disc.* No. 1. c. i. *Ovid's Met.* lib. i. *Grot. de Verit. with Le Clerc's Notes*, lib. i. c. xvi. p. 26—40. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 11—17. fol.; p. 23—34, 8vo edit.

2. The division of time into weeks has long prevailed, not only among the inhabitants of Greece and Italy, as we learn from Josephus, Philo Biblius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Lucian, but also among the Celtæ and Indians, as Philostratus, Dion Cassius, and Justin Martyr assure us; and which we may further learn from the ancient names of the seven days.

Grot. ibid. p. 41, 42. *Roll. Hist. Anc.* tom. iv. p. 116, French. *Selden de Jure N. et Gent.* lib. iii. c. xvi—xxiii. *præs.* c. xvi. *et* xix.

3. Diodorus Siculus, Plato, Dicæarchus, Calanus the Indian philosopher, quoted by Strabo, and others quoted by Maimonides, and several other writers, mention a state of innocence, and the fall of man: to which it is probable we are to refer what so many writers say of the *Golden Age*: nor is it an improbable conjecture that the worship of *serpents*, which has prevailed among so many Heathen nations, may have some reference to that form, in which Moses tells us the tempter appeared to the first human pair.

Grot. ibid. p. 42, 43. *Burn. Arch.* lib. ii. c. ii. iii. *Bate cruc. with Cand.* vol. i. p. 80, 81. *Jenk. on Christian.* vol. ii. p. 246—248. *Stilf. Orig. Sac.* p. 316—318. *Owen on Serp. Diss.* iv. v. p. 216—232.

4. The long lives of men in the early ages of the world, are mentioned by Berosus, Manetho, Hiromus, and Helanicus, as also by Hesiod, and many other writers quoted by Josephus, and afterwards by Servius, in his Notes on Virgil.

Grot. ibid. p. 44. *Jos. Ant.* lib. i. c. iii. § 9.

5. The account which Pausanius, Philostratus, Pliny, and several other writers, give us of the remains of gigantic bodies which have been found in the earth, serve in some degree to confirm Moses's account of the antediluvian giants.

Grot. ib. p. 45. *Pliny's Nat. Hist.* lib. vii. c. xv. *Solinus*, c. i. *with Salm* note. p. 9. *Annual Register for* 1764, part ii. p. 106, 107.

6. Berosus, the Chaldean historian, quoted by Josephus, and Abidenus by Eusebius, Plutarch, Lucian, Molo, Nicholas Damascenus, as well as many of the Heathen poets, mention the Deluge: and some traditions concerning it are to be found among the Americans and Chinese; not to mention what some modern travellers have fabulously related concerning some ruins of the ark, said to remain on mount Ararat, and to have been seen there but a few centuries ago.

Grot. ib. p. 47—52. *Ray's* 3 *Disc.* No. ii. c. i. *Saurin's Diss.* vol. i. p. 131—134. *Stilf. Orig. Sac.* lib. iii. c. iv. § 8. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 112, fol.*

We may add under this head, (that we may not break the order of all that follow,) that Alexander Polyhistor quotes Artapanus and Eupolemus, as mentioning the Tower of Babel; and the former speaks of it as built by Belus. (*Eus. Præp. Evan.* lib. ix. c. xviii.) Abydenus likewise (ibid. c. xiv.) and Hestiæus (15.) mention the same building, with something of the circumstances attending the disappointment of that enterprise.

7. Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Tacitus, Pliny, and Solinus agree in giving us an account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities, in the main agreeable to that of Moses; the truth of which is in some measure confirmed by what modern travellers of the best credit have related concerning the phenomenon of the Dead Sea; and Alexander Trallianus mentions a Heathen form of exorcism, "In the name of the God that turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt."

Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. vii. *Whitby's Cert. of the Christian Faith*, p. 36—39. *Pliny's Nat. Hist.* lib. v. c. xvi. lib. xxxv. c. xv. *Solinus*, c. xxxvi. *with Salm.* note. *Grot.* ib. p. 58, 59. *Maundrel's Trav.* p. 83—86. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 576, 577, fol.

8. Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, Philo Biblius, and some others, mention *circumcision* as a rite used by several of those nations into which, according to Moses, Abraham travelled, or which were descended from him, especially by Hagar and Keturah: and if the hypothesis of a late learned author be admitted, that the Egyptians derived it from the Ishmaelite Shepherd-kings, it will be equally to the present purpose. Vid. *Prop.* 104. *Schol.* and the references there.

Grot. ib. p. 59, 60. *Saur. Diss.* vol. i. p. 246, 247.

9. Berosus, Alexander Polyhistor, (from Eupolemus and Melo, more ancient writers than himself,) Damascenus, Artapanus, and other ancient historians cited by Josephus and Eusebius, make express

* Many curious tracts and evidences of the [illegible] Deluge, [illegible] Hutchinson [illegible] Mr. John Beckett's great work, entitled, A new System, or an Analysis of Ancient Mythology. [illegible] [illegible]

and honourable mention of Abraham and some of his family, as some of them do also expressly speak of his interviews with Melchisedek. To which we may add the account given of him by Trogus Pompeius as abridged by Justin; nay, Josephus tells us that Hecataeus wrote a whole book of Abraham's life.

Jos. Ant. lib. i. c. vii. § 2. *Just.* lib. xxxvi. c. ii. *Mill. Prop. on Christian.* vol. i. p. 114, 115. *Eus. Præp. Evan.* lib. ix. c. 17—23.

10. Besides the express testimony concerning Moses, *Prop.* 104. which may properly be referred to this proposition, there are also many fabulous stories of Thoth, Typhon, Hermes, and others, in which many celebrated writers have endeavoured to prove that such traces of his history are to be found, as show he was the person represented under that variety of names.

Heut. Dem. Evang. Pr. iv. c. iii. p. 19—68. *Dacier on Hor.* lib. i. *Od.* x. *Mill. Prop. Christian.* vol. i. p. 167—169. *Wits. Ægypt.* lib. iii. c. iv. *per tot.* *Jacks. Cred.* part ii. § 2. c. viii. ix. *apud Op.* vol. i. lib. iii. c. 14, 15. *Warb. Div. Leg.* vol. i. lib. iii. § 3. p. 354—358. vol. i. part ii. p. 130—135.

11. Eupolemus and Dius, as quoted by Eusebius and Grotius, mention many remarkable circumstances of David and Solomon, agreeing with the Old-Testament story; and Herodotus has a remarkable though much controverted passage, supposed to refer to the destruction of the Assyrians in the reign of Hezekiah, in which he mentions Sennacherib by name.

Eus. Præp. Ev. lib. ix. c. 30—34, and 39—41. *Jos. Antiq.* lib. viii. c. ii. *Contr. App.* lib. i. p. 1340. *Millar*, ibid. vol. i. p. 123—127. *Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 25. *Herod. Hist.* lib. ii. c. 141.

12. As for the mention of Nebuchadnezzar, and some of the succeeding kings of Babylon, as well as of Cyrus and his successors, it is so common in ancient writers, as not to need a more particular view of it.

1—12. 13. *Valet propositio.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

It would be very easy to prove, that many passages of the Old Testament are mentioned by Celsus, and objections against Christianity formed upon them: but he comes too late to be esteemed a witness to them; and all that can be inferred from those passages is, that he had read the Old Testament, probably in the Greek version of it, and that he knew Christians paid a religious regard to it;—neither of which facts are at present in question.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may not be improper here to mention the monument which Procopius mentions as found in Africa, testifying "that they had fled from the face of the robber Joshua, the son of Nun; though that coming through the hands of a Christian writer, and of one who lived so very long after Christianity was introduced, it did not seem so convenient to insert it among the preceding testimonies.

LECTURE CXXVII.

PROPOSITION CX.

The History of the Old Testament is in the main worthy of credit.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 106, 107. 1. The books of the Old Testament received by the *Reformed*, (of which alone we speak,) are genuine.

1. 2. Many of the writers of the Old Testament have given us an account of things, in which they were themselves personally concerned, *e. g.* Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and several of the minor prophets; and consequently they were capable of giving us a true account of what they represented, as having fallen within their own observation and experience.

3. There are great marks of integrity in their writings, not only as they tell their very amazing story with great simplicity, and without apology, excuse, digression, &c. but as they every where write with the deepest sense of God upon their spirit, regarding him as the Author of all events, whose moral as well as natural perfections they every where celebrate, and in whom they seem to have reposed the confidence of their souls, seeking his favour above all, and referring their actions to his glory: they do also most candidly acknowledge their own faults, and the faults of the greatest heroes of their history;—and as for Moses, whose credibility is of the greatest importance to support all the rest, his leaving his family in the circumstances of common Levites, without entailing any peculiar honours or possessions upon them, is as strong a proof of his uprightness as could well be imagined.

Jacks. Cred. p. 20—38. 4to; *apud Op.* vol. i. lib. i. c. iv. p. 15—28.

3. 4. There is no reason to believe they would attempt to impose upon us, at least unless we can find that they were under some strong temptation to have attempted it.

5. Considering the time in which their writings were published, and also the public and remarkable nature of many of those events which are there recorded, and how many witnesses there must have been to the falsehood of them, if they had been false, they could expect no advantage by attempting to impose upon the world by such forgeries, nor could they have reaped any thing but contempt from it.

Prop. 104. 6. Nevertheless we find that their writings were received as credible by those who were the most capable of judging in the case, and those institutions submitted to on the authority of these facts which would otherwise have appeared very unreasonable and very grievous.

2, 4, 5, 6. 7. There is reason to believe that the History of the Old Testament is true, so far as the authors wrote it upon their own personal knowledge.

8. As for the history of remoter ages, much might be known of it by tradition, considering the long lives of the first men; at least all that was necessary might be learnt by revelation, to which we well know that Moses pretended; and there is such an evident and close connexion between what was written by Moses and other persons mentioned, *pr.* 2. upon *their own knowledge*, and what they or others whose names are not certainly known have written in the Old Testament upon *tradition* or *revelation*, that he who believes the former to be credible, will easily admit the latter, especially considering that it is one leading fact of the history, that Moses himself was instructed in so extraordinary a manner by God.

Prop. 109. 9. The agreement there is between many facts recorded in the Old Testament, and the testimony of many Heathen historians of considerable note, is a further evidence in favour of its credibility.

7, 8, and 9. 10. The History of the Old Testament is in the main credible. *Q. E. D.*

Bonnet on Script. p. 116, 117. *Mill. Prop.* v. i. p. 87, 88, 94—99. *Burnet on the Art.* p. 83. *Still. Orig. Sac.* lib. ii. c. ii. § 1, 2, 7—9. c. iii. § 1. 2. *Williams at Bagot's Lect.* p. 119—121. *Jenkins on Christianity*, part ii. c. iii. vi. xi. vol. i. p. 132, &c. 151, &c. 296, &c. *Leland against Tind.* vol. ii. p. 38—42. chap. ii. p. 30—33. 2d edit.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The great ignorance of those Latin and Greek writers which now remain, as to facts which happened very long before their own time, and the peculiar contempt which several of them had for the Jewish nation, arising from the diversity of its customs and institutions, concur with many other considerations mentioned *Prop.* 99. *Schol.* 2. to answer any objection which might be raised against the credibility of the Old-Testament History, from the silence of such writers as to many important articles of it.

Jenkins's Reas. of Christianity, vol. i. p. 95, 96. *Leland's View*, vol. ii. p. 280—293.

SCHOLIUM 2.

We do not particularly mention the supposed absurdities to be found in some parts of the history, because they do not affect the truth of the whole, and will much more properly be considered as objections against its *inspiration*.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, as we have before proved that it is no absurd thing that God should make a revelation of some things before unknown (*Prop.* 93.); and as the main body of the Jewish story is taken up in giving an account of such revelations, the proposition must lay a reasonable foundation for our believing that series of *prophecies*,—which will be the subject of the two next propositions.

LECTURE CXXVIII.

PROPOSITION CXI.

Many Prophets of the Old Testament foretold a variety of events, which it was impossible they should have foreseen, merely by the force of their natural genius and sagacity.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Immediately after the flood, Noah foretold the infamy and servitude of the descendants of Cainan, and the conversion of several Gentile nations descended from Japhet, *i. e.* the Europeans, to the worship of the true God, who stood in a peculiar relation to the Jews, as descended from Shem.—Gen. ix. 25—27.

Camb. Orig. Gent. p. 427. *Whist. Ser. Proph.* p. 104—108. *Bp. Newt. Diss. on Proph.* vol. i. *Diss.* i. p. 9—36; *Works*, vol. i. p. 13—27. *Jen. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 10, &c.

2. The servitude of the Israelites in Egypt, their deliverance from thence, and the extensive dominion they afterwards obtained, were exactly foretold to Abraham. Gen. xv. 13—21.

3. The character and fate of the Ishmaelites was in the most amazing manner foretold to Hagar, Gen. xvi. 12. which is accomplished even to this day, as the Arabians still remain an unconquered people, remarkable above any other for their fierceness and rapine.

Rev. exam. vol. ii. *Diss.* iv. p. 144—152. *Univ. Hist.* vol. xx. *Newt. Diss.* vol. i. *Diss.* ii. p. 37—48; *Works*, vol. i. p. 28—41. *Rev. exam.* v. ii. *Diss.* iv. *Judic. Tr. of Sect.* p. 156—168. *ap. Op.* vol. i. c. 25. 26. p. 115—124.

4. The contests between the Edomites and the Israelites, with the success of them, were foretold to Rebekah, before her children were born, and afterwards by Isaac to his children themselves, with some further circumstances.—Gen. xxv. 23. xxvii. 39. 40.

Newt. Diss. vol. i. *Diss.* iii. p. 61—84; *Works*, vol. i. p. 42—58.

5. Many remarkable events, not only relating to himself and his family, but the whole Egyptian nation, were in a wonderful manner predicted by Joseph.—Gen. xxxix—xli.

6. Various surprising circumstances relating to the settlement of the twelve tribes in Canaan, and the occurrences to befall some of them there, were foretold by Joseph upon his dying bed.—Gen. xlviii. xlix.

Sherl. on Proph. p. 341—343. Vid. *Patrick on Pyle in Loc. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 314—325.

7. The obstinacy and ruin of Pharaoh, the deliverance of the Israelites from his kingdom, and their serving God at Mount Sinai, were discovered to Moses, Exod. iii. 11, 12. not to mention the prediction of each of the ten plagues, immediately preceding the execution of them.

8. Many remarkable circumstances relating to Israel and the neighbouring nations were foretold by Balaam.—Numb. xxiv. 15—25.

Newton, ib. *Diss.* v. p. 114—155; *Works*, ibid. p. 68—90. *Whist. Proph.* p. 214—221.

9. The various dispensations of God towards Israel in future ages, as well as the circumstances of their settlement in their own land, though decided by the contingency of lots, were foretold by Moses; and their national revolt from God, their destruction by the Romans, with the calamities afterwards attending them, and continuing upon them in part even to this day, have been, and are, a most remarkable accomplishment of the express predictions of their illustrious prophet.—Deut. xxxi. 16. &c. 28—30; xxxii. xxxiii. xxviii. *præs.* v. 49.

Jacks. ibid. c. 6, 11, 13. p. 131, &c. 174, &c. *Ap. Op.* vol. i. lib. i. c. xxiii. p. 92. c. xxvii—xxx. p. 123—136.

10. The calamity of Eli's family, and the transferring the priesthood to the descendants of Eleazar, were foretold by Samuel and other prophets.—1 Sam. ii. 31—36; iii. 11—14.

11. The birth of Solomon, his extraordinary prosperity, and that of the Israelites under him, together with the settlement of the crown on his descendants, was foretold by Nathan to David.—1 Chron. xxii. 8—10.

12. The revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David, was foretold by Abijah to Jeroboam, before there appeared any probability of it, *i. e.* in the midst of Solomon's prosperity.—1 Kings xi. 29—38.

13. The destruction of Bethel and its idolatrous priests, was foretold as to be accomplished by Josiah, who was named on this occasion 300 years before his birth: as well as the destruction of the family of Jeroboam for his continual idolatry; as also the captivity of Israel beyond the Euphrates, then a very distant and very improbable event.—1 Kings xiii. 2, 3, xiv. 10—16.

14. The famine in Israel, their deliverance from the repeated invasions of the Assyrians, the death of Ahab, and ruin of his family by Jehu, with several other events in the reign of Ahab, were foretold by Elijah and other prophets.—1 Kings xvii—xxii.

15. The relief of Samaria, when pressed by a siege, the exaltation of Jehu and Hazael, and the victory of Israel over the Moabites, besides several private and personal events, were foretold by Elisha. 2 Kings vii—xiii.

LECTURE CXXIX

16. The deliverance of the Jews from the conspiracy of Rezin and Pekah, and afterwards the defeat of Sennacherib, and the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, were all foretold by Isaiah; as the last event was also by Jeremiah, Hosea, and many other prophets.

17. The deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, as to be accomplished by Cyrus, (though an event quite unparalleled in its kind,) was foretold by several of the prophets, and particularly by Isaiah, who named Cyrus many years before he was born; and the very date of that deliverance was fixed by Jeremiah to 70 years from the beginning of the captivity.—Isa. xliv. 24—28; xlv. 1—4. Jer. xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 11. Dan. ix. 2. Zech. vii. 5.

18. The calamities which fell upon the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Syrians, the Arabians, and many other nations, were expressly foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and several other prophets; and above all, the destruction of Babylon, with such particular circumstances as are really astonishing, and such a prediction of its utter desolation as, humanly speaking, seemed impossible when the prophecies were delivered, and even long after their publication in the world, considering the greatness and magnificence of that city.

Sykes's Con. c. viii. p. 139. *Rev. Inc. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 272. Fr.

It may be added under this head, that the easy conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, so beautifully described Jer. xliii. 12 and its final abasement, Ezek. xxx. 13, &c. events, considering the extraordinary grandeur of Egypt at that time, and the great confidence of its princes, extremely wonderful in their correspondence with that prediction.

Roll. ib. vol. i. p. 175.

The exact accomplishment of the above-mentioned predictions is well illustrated by Dr. Pri-

deaux in his *Connexion*, and by Dr. Wells in his notes on the minor prophets, and many other writers.

19. The succession of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies, several particular circumstances in the history of the Ptolemaidæ, and Seleucidæ, the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes, and even the erection of the Papal kingdom, are foretold by Daniel, Dan. ii. v. vii. viii. xi. xii.; and that part of them relating to the former article is well illustrated by the writers quoted under the last step, as those relating to the latter are by Sir Isaac Newton, in his book on the prophecies; (on which also see Whiston's remarks;) and in some measure by Lowman on the Revelations. See those passages in the several volumes of Rollin's Ancient History, which particularly relate to these prophecies, vol. vi. p. 270 and 289; vol. viii. p. 417 and 583, Fr.*

20. Those prophecies which relate to the kingdom of the Messiah, and the various circumstances which would attend his appearance, are so considerable, that we shall make them the matter of a distinct proposition, and therefore wave the mention of them here. *Sykes's Con.* c. viii.

COROLLARY 1.

If the genuineness and credibility of the books of the Old Testament be allowed, we have here a most certain proof of the divine foreknowledge of future contingencies,—since there are some things foretold which depended as much as any thing we can imagine upon the volition of free agents: and if it be said, as it is by Mr. Colliber and some others, that God had determined to render those events *necessary*, and upon that determination foretold them, it is to be considered that some of the events mentioned above, especially *gr.* 2. 7. 9. are as criminal as any we can imagine: and in some of those instances are foretold by God as crimes, which he would severely punish on those who were the agents in them; which plainly shows that they were not necessarily determined, nor their accountableness in that instance suspended, as Mr. Colliber supposes. Where considerable bodies of men are concerned in the prediction, which is the case in some instances above, the difficulty on this hypothesis is still greatly increased; and indeed it is difficult to say how God could determine upon such supposed necessitating influences as fit, unless (contrary to this hypothesis) he foresaw those circumstances that would render them so.

* Besides the [illegible] Dr. Newton, Dr. Prideaux, the Port-royal [illegible] Abridgment of Calmet, Mr. Whiston's Essay on the Revelation, vol. i. p. 178, 2d edit. 8vo. Dr. Wells's Hist. vol. i. p. 28. The prophecy [illegible] explained by Mr. Abauzit, [illegible] Dr. Hancock, p. 46. M. Jurieu, in his Letters on the Prophecies, and the Romans, as quoted in Daniel, the [illegible] Calmet, Dr. Prideaux, vol. i. p. 216, and Mede's works [illegible]

Collib. Inq. p. 92. *Sauria's Serm.* vol. i. p. 199. ed. 3.

COROLLARY 2.

Such a series of prophecies as is here described, is a very evident proof of the peculiar presence of God with the Jewish nation; which is further evidenced by the many signal miracles wrought in confirmation of it.

COROLLARY 3.

The accomplishment of many of these prophecies, and especially of those relating to the Christian religion, and to events which happened after the time of Christ, does evidently prove the genuineness and credibility of the books in which they are contained: and it is to be considered as an argument for them, independently on those urged before, *Prop.* 107, 108. for none can with the least show of reason pretend they were forged since Christ's appearance; and it is most evident that there is such a connexion between one part of the Old Testament and another, and such a mutual dependence, that the whole history must in the main be credible, if those parts of it are allowed to be true in which these prophecies are to be found, especially the books of Isaiah and of Daniel.

Vid. *Sykes ubi sup.* *Hartley on Man.* vol. ii. *Prop.* 30. p. 150.

SCHOLIUM.

The arguments brought against the genuineness of the book of Daniel, are proposed and fully confuted in the following references.

Cal. Lit. Sch. p. 149. *Bullock's Vind.* p. 181. *Chand. Vind. Dan. pass.* *Newt. Diss.* vol. ii. *Introd.* p. 1; *Works*, vol. i. p. 275. *Lard. Test.* vol. iii. c. xxxvii. § 3, 4; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 184.

LECTURE CXXX.

PROPOSITION CXII.

To collect the chief of those Old-Testament Prophecies which most evidently relate to the Messiah and his kingdom.

SOLUTION.

1. It was foretold by many of the prophets, that the knowledge of the true God should be extended from Jerusalem over the whole earth; and that Pagan idolatry should be entirely, or in a great measure, suppressed by it.—Psalm xxii. 27; lxxxvi. 9. Isa. ii. 1—5. xi. 9. xlv. 22, 23. Jer. x. 11. Zeph. ii. 11. Mal. i. 11. *Bullock's Vind.* p. 73.

2. Immediately after the *fall*, as recorded by Moses, intimation was given of some person to descend from the woman, so as to be called *her seed*.

who should triumph over the enemy that vanquished them, though he should himself receive some damage comparatively small.—Gen. iii. 15.

Chand. Mir. p. 275. *Sherl. on Proph.* p. 66. *Col. Lit. Sch.* p. 231. *Rev. ex. with Cand.* vol. i. p. 47. *Midd. Posth. Works.*

3. It was foretold to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that *all nations should be blessed in their seed*; which may naturally signify, that a person to descend from them should be a blessing to mankind.—Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxxviii. 14.

4. Jacob on his dying bed speaks of some victorious person, unto whom the people should be gathered, whom he calls Shiloh, declaring that he should appear before Judah ceased to be a tribe.—Gen. xlix. 10.

Sherl. on Proph. Diss. iii. *pass. Mede's Diat. in Loc. Newt. Diss.* vol. i. No. iv. p. 85; *Works*, v. i. p. 53. *Jen. Jew. Ant.* v. i. p. 76.

5. Moses speaks of *a prophet like unto himself*, who should be raised up with such proof of divine authority, that all who rejected him should be rejected and destroyed by God; which could not refer to a *succession* of prophets, since it is expressly said that none of them were like Moses.—Deut. xviii. 18—20; xxxiv. 10.

Coll. Lit. Sch. p. 239. *Jeff. true Gro.* p. 128. *Harris on Mess. Serm.* vii. p. 199. *Sherl. on Proph.* p. 187. *Bullock's Serm. in Loc.* p. 220. *Jort. Rem. on Eccl. Hist.* vol. i. p. 196. *Newt. Diss.* vol. i. No. vi. p. 156; *Works*, vol. i. p. 90.

6. David foretells a person, who should be owned by God as *his Son*, to whom universal dominion over the Heathens should be given, and who should punish with utter destruction all that should refuse to submit to his government. Psa. ii. *pass.* He speaks also of an illustrious and victorious person, whom he calls *his Lord*, that should likewise be *a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek*, Psal. cx.; and this is probably the same glorious Person whom he elsewhere calls God, and of whom he says much more than could be applied to Solomon, or any other temporal prince, both with regard to the excellency of his character and the extent and perpetuity of his kingdom. Psal. xlv. *pass.* and lxxii. *pass. præs.* ver. 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17. To which add Psal. xxii. 26—31. which, if it be allowed to refer to the same event, then the former part will also appear a prediction that this glorious person should *suffer*, with circumstances remarkably fulfilled in the death of Christ. See also 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7. which relates to the glorious reign of the *Just One* over men, and expresses the final destruction of those that oppose his kingdom, as well as the blessings given by an everlasting covenant to those that should be his faithful subjects.

Grey's Last Words of Dav. Jort. Rem. vol. i. p. 183.

7. Isaiah speaks of an extraordinary child, who should be born of a *virgin*, of the house of David, whose name should be called Immanuel, who should grow up from infancy to manhood, who should also bear many other illustrious titles, which speak him to be more than human; who should be most eminent for wisdom and piety; and finally, who should establish a most successful and permanent kingdom by very peaceful and gentle methods.—Isa. vii. 14, &c.; ix. 5—7; xi. 1—10; xlii. 1—7.

Collins on Gro. &c. p. 61. *Chand. on Mir.* p. 261. *Green's Lett. to Coll.* No. iv. *pass. Dod. Fam. Exp.* vol. i. p. 39. note. *Kennic. on Isaiah* vii. 14. *Williams's Obs. on ditto.*

8. God foretold his purpose of laying a foundation-stone in Zion, whereby all that trust in him should be saved, when others should find that their shelter was swept away by storms of the divine vengeance.—Isaiah xxviii. 16—18.

9. Isaiah likewise foretold an extraordinary appearance of God, which should be attended with the miraculous cure of the blind, the lame, the deaf, and the dumb, and introductory to a state of extraordinary holiness and everlasting joy.—Isa. xxxv. 3—10.

10. The same prophet also foretold the coming of One, who should from the wilderness prepare the way for an extraordinary divine appearance, and bring tidings of a most gracious and compassionate Shepherd.—Isa. xl. 1—11.

11. Isaiah afterwards, speaking of a person to whom the characters *gr.* 1, 7, 9. do so evidently agree, that we cannot doubt but it is the same mentioned before, adds, that he should be rejected and abhorred of the Israelites; and afterwards, speaking of a person to whom the same characters do belong, foretells his being rejected and wounded, mentions his silent submission under his sufferings, and at length his death and burial.—Isa. xlix. 1—11; lii. *per tot.*; liii. 1—9.

Collins's Lit. Sch. c. v. § 12. p. 208. *Bp. Chand. on Chris.* p. 178, 147, ed. 2. *Harris's Rem. pass. Burn. Life of Roch.* p. 140. *Bullock's Vind.* p. 147.

12. Nevertheless, in the same period he prophesies of the exaltation and glory of this remarkable person, and the success of his cause in the world; which evidently implies his resurrection from the dead. Isa. liii. 10, 12.—See writers quoted above. In the following chapter he describes a most gracious and important covenant to be made with Jews and Gentiles by him, and such universal proposals of pardon and grace, as would by multitudes be accepted to their great advantage and complete happiness.—Isa. liv. lv. *per tot.*

13. He does afterwards, in a very pathetic manner, describe the wickedness and ruin of the Jewish nation, foretells nevertheless its recovery and prosperous state, in the most exalted style, as effected by that servant of God, whom he had for that purpose anointed with his Spirit in an extraordinary manner.—Isa. lix. lx. lxi. and lxv.

14. Jeremiah prophesies of a righteous and victorious prince, to be raised up out of the house of David, whose name should be called the *Lord our Righteousness*; which most naturally implies that, by means of him, his people should be made righteous by God, through the provision of the divine mercy.—Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 14—16.

15. The same prophet evidently speaks of a new covenant to be made with Israel, which should contain extraordinary provision for divine instruction and the pardon of sin, beyond what had been made by the Mosaic religion.—Jer. xxxi. 31—34. agreeably to the tenor of which it is elsewhere by this prophet foretold, that a plan of religion should be given to God's people, of which the regard then paid to the ark of God, the great centre of their ceremonial worship, should make no part, when all the nations of the world should be incorporated with the Jews, and a lasting reformation should be introduced.—Jer. iii. 16—18.

16. Ezekiel speaks of *one great Shepherd*, whom, long after the death of David, he calls by the name of that prince, who should be a means of conferring on his people such blessings as Isaiah and Jeremiah had before described.—Ezek. xxxiv. 23—31; xxxvii. 23—26.

17. Daniel foretells a glorious kingdom, which God would erect on the ruins of the four grand monarchies, under the command of one whom he calls *the Son of Man*, whose empire, though arising from small beginnings, should be both universal and eternal.—Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45; vii. 13, 14.

Sykes on Chris. c. ii. p. 12.

LECTURE CXXXI.

18. Daniel afterwards foretells that in seventy weeks, *i. e.* probably 490 years after the going out of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, which seems to refer to that given in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, reconciliation should be made for iniquity, and an everlasting righteousness brought in by one, whom he calls Messiah *the Prince*, who should be *cut off*, *i. e.* put to death, without any demerits of his own; after which the city of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the sacrifices made to cease, yet not till he had confirmed his covenant with many of his people.—Dan. ix. 24—27.

Prid. Con. vol. i. p. 262. *Bull. Vind.* lib. ii. c. iv. § 6. p. 184. &c. *præs.* p. 246. *Cell. Lit. Sch.* c. v. § 8. p. 173. *More's Theol. Works*, p. 204. *Mann's Diss.* p. 93. *Clarke at Boyle's Lect.* p. 427. *Sir I. Newt. on Proph.* part. i. c. x.*

19. Joel foretells an extraordinary effusion of the Spirit of God in the latter day, in which all that called on the name of the Lord should be saved, and extraordinary deliverance should be wrought out in Mount Zion and Jerusalem.—Joel ii. 28—32.

Chand. on Joel, ib. et Diss.

20. Micah repeats part of Isaiah's prophecy of the glorious and peaceful kingdom that God would erect in the latter day, and afterwards expressly mentions Bethlehem Ephratah, as the place from whence the Ruler should go forth, who should be the illustrious Shepherd not only of the Israelites, but other most distant people.—Micah. iv. 1—5; v. 2—4.

21. Haggai prophesied, that during the time that the second temple was standing, which was not entirely demolished till the Roman captivity, (though in Herod's time gradually rebuilt,) God would *shake all nations*, *i. e.* produce surprising revolutions in them; and *the desire of all nations* should come into his temple; on account of which, the glory of it should be greater than that of the former house, though in external ornaments it was so much inferior.—Hag. ii. 6, 9.

Peirce on Heb. xii. 26. p. 190. *Bp. Chand. on Chris.* p. 86, 71. ed. 2. *Lit. Sch.* p. 120. &c. *Gill on the Proph.* p. 42. *L'Enf. Intr. to N. Test.* p. 14. *Bullock's Vind.* p. 177. *Berrim. at B. Lec.* vol. ii. Ser. xiv. *præs.* p. 41.

22. Zechariah twice mentions a person whose name was *the Branch*, *i. e.* probably who had been foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah under that character, (vid. Isa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15.) on whom the eyes of God should be set with peculiar care, who should build the temple of God, and bear the glory, and remove the iniquity of Israel in one day, and appear as a priest on his throne, (perhaps in allusion to Psal. cx. 4.) restoring under his administration peace and happiness.—Zech. iii. 8—10; vi. 12, 13. *Lowth in Loc.*

23. The same prophet foretells the appearance of a meek Prince, who, in token of the gentleness of his administration, should, at Jerusalem, ride on an ass: he is described as the person who, taking

* Two eminent divines have lately exerted their talents upon the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. The first is Mr. [illegible] Dissertations on Dan. ix. 24—27. The other is Dr. Prideaux, in the Preface to his Connection. The scheme of Dr. Prideaux, and Dr. Hales's Answer to it, may be seen in the Gentleman's Magazine for the year 1728. In the second month's Magazine Dr. Prideaux's Paraphrase of Seventy Weeks. Dr. Prideaux has made some occasional remarks on Mr. Hales's Letters.

off the Jews from their forbidden confidence, should speak peace to the Heathen, and erect an universal empire, making a covenant by blood, whereby miserable sinners should be delivered from destruction.—Zech. ix. 9—12.

Chand. on Christ. p. 102. *Lit. Sch.* p. 143. *Bull. Vind.* p. 175. *Sherl. 4th Diss.*

24. The same prophet afterwards predicted an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Jews, which should bring them in a better manner to lament him whom they had pierced, and should be attended with ample provision made by divine grace for their pardon.—Zech. xii. 10—14; xiii. 1.

Chand. ib. p. 107, 88. ed. 2. *Lit. Sch.* p. 146.

25. Malachi speaks of *a Messenger of the covenant*, who should bring the Jews to a strict trial; of *a Sun of Righteousness*, who should arise, and whose appearance should be introduced by a person, who, in the language of prophecy, is called Elijah, *i. e.* probably one in whom his spirit should eminently appear.—Mal. iii. 1—4; iv. 2—6.

Chand. ib. p. 63. *Lit. Sch.* p. 113. *Bul. Vind.* p. 180. *Jeffr. on Chris.* p. 351.

26. From comparing these prophecies one with another, it appears that they all centre in one illustrious Person; both as the language in which the deliverance is foretold by several of them is so much the same, and as there is no mention made of a succession of such deliverers, or a plurality, whose kingdom should be extensive and perpetual; to which we add, what we shall more largely show in the Scholium, that there was a very universal expectation of a Messiah, raised in consequence of these predictions.

1—26. 27. The sum of the whole is this. The prophecies of the Old Testament foretell that there should be a glorious Person, descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who should be born at Bethlehem, of a virgin, of the family of David then in its decline, before the Jews ceased to be a people, while the second temple was standing, and about 500 years after Ezra's time; who, though appearing in mean circumstances, should be introduced by a remarkable forerunner, whose business it should be to awaken the attention and expectation of the people: He (*i. e.* this illustrious Person so to be introduced) should himself be eminent both for the piety, wisdom, and benevolence of his character, and the miraculous works he should perform; yet that, notwithstanding all this, he should be rejected, and put to death by the Jews, but should afterwards be raised from the dead, and exalted to a glorious throne, on which he should, through all generations, continue to rule, at the same time making intercession for sinners; that great calamities should for the present be brought on the Jews for rejecting him, whereas the kingdom of God should by his means be erected among the Gentiles, and diffuse itself even to the ends of the earth, wherever it came, destroying idolatry, and establishing true religion and righteousness. In a word, that this great Person should be regarded by all who believe in him as a Divine Teacher, an atoning sacrifice, and a royal governor, by means of whom God would make a covenant with his people very different from that made with Israel of old, in consequence of which they should be restored to, and established in, the divine favour, and fixed in a state of complete and perpetual happiness.

Clarke at Boyle's Lect. p. 390. *Butl. Anal.* part ii. c. vii. p. 250. *Euseb. Dem. Evang.* lib. viii. ix. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 170. *Hodges's Serm.* No. 18.*

LECTURE CXXXII.

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it evidently appears that there was in the Divine Mind a purpose of raising up a glorious Prince, called the Messiah, to reign over mankind, and likewise of exciting a great expectation concerning him before he appeared in the world.

Hurd on Proph. No. ii. p. 41, *ad fin.*

COROLLARY 2.

Hence it will appear probable, considering the nature of prophecy in general, together with those express predictions mentioned above, that there might likewise be a reference to the Messiah in some of those passages, in which the prophets speak *in their own person*, and describe extraordinary distress or glory in terms literally applicable to the Messiah, (comparing other prophecies,) and only figuratively to themselves; and it might be the wisdom of Providence so to order matters, that many eminent persons in the Jewish state should in some matters resemble the Messiah, and many deliverances granted to the Jews should represent the great deliverance expected from him. This may be the foundation of types, and for what may seem a double sense of some prophecies; which double sense is not to be understood, as if a prophecy equally and indifferently referred to many persons or events; or, as if literally referring to a lower person, it was only figuratively and allegorically to be interpreted of the Messiah (for a passage only capable of being accommodated to him is not

* Dr. [illegible] Sherlock [illegible] Dr. [illegible] Dr. [illegible] Dr.

by any means a prediction of him), but it is to be so explained, as that it may appear the Messiah was *principally* intended, and the prophecy *literally* referred to him, though it might in part be applied to that other person that typified him; and might have been understood as referring to that inferior person alone, if further light had not been thrown upon it, by comparing other prophecies, or by the testimony of those whom, on other accounts, we have reason to regard as authentic interpreters. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that, though tracing the Messiah in such prophecies as these, may serve to illustrate the unity of design, which (as we before observed, *Prop.* 97. *gr.* 5.) is a considerable additional proof of the truth of a revelation, yet the main stress is to be laid upon such prophecies as those mentioned in the proposition, rather than on those in which the prophets personate him. Yet, when some of these (as Psal. xvi. xxii. xl. lxix. Zech. xi. 12, 13, &c.) are compared with parallel places in the Old Testament, and correspondent facts recorded in the New, it is more reasonable to own that the sufferings and death, resurrection and exaltation, of the Messiah were chiefly designed in them, than to consider the appeal made to them in the New Testament, as an objection against the truth of Christianity; how far they are an objection against the inspiration of the New Testament, is a distinct point, and will afterwards be considered in *Prop.* 116. *Schol.* 7.

Bar. Works, vol. ii. p. 205. *Jeff. Rev.* p. 97. *Chand. on Mir.* part ii. c. viii. p. 255. *Har. Crit. Rem.* 4to. p. 80. *Whist. on Proph. at B. Lect.* p. 13. *Mudge's Pref. to Psalms. Hurd's Serm. on the Prophecies*, No. iii. *Jort. Rem.* vol. i. p. 183.*

COROLLARY 3.

That so many prophecies looking to the Messiah, and centring in him, and which at least seem to be fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and so naturally tend to promote the Christian cause, should yet be extant in the Old Testament, is a plain argument that it is a book of an extraordinary character, and likewise that it has in the main been kept uncorrupted by the Jews, though, through negligence or design, some few passages should be altered; for had they allowed themselves any great liberty with it, they would probably have taken care to destroy or change such passages as have been quoted in the proposition.

* Dr. Hurd is a vindicator of the middle sense of prophecy; and Bishop Lowth endeavours to establish the same thing in his Lectures and Dissertations. But see Bishop Hare's Three Letters to Dr. Warburton. Middleton, p. 120, 121. Dr. Sykes (and many others) considered the literal interpretation of the prophecies, in his Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion, and in his Principles and Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion. Dr. Benson, in his Essay concerning the Unity of Sense, has endeavoured to show, at large, that the text of Scripture has many times no other sense.—Benson on the Epistles, vol. i. Introd. p. xxv—xlv. 2d edit.

COROLLARY 4.

It further appears, especially from the Scriptures enumerated in the first step, when compared with several passages in those that follow, that the Messiah is not in Scripture represented as a temporal deliverer of the Jews alone, by whom the Gentile nations were to be enslaved and destroyed, —but as a universal friend, teacher, and benefactor, by whom they were to be brought to true religion and happiness.

Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 328, &c. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 485.

COROLLARY 5.

It further appears, as above, that in order to reconcile those prophecies with each other, some of the expressions must be taken in a figurative sense; or that what is said of the conquests of the Messiah, or the destruction of the enemies of the Jews, must be understood of the punishments to be inflicted upon those who, when the Jews become subjects to him, should rise up against them.

Chapm. ib. p. 500.

SCHOLIUM 1.

For the illustration of what has been hinted at, *Dem. gr.* 26. it may be observed, that there are several texts in the New Testament, whence it evidently appears that there was among the Jews, about Christ's time, an actual expectation of the speedy appearance of the Messiah, though too many of them regarded him as a temporal deliverer, Matt. ii. 2—6. Luke ii. 25, 26, 38; iii. 15. John i. 19—25; vi. 14, 15; x. 24. Luke xix. 11. Acts xxvi. 7. Some have thought that some traces of such an expectation are also to be found in earlier ages, 1 Mac. iv. 46; xiv. 35, 41, 48. Eccles. xxxvi. 6, 8, 12—17. (compare Luke i. 68—73.) xliv. 21, 22. Tobit xiv. 5—7. Baruch iv. 22. As to the express references to the Messiah in the second book of Esdras, (ii. 42—47; vii. 28, 29.) we wave them, because it is certain that book was either entirely forged, or interpolated long after the Christian æra. The many insurrections of the Jews about Christ's time, under impostors professing themselves the Messiah, do further show that there was such an expectation among them, which was also common to the Samaritans, who apprehended he would be a prophet as well as a king.—Compare John iv. 25, 29, 42.

There are also some remarkable passages in Josephus, Philo, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Celsus, which show that such an expectation prevailed in some degree even among Heathen nations: and many have supposed there is a reference to the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, where there are indeed many things nearly parallel to those of the prophets, in which the glorious reign of the Messiah is described. Such expectations might possibly

arise from the dispersion of Greek translations of the Old Testament.*

As for those prophecies of Christ, which are pretended to have been found in the books of Zerdusht, (of which none is more memorable than that quoted by Abulpharagius,) there is little dependence to be had upon them, considering the uncertainty of the oldest Persian manuscripts from whence they are said to be taken, as well as the late date of Abulpharagius. Neither can we much depend upon Confucius's pretended prophecy of him among the Chinese; nevertheless, it seemed not improper to mention them here.

Bp. Chand. Def. Chris. p. 3. *Trav. of Cyrus*, vol. ii. Appen. part. ii. *pass.* and p. 127. 8vo; p. 300, &c. 12mo. *Lard. Cred.* part i. lib. i. c. v. p. 280; *Works*, vol. i. p. 131. *Col. Lit. Sch.* c. i—iv. *Hyde Rel. Pers.* c. xxxi. p. 382. *Tavern. Voy.* vol. i. p. 484. lib. iv. c. viii. *Conf. Scien. Sinica*, Pref. p. 120. *Jort. Rem.* vol. i. p. 294. *Lampe's Syn. Eccl. Hist.* lib. iv. *ad ult.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

As for the Sybilline Oracles, which are said to have been preserved among the Romans with so much care, there is great reason to believe they were political forgeries; and it is certain that those which are now extant were forged by some Christian writer, after the events there foretold had happened,—since those events are much more plainly described there than in any Jewish prophet, which we can hardly imagine, especially since the apostle tells us, Rom. iii. 2. that the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, and never made any appeal at all to the Sybilline oracles for the conviction of the Gentiles. Yet we allow it very possible, that among the collections which were made after the first copies were burnt, some passages might be inserted from Jewish writings, (from whom it is certain many things were borrowed by the heathens,) and probably it is to such passages as these that the earliest of those Christian writers alluded, when they mentioned the Sybilline oracles, before the time in which we can suppose those now extant to have been invented.

Whist. Vin. Sib. Or. pass. Prid. Con. vol. ii. p. 620. *Edw. on Scr.* vol. i. p. 317. *Bp. Chand. Def.* p. 10. *Obsop. Sib. Orac.* p. 186. *Jort. Rem.* ib. p. 283.

SCHOLIUM 3.

As to the endeavours which have been used to enervate the argument in favour of Christianity, drawn from the prophecies mentioned in the proposition, by showing that they are capable of other senses from which the Messiah may be excluded, see the places referred to as glossed upon by Collins in his Grounds and Reasons, &c. and the Literal Scheme, and the Commentaries of White, and Grotius, who have studied to strain almost all these to some other sense; and some of them in so unnatural a manner, as greatly to establish the interpretation they would oppose.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The most considerable objection brought against applying these prophecies to the Messiah is, that the prosperity of the Jews, and their return to their own land, is foretold as an event to be accomplished by him, whereas no such event is yet accomplished. See, amongst many other places, Ezek. xx. 34—44; xxxvi. 24, 28; xxxvii. 21—28. Amos ix. 11—15. Zech. xiv. 9—11.

To this (besides what is said *Cor.* 5.) it is answered,

1. That their being rejected for a time is likewise foretold, and their being delivered over to the hands of their enemies. Vid. *gr.* 13, 18.

2. That Christians expect a restoration of the Jews in the latter days, upon their believing in Christ, Rom. xi. 11, &c.; and none can reasonably pretend that their restoration is to *precede* their faith in him.

3. That the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, notwithstanding all their dispersions, leaves evident room for the accomplishment of these prophecies; and is so remarkable a fact, especially when their moral character is considered, and so well agrees with the predictions of the Old Testament and the New, as to lay a reasonable foundation for expecting their fullest restoration in God's appointed time.

Clarke at B. Lect. p. 431. *Limb. Coll. cum Jud.* p. 70. *Berrim. at B. Lect.* vol. i. *Serm.* xi. p. 326.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Whereas some think it strange that the prophecies which seem most expressly to fix the time of the Messiah's coming, (such as Gen. xlix. 10. Hag. ii. 6. Dan. ix. 26.) are nowhere urged in the New Testament, it may be answered,

1. That it could not have been made appear that the period marked out by them was entirely elapsed, during the time in which most of the apostles wrote, the sceptre not being quite departed, nor the temple or city destroyed.

2. That it might have exposed the apostles to additional inconveniences in their work, to have entered nicely into the discussion of some of these prophecies; as some would have engaged them in tedious calculations, of which the common people were not capable judges, and others in civil controversies between them and the Romans, which it was prudent as far as possible to decline. Yet it is to be remembered that Christ, when quoting a

* Some ingenious observations concerning the Pollio of Virgil, may be seen in Lowth's Lectures, before referred to, p. 289.

part of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks strongly intimates that the whole of it was worthy of special regard.—Matt. xxiv. 15.

Sykes's Christ. c. xvi. p. 297.

LECTURE CXXXIII.

PROPOSITION XIII.

JESUS is worthy of being received as a *teacher sent from God*, with entire credit to all his declarations, and obedience to all his commands.

Emlyn's Life, p. lxxvii. lxxviii.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 112. *gr.* 27. 1. Many of the most remarkable prophecies relating to the person, state, and condition of the Messiah, had a remarkable accomplishment in *him*; for it appears from the history of the Evangelists, that he was born of a virgin descended from Abraham, in the decline of the Jewish state, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second temple, by the Romans; that he was a most wise, holy, and excellent person, going about to the kindest purposes, of instructing men's minds, and healing their bodies, till at last he was put to death by the Jews as a malefactor; nevertheless, that he was on the third day raised from the dead, and ascended into Heaven; from whence he poured forth an extraordinary Spirit upon his followers, whereby they were enabled to perform many surprising works, and to propagate the worship of the one God and the practice of true religion, even among many of the remotest nations.—That such things were fact concerning Jesus of Nazareth, appears from the whole tenor of the evangelical story, which we before proved to be credible, *Prop.* 108.

Prop. 113. 2. The Jewish prophets intermingled with their predictions such encomiums on the person in whom they should be accomplished, and such attestations of his divine mission, as must recommend him to the highest regard and humblest obedience: particularly speaking of him, as God's servant, whom he anointed to publish glad tidings, whom all men should be obliged to hear, as a king, who should finally triumph over all opposition, and should bring a secure and lasting blessing to all his faithful servants. Vid. *Prop.* 112. *gr.* 3, 6, 8, 12, 14—16, 22, 23.

3. To the former head we may properly add the testimony of Angels, and of persons of the most eminent sanctity about the time of his appearing, who are said expressly to have the spirit of prophecy; particularly of Gabriel, in his message to Mary, Luke i. 32. at. and in that to Joseph, Matt. i. 20, 21. compare ver. 23. Elizabeth, Luke i. 43. Mary, ib. ver. 47. &c. Zacharias, ib. ver. 68. &c. the Angel to the shepherds, Luke ii. 10, 11. Simeon, ver. 29. &c. Anna, ver. 38. and John the Baptist, Matt. iii. 11. John i. 29. iii. 27—36.

4. The Jewish religion was constituted in such a manner, that there were many institutions in it which bore so remarkable a resemblance to circumstances relating to Christ in the New Testament, that they could not but in some degree confirm his claim, and show, on the one hand, the harmony between the Old Testament and the New; and, on the other, how much Christ was the end of both. On this head, the abode of God in the Jewish temple, the sacrifices there presented, the purifications appointed, and the intercession made by the high priest, were remarkable circumstances, worthy of regard, as some other more particular ceremonies also were, especially those relating to the *paschal lamb*.

Witsii Econ. Fœd. l. iv. c. ix. § 3—58. *Lamy. Hist. Rit.* part iii. c. iii. p. 360. *ed. fin.*

5. The New Testament assures us that Christ was perfectly innocent and good. Vid. 1 Pet. i. 19; ii. 22; iii. 18. 1 John ii. 1; iii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. iv. 15; vii. 26, 27. which he also publicly asserted of himself, John viii. 29, 46. The imputations thrown on his character appear to have been false and malicious; nor did any of the most inveterate enemies of Christianity, particularly Celsus and Porphyry, deny the innocence of his life: and the silence of Judas as to any accusation against him, nay, the express testimony he bore to his innocence, though he so intimately knew his circumstances, and had so strong an interest to have aspersed and ruined him if possible, is an important illustration of this, which is set in a most just and beautiful light by Bonar on the character and conduct of Judas.*

Yet our Lord declared himself to be such a person as the proposition describes, and solemnly attests the absolute necessity of regarding him as such. John iii. 18. viii. 12, 24. Luke xix. 27. Mark xvi. 16.

Chapin. de Mess. vol. i. p. 241. note. *Durel. prior Diss. Sacra.* I. *Har. on Mess.* vol. ii. *Prop.* 24. p. 167.

6. Christ foretold many things which he could not have foreseen by human prudence, which therefore plainly argued a divine revelation of them to him, considering how expressly they were afterwards accomplished. Particularly such as these. His own death, with the various circumstances of it, Matt. xvi. 21. xx. 18, 19. xxvi. 23, 31. &c. Mark

* Dr. M. Dixon has communicated a Sermon of Bonar's, entitled, "The Character of Judas," which I have transcribed, and shall insert in the Appendix. Bonar's Sermons are very scarce, and this is a remarkable one. Dr. Dixon, in the communication with which he favoured me, observes, "The sentiments and doctrine of Bonar's Sermon are those of the Reformers, and of the Church of England, as appears from the Homilies, and from the Articles of Religion, which were drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer, and Bishop Ridley, and Bishop Latimer, and others of the Reformers, and which were subscribed by Bonar, and by all the Clergy of the Church of England, at their Ordination, and at their Induction to Livings, &c. &c. &c. &c."

x. 33, 34; xiv. 30. John iii. 14, 15; xii. 32, 33. His own resurrection on the third day; or, which according to the Jewish manner of speaking was equivalent to it, *after three days and three nights.* (Compare 1 Kings xx. 29. 2 Chron. x. 5, 12. Luke ii. 21. Esth. iv. 16; v. 1. Exod. xxiv. 18.)

Chand. Witn. Re-exam. p. 14. *Dodd. Fam. Exp.* vol. i. p. 384, note.

Matt. xvi. 21; xii. 40; xxvi. 32; xxvii. 63, 64. John ii. 18—21. His ascension into Heaven, John vi. 62; xx. 17. The mission of the Spirit on his disciples, to enable them to perform miraculous works, John xv. 26; xiv. 12, 16, 17, 26; xvi. 7, 13. Mark xvi. 17, 18. Luke x. 18, 19; xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. The persecution of his apostles, Matt. x. 16—22. John xvi. 2. Matt. xxiv. 9, 10. The manner of Peter's death, John xxi. 18, 19. That Jerusalem should be destroyed and trodden under foot by the Gentiles; that its destruction should be signified by several remarkable prodigies; that false prophets and false Christs should come; that the temple itself should be entirely demolished; and that unheard of calamities should befall the Jewish nation, Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi. And finally, he foretold the extraordinary success of the gospel in the world, over all the opposition it should meet with, Matt. xiii. 31—33; xvi. 18; xxiv. 14. John xv. 16. Compare Matt. xxviii. *ult.* The accomplishment of all these predictions sufficiently appears from the history of the New Testament, from Josephus and Eusebius, and many other unexceptionable witnesses, amongst whom some heathens are to be reckoned; particularly Tacitus, (*Hist.* lib. v. c. xiii.) Celsus, (*Orig. against Cels.* lib. vii. p. 339.) and Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. *sub. init. apud Dod. Ten Serm.* p. 295; which last reference relates to that illustrious fact of the miraculous interposition of Providence to defeat Julian's malicious project of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, thereby to confute our Saviour's prophecy of its continuing desolate: a circumstance set in the most convincing and beautiful light in Warburton's Julian, part. i. *pass.* On this head we might also mention Christ's discovering secrets present or past, particularly to Nathaniel and the woman of Samaria, John i. 48—50; iv. 17, 18.

Whitb. Gen. Pref. vol. i. § 12. *ad fin. Whitb. Ann. on Matt.* xxiv. *Till. Serm.* vol. iii. p. 547. *Lamb. Coll. cum Jud.* p. 46. *Clarke at B. Lect.* p. 386. *Allix. Ref.* vol. ii. p. 246. *Jenk. on Chris.* vol. i. p. 25. *Jort. Rem.* vol. i. p. 20. *Hodges's Serm.* No. 10.*

7. Christ wrought a long series of various public and uncontrolled miracles; *v. g.* turning water into wine; feeding thousands with a very small quantity of provision; casting out devils; cleansing lepers; giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, limbs to the maimed, and in some instances raising the dead; quieting tempests by his command; and at length raising himself from the dead, and ascending into Heaven.—See the whole history of the Evangelists.

Arnob. adv. Gent. lib. i. p. 26. *Lact. Instit.* lib. iv. c. xv. *Leland ag. Tind.* vol. ii. p. 81. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 248. *Bulckley's Exam. of the Gosp.* book i. c. iv. *Hodges's Serm.* No. v. p. 92.

8. Our Lord often made express appeals to these miracles, in proof of his divine mission, John v. 36; x. 24, 25, 37, 38; xiv. 11; xv. 24. Mark ii. 10. Matt. xi. 4, 5, 20, &c. John xi. 15. which by the way shows how much Dr. Chandler is mistaken, in saying that our Lord, in appealing to his miracles, only argues with the Jews upon their own principles, as upon the foot of miracles they acknowledged Moses while they rejected *him.*

Chand. on Mir. p. 36. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 257.

9. His disciples also wrought miracles in his name, to prove him to be such a person as the proposition describes, expressly declaring that to be the purport of those miracles.—Acts ii. 32—36; iii. 12, 13, 16; iv. 9—12. Rom. xv. 18, 19.

10. Christ was declared to be the Son of God by a voice from Heaven, at his baptism, and his transfiguration, and in effect again afterwards, *i. e.* a little before his death.—Luke iii. 22. Matt. xvii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. John xii. 28.

11. The proposition is further illustrated by the new star which appeared at his birth, the angels which brought the tidings of it, the prodigies attending his death; among which, the darkness said to be mentioned by Phlegon, and the rending the rock, (the marks of which are still said to remain,) are particularly worthy of consideration.

Winston, Notes, and Chapm. at Philos. Test. Flem. Chris. vol. ii. p. 97. *Maund. Trav.* p. 73. *Sand. Trav.* lib. iii. p. 164. *Lard. Jew. and Heath. Test.* vol. ii. c. xiii.; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 370.

To which may be added his visible ascension, and his glorious appearance to Paul at his conversion, as well as to John in the island of Patmos, in a form so nearly resembling that in which God manifested himself to the prophets of old. Compare Ezek. i. 26—28. Dan. vii. 9, with Rev. i. 14, 15. *Pyl. Sing. Hermes Dissert.* § 22.

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. That Scripture that Christ was described in the Old-Testament pro-

* Our Saviour's prophecies relating to the destruction of Jerusalem are amply considered by Dr. Newton, in his two last volumes upon the Dissertations, vol. ii. p. [illegible] Works, vol. [illegible] Dr. Lardner is likewise very copious upon the subject. See his Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. i. edition of [illegible] Works, vol. vii. p. 28. Warburton and Dr. Julian's project [illegible] Dr. Lardner has some curious observations upon it, Jewish Test. vol. v. p. 36. Works, vol. vii. p. 370.

phecies, and represented under its types, as a person worthy of the highest regard; seeing prophetic persons renewed this testimony at the time of his appearance; seeing he whose character was perfectly innocent and holy declared himself to be so, and God bore witness to it by the prophetic gifts he gave him, and other miraculous powers wherewith he endued both Christ and his disciples, as well as by a voice from Heaven, and by so many extraordinary interpositions to attest his mission; considering also that miracles have been already proved to be an evidence of divine revelation (*vid. Prop.* 91. I.), we have just reason to believe that the revelation which Christ made was divine, and that he is without reserve to be credited in all he has asserted, and obeyed in all he has commanded. *Q. E. D.*

Burt. Works, v. iii. p. 70. v. ii. p. 114. *Fleetw. on Mir.* p. 144. *Blackall at B. Lect. Serm.* vi. p. 66.

LECTURE CXXXIV.

COROLLARY 1.

Considering how much the evidence of Christianity depends upon the Old Testament, there is great reason to admire the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence in preserving the Jews as a distinct people, dispersed almost all over the Christian world; and thereby adding force to the arguments taken from those sacred books, beyond what they could otherwise have had. Compare *Prop.* 112. *Schol.* 4.

Spect. vol. vii. No. 495. *Burnet's* 4 *Disc.* p. 8. *Dod.* 10 *Serm.* No. x. p. 277. *Lardn.* 3. *Disc. on the Jews*; *Works*, vol. x. p. 63.

COROLLARY 2.

Considering how much the argument drawn from Christ's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem is illustrated by the writings of Josephus, it is also to be acknowledged as an extraordinary providence, that this author was preserved in such a variety of extreme dangers, and that his excellent writings are come down to us so entire; in which we have a more particular account of the desolation of his country than of any other war of which we read in ancient history.

Burn. 4 Disc. p. 10. *Jos. Bell. Jud.* lib. iii. c. vii. *Hudson's* edit. *Bens. Prop. of Gosp.* vol. i. p. 193. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 34.*

COROLLARY 3.

The *time* in which Christ appeared was peculiarly proper on many accounts; considering that it was marked out by some of the prophecies quoted above; that the vanity of other attempts for reforming the world had been sufficiently tried; that the world was in a peaceful state, and the cessation of the extraordinary gifts of prophecies and miracles in the Jewish church, for some preceding ages, would make the appearance of a person so eminently endowed with them the more honourable and the more remarkable.

Flem. Christol. v. ii. p. 414. *Tillots. Serm.* v. ii. p. 162. *Har. Crit. Dis.* 4to, p. 102. *Lect. Serm.* vol. ii. No. vii. *Inf. of the Want of Jenk. Rens. of Chris.* part ii. c. 24. vol. ii. p. 387. *Law's Consid.* part ii. *init.* p. 126. *Jort. Disc.* No. iv. p. 162. *Tayl. Sch. of Dis.* c. 37. *Bp. Watson's Coll. of Tracts*, vol. i. p. 168. *Dr. Roberts. Serm. on the Sit. of the World at Christ's Appearance.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

To say that the miracles referred to in the proposition were performed by *magic*, is very unreasonable; since, on the one hand, there is no reason to believe that men of such an excellent character as Christ and his apostles appear to have been, would have acted in confederacy with wicked spirits, or that these would have lent their aid to advance a cause which had so direct a tendency to destroy their own kingdom: nor can we, on the other hand, believe that God would have permitted such things to have been done in consequence of such a confederacy, without interposing with miraculous evidence on the contrary side of the question, seeing these doctrines were far from being so evidently absurd as to be incapable of being confirmed by miracles.

Whitb. Com. vol. i. ed. 5. *Pref.* p. 20. *Turret. Loc.* 13. *Quæst.* ii. § 19. v. ii. p. 319. *Blackall at B. Lect.* p. 73. *Chapm. Euseb.* vol. i. p. 355. note. *Farmer on Mir.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

If we should grant (as many have maintained, though they have not been able to prove it) that the case of those who are called Demoniacs in the New Testament, was nothing more than common *madness* or *epileptic* disorders, the cure of these, merely by speaking a word, would be as true a miracle as casting out devils; but how far this would be reconcilable with the honour of the authors of the New Testament, in the report they have made of these miracles, will be considered at large hereafter. *Prop.* 161. *Schol.* 1.

Beausobre ap. Jort. Rem. v. ii. p. 218.

SCHOLIUM 3.

That the miracles wrought by Christ were on the whole superior to those of Moses, is shown by a large and beautiful comparison of them in

* The value of Josephus's testimony is well estimated by Dr. Lardner, in his Testimonies, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 128. Works, vol. v. p. 161. See also Dr. Benson's excellent Observations on Josephus, Life, p. 1. p. 167. Works, ib. p. 139.

Limb. Collat. p. 131, 132, 151. *Jort. Rem.* v. ii. p. 4, &c.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The *cessation* of *oracles* among the Heathens, might have been justly added under the eleventh step, could it be proved to satisfaction (as perhaps it may) on the one hand, that there was any thing supernatural in them; and, on the other, that they did cease at the time of Christ's appearance. But as this is matter of controversy, it seemed sufficient to have touched upon it here, referring it to further examination in a more proper place. But if granted, it is not a consideration proper to show the suitableness of the time of Christ's appearance,—since it might as well have followed upon it, had that appearance been sooner or later.—*Cor.* 3. *Prop.* 161. *Schol.* 2. *Atterb. Ser.* vol. i. Ser. iii. p. 120.

LECTURE CXXXV.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Several Heathen writers, and especially Hierocles, whose book Eusebius has answered, and Philostratus, endeavour to bring the miracles of Christ into disgrace, by comparing with them, and preferring to them, those of Apollonius Tyanæus, of whom it may be proper here to give a short account:—He is said to have been a Pythagorean philosopher, contemporary with Christ, remarkable for his temperance and many other virtues. It is said he claimed and exercised an extraordinary power of speaking all languages, and performing all miracles, equal to those which are ascribed to Christ, not excepting even raising the dead. He is also said to have transported himself into the air from one place to another, and at last to have ascended into Heaven; and afterwards to have appeared to the emperor Alexander.—To this story it may be objected,

1. That according to the account which Philostratus gives of the manner in which he was furnished with the materials of his history, the facts must be very uncertain; for he tells us that Apollonius had been dead or translated a hundred years before he wrote, and that his history was compiled partly from the commentaries of one Damis, which were never published, but given to Philostratus by the empress Julia as secret memoirs, without any evidence of their being genuine; and partly from the writings of Maximus Egiensis and Meragoras, the former of whom only wrote a few particulars; the latter was, according to the character Philostratus himself gives of him, a very fabulous and romantic writer. He does indeed add, that there were some monuments of some of these facts; but places them in distant countries, as India and Ethiopia, where no writers pretend to have found them; and as for the letters of Apollonius himself, he owns they related not to his miracles, but to the curiosities of the countries through which he had travelled; so that had Philostratus himself been ever so honest, and his design in writing ever so good, it is difficult to see what satisfaction he could have had himself, or have given his readers, as to any of those facts.

2. The manner in which Philostratus has written his history, gives us but an ill idea of his own character, and lays a foundation for great suspicion; for it is very affected, extravagant, and most unlike the beautiful simplicity of style which is observable in the New Testament, full of an ostentation of learning, and discovers a disposition to aggravate all facts to the utmost which might tend to the reputation of his hero.

3. Many of the miracles which Philostratus ascribes to Apollonius, were, according to him, done in secret, or before very few witnesses, or were self-contradictory, and others were vain and foolish; not a few appear to have been borrowed from the History of the Evangelists, and applied to Apollonius, with the change of a few circumstances.

4. The occasion of writing his book, seems to have been the author's desire to ingratiate himself with Julia the wife of Severus, and with Caracalla the succeeding emperor, by detracting from Christianity; to which they had both a great aversion.

5. The story so soon died, and the disciples of Apollonius were so few, that there is little reason to believe he was so extraordinary a person as Philostratus represents, especially since none of his followers pretend to have received from him a power of working miracles.

6. It has also been answered, That should the truth of this most incredible story be allowed, no certain argument could be brought from thence against the credibility of the Gospel,—since Apollonius did not profess to work his miracles in confirmation of any doctrine contrary to and inconsistent with it. Yet, after all, the truth of the story would so far derogate from the honour of Christianity, though it does not directly oppose it, that it is most reasonable to rest the stress of the answer on the remarks under the preceding heads.

Tillem. Life of Apoll. and Jenkin's Observ. Smallbr. &c. Weake vol. i. p. 16. *Watt Com.* vol. i. Pref. p. 19. *Electw. on Mir.* p. 249. *Kidder on Messiah*, part i. p. 63. *Jacks. Cred.* lib. i. part ii. § 3. c. xi. *ap. Op.* vol. i. lib. i. c. xvii. p. 64. *Weston's Rej. of Mir.* c. iv. p. 94. *L'Hist. des Emp. par M. Crev.* vol. vii. lib. v. § 5. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. v. lib. iii. c. xix. p. 691. vol. xv. p. 88. *Dougl. Crit.* p. 55. *Lard. Test.* vol. iii. c. 30. and Appen.; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 261.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Some of the same remarks may be made on most of the miracles which Heathen writers mention as performed by Pythagoras, Adrian, Vespasian, and others. The pretended number of them was small, the evidence very uncertain, most of them being reported by distant hearsay, and some circumstances of them connected with circumstances which would render it a dangerous thing to examine into them; so that, upon the whole, the wisest of the Heathens themselves did not appear to believe them. Or if it should be granted they were facts, since they were not wrought in confirmation of any proposition, the evidence of Christianity would not be impaired by them. On the contrary, as some of the most credible among them were signally subservient to the intended vengeance of God upon the Jews, taking them in all their circumstances, they give additional evidence to Christianity rather than detract from it. As for any extraordinary facts ascribed to the Philosophers in Eunapius, the distance of time in which he wrote, and the uncertainty of his information, sufficiently obviates any argument to be drawn from them; they probably were the effect of the same enmity to Christianity which engaged Zosimus to throw so many slanders on those great men who professed it.

Hist. Dem. Pr. ix. c. 142. [illegible] 12. *Whit.* ib. vol. ii. Pref. p. 26. *Suet. Vesp.* c. vii. *Pitiscus on Lucian.* v. *Spect. Hist.* c. xxv. *ap. Poter.* p. 957. *Jos. Ant.* lib. viii. c. ii. p. 257. Col. ed. lib. viii. c. ii. § 5. p. 339. Huds. ed. *Grot. de Verit.* lib. iv. c. viii. *Gastr. at B. Lect.* vol. ii. p. 280. *Fleetw. on Mir.* p. 239. *Jenk. on Chris.* vol. i. p. 29. *Jacks. Cred. ubi sup.* p. 131. *ap. Op.* lib. i. c. 23. vol. i. p. 92. *Patrix. Lect. Int. Rom. in Vers. Tayl.* vol. i. p. 416. *Weston's Rej.* p. 15. *Lardn. Hist.* lib. 24. *Univ. Hist.* vol. xv. p. 21. *Hume on Mir.* p. 188. *Douglas, Criter.* p. 93. *Lardn. Test.* vol. i. c. 3. p. 87. vol. iv. c. 53; *Works*, vol. vii. p. 73. vol. ix. p. 1.

How extremely difficult it was for the most artful and bold impostor to secure to himself the reputation of a prophet, and any supposed regard to pretences of working miracles, may also further appear from the story of Alexander, in the Pseudomantis of Lucian; which is an admirable contrast to that of Christ and his apostles; and, as such, is comprehensively represented with great force in

Taylor, Obs. on Paul. p. 62. *Mem. Wernig.* vol. ii. p. 81. *Lucian. Test.* vol. ii. c. 15. *Works*, vol. viii. p. 74. *Johnson on Mir.* p. 80. *Comp. on Hume.* p. 180. *Univ. Hist.* vol. xv. p. 248. vol. xi. p. 81.

SCHOLIUM 7.

The miracles of the Church of Rome hardly deserve any mention upon this occasion; many of [illegible] ridiculous tales, according to their own [illegible] evidence of them being pretended, without any credible witnesses or in circumstances where the performer had the greatest opportunity for [illegible] and it is particularly remarkable, that [illegible] have the hardest task to support their most [illegible] [illegible] in countries where those doctrines are renounced, which that church esteems of the highest importance.

Kippis's Memoirs, part i. p. 59. *Farm. Serm.* vol. iii. No. 117. p. 501. *Bennet's Sund. and Serm. at Lucon*, v. iii. *pass.* p. 62. *Dissert. Critic. Sykes on Mir.* p. 76. *Hume on Mir.* p. 93. *Adams on Miracles*, p. 63. *Campb. on ditto*, part ii. § 5. *passim.*

LECTURE CXXXVI.

DOCTRINES DELIVERED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The system of doctrines delivered to the world in the New Testament, is in the main worthy of being received as *true* and *divine*.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 108. 1. 1. Many important doctrines contained in the New Testament, were taught by Christ in his own person, and reported by the apostles as spoken by him; now we have already proved that he was worthy of universal credit, and that their testimony of facts deserves great regard.

2. The apostles received from Christ the promise of extraordinary divine assistance in the discharge of their office and ministry; which must at least extend to the furnishing them with the knowledge of all necessary truth, and preserving them from gross and dangerous mistakes:—John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 13; xx. 21–23. Matt. x. 19, 20. Luke xii. 11, 12; xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5.

3. The Holy Spirit was in a visible manner poured out upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, in consequence of this promise; and they professed to have received such assistance from him, as empowered them to declare the mind and will of Christ as authorized interpreters of it, and to challenge a regard to what they said as to a message from Heaven:—Acts ii. *pass.* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 12, 13, 16; vii. 40; xiv. 37. 2 Cor. ii. 10; iii. 5, 6. 1 Thess. iv. 8. Gal. i. 11, 12, 15–17. Compare 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. Eph. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 2, 15, 16. 1 John iv. 6. To which we may add all the passages in which the gospel taught by the apostles is called *the Gospel of God*, 2 Cor. xi. 7. 1 Tim. i. 11. *et pass.* as also Eph. iii. 7—11. Gal. ii. 8, 9. and all those passages in which the Gospel-dispensation is declared in the discourses and writings of

the apostles, is represented as vastly superior to the Mosaic law, of whose divine authority, nevertheless, the apostles speak (as we shall afterwards see at large) in such strong terms.—Vid. *Prop.* 118. *gr.* 12. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 289.

4. There is a great deal of reason to believe that this was not merely an empty boast, or a mistaken conclusion of their own; considering, not only the general probability of the thing, that, after Christ had taught a doctrine introduced by such extraordinary circumstances, some extraordinary care should be taken in transmitting it; but also the excellent character of the persons themselves, and the miracles which were performed, and the prophecies which were delivered by them,—some of which have already had a remarkable accomplishment, especially those relating to the *apostasy of the latter days*, and the arising of the *man of sin*, *i. e.* the papal kingdom; not to mention the whole book of the Revelations. Vid. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Thess. ii. *pass.*

Sir I. Newt. on Proph. part ii. *Benson on the Man of Sin, Par. and Notes on the Epist.* vol. i. p. 173. 2d ed. *Nath. Taylor on Faith*, p. 105. *Duchal's Serm.* No. vii.

5. The primitive Christians, who professed to have received their religion from the apostles, and who expressed the highest regard for the authority of their writings, (as will be more fully shown in the following proposition,) were attended with a remarkable power of working miracles, which continued in the church for more than a hundred years after the apostles' time.

Iren. c. ii. § 31, 32, 56, 57; c. v. § 6. *ap. Chapm. Eus.* vol. i. p. 305. *Eus. Eccl. Hist.* lib. v. c. vii. *Cypr. ad Demet.* p. 191. *Tert. ad Scap.* § 4. *Just Mart. Apol.* No. i. *ap. Op.* p. 45. *Justin Mart. Dial. with Trypho. ap. Op.* p. 258. Paris. *Orig. Contr. Cels.* p. 124. *Minut. Felix*, c. xxvii. *Tert. Apol.* c. xxiii. *Reeves's Apol.* vol. ii. p. 136, Note. *Whit. Com.* vol. ii. Pref. § 10. p. 26.

6. God appears to have borne witness to the truth of Christianity, by the extraordinary success which attended it, and by the support which was given to those who endured martyrdom for it. This success of the Gospel appears wonderful indeed, if we consider, on the one hand, how speedy and extensive its progress was, and, on the other, what opposition was made to it from the prejudices of education, from the corrupt affections of men, which would render them exceedingly averse to so humbling a scheme, and so strict a system of morality. To this may also be added, the candour with which the whole scheme was laid open at once, not excepting those parts which might give the greatest disgust, the want of the advantage of human literature, and other recommendations of a secular nature on the side of the persons by whom it was preached, the wit and eloquence which were engaged against it in so polite an age and country, and the terrors of persecutions which were so early armed for its utter extirpation: that such exquisite torments as were often inflicted on Christians in these times, should be supported by the youngest and weakest with such patience and joy, and that the Christian cause should be promoted by them, seems evidently to prove, not only that the sufferers had convincing evidence of the truth of the Gospel, but likewise that God was present with them in so remarkable a manner as to acknowledge their cause for his own.

* *Bennet's Inscp.* p. 128. *Addis. Works*, vol. iii. p. 314. *Eus. Eccl. Hist.* lib. v. c. i. p. 202; lib. iv. c. xv. p. 163; lib. viii. c. vii. *Atterb. Serm.* vol. i. No. iii. p. 95. *Whitby's Chr. Faith*, c. vi. p. 140. *Bur.* 4 *Disc.* p. 37. *Bur. Works*, vol. ii. p. 225. *West's Obs. on Christ's Resurr.* p. 110. *Emlyn's Life*, p. 79. *Har. on Man*, vol. ii. Prop. 44. *Jortin's Rem.* vol. ii. p. 134, &c.

1—6. 7. Since so much of the systematical doctrines delivered in the New Testament came from Christ's own mouth, and the apostles were so well furnished for acquainting us both with them and other particulars, since such a testimony was borne to them, both by the effusion of the Spirit upon them, and the miracles wrought by them and succeeding Christians, and by the extraordinary success of that doctrine they taught,—there is great reason to believe and admit it as a system of divine truth. *Q. E. D.*

COROLLARY.

When it is considered how very large a part of the argument is derived from the testimony of Paul and his writings, it will appear that his extraordinary conversion was a circumstance most wisely adjusted by Providence; as, on the other hand, what relates to him contains a compendious demonstration of the truth of Christianity; as is largely and excellently proved in

Lyttl. on Conv. of Paul, pass. *Mor. Works*, vol. ii. p. 3, &c. *Duchal's pres. Evid. Serm. 5 and 6.*

SCHOLIUM I.

Though it must be acknowledged that traditional testimony is in some degree weakened by passing through a succession of hands, and on that account the evidence of Christianity must in some degree diminish with time,—yet that may be balanced by the accomplishment of prophecies referred to, *gr.*

* The question concerning the extraordinary success of the Gospel occasionally occurs in the writings of Mr. Godwin's two disputants, to which others we have before referred. We now add the late Mr. Henry Taylor's further Thoughts on the Gospel Narrative

4. as well as by growing observations on other parts of the internal evidence. Vid. *Prop.* 37. *Schol.* 2.

Sharp's Serm. vol. i. No. 1. *Wards. Dis. Leg.* vol. i. p. 1. *Har. on Mar.* vol. ii. Prop. 29.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is most evident, that the extraordinary progress of the Mahometan religion in the world, is a fact by no means comparable to the propagation of Christianity, considering the different genius of it, and the different methods by which it was effected.

Limb. Collat. p. 136. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 75. *Bar. Works*, vol. i. p. 375. *Sale's Kor.* p. 25, &c. *Prid. Let. to Deists*, v. 1, 5, 7. *ap Life of Mahom. Atterb. Ser.* vol. i. No. 4. p. 126. *Ockl. Hist. of Sarac. pass. Har. on Man*, vol. ii. Prop. 45. *White's Serm. at B. Lect. passim.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is urged that martyrdom is no argument of a person's being in the right, since there have been martyrs of all religions; and enthusiasts have died for notorious errors with the greatest readiness and zeal.

Ans. It shows at least that people are persuaded of what they die for; and the thing for which the primitive Christians suffered was not a point of speculation, but a plain matter of fact, in which (had it been false) they could not have been mistaken.

Burn. Hist. 8vo. vol. ii. p. 888. *Jort. Rem.* vol. ii. p. 137.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The power of working miracles in the Christian church was pretty universally ceased before Chrysostom's time. As for what Augustine says of those wrought at the tombs of the martyrs in his time, and some other places, the evidence is not always so convincing as might be desired in facts of such importance: but we are not to wonder that miracles are generally ceased; seeing if they were to be frequently repeated for many succeeding ages, they would lose much of their convincing power, and so would be less capable of answering the end proposed by them.

August. de Civ. Dei, lib. xxii. c. viii. *Arnob.* lib. i. p. 27. *Lact. Inst.* lib. ii. c. xv. lib. iv. c. xxvii. lib. v. c. xxi. *Burn.* 4 *Disc.* p. 58. *Tillots. Ser.* vol. iii. p. 349. *Jack. Creed*, vol. ii. p. 484. *Jurieu's Posth. Let.* p. 6-5. *Whist. Mem.* vol. iii. *Postsc.* p. 6. *Lord. Cred.* vol. x. p. 378. *Works*, vol. iv. p. 153.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

Though we ought not to be over-credulous in believing stories of miracles wrought in our own days, yet it would be a very groundless presumption to say that God never does, nor will work them. We are not judges of what is fit for him to do: and where facts appear with such evidence as would be admitted in other cases, it seems very unreasonable to reject it here.

Ac. Maillard's Mirac. Cure. Calam. Life of Baxt. vol. i. p. 100.

LECTURE CXXXVII.

DEFINITION LXXI.

Any *supernatural* influence of God upon the *mind* of a rational creature, whereby he is formed to any degree of intellectual improvements, to which he could not or would not in fact have attained in present circumstances in a natural way, is called in general DIVINE INSPIRATION.

DEFINITION LXXII.

That is called in general AN INSTRUCTION OF SUPERINTENDENCY, in which God does so influence and direct the mind of any person, as to keep him *more* secure from *error* in some various and com-

* In 1747, Dr. Middleton published an Introductory Discourse to a larger work, containing the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, from the earliest ages, through several successive centuries, inferring, by plain Consequence, as well as Direct Proofs, the reason to believe, upon the authority of the genuineness of those facts, and such powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apostles. This performance was immediately attacked by Dr. Sandby. Though without his name, in Observations on a Book, entitled An Introductory Discourse to a larger Work; and by Dr. Chapman, in a Letter to the Author of a late Introductory Discourse. Dr. Middleton replied to the latter, in One Letter; and Dr. Middleton rejoined to Dr. Sandby, in Remarks on two Pamphlets, which appeared against Dr. Middleton's Introductory Discourse. Some time, Dec. 1748, appeared One Dissertation on these works, in three parts. A Letter from the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, from the Earliest Ages through several successive Ages. The Third Letter, was occasioned by Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, and the Letter, by the Author of Some Free and Candid Remarks upon a late Pamphlet, entitled, A Letter from Rome, shewing an exact conformity between the Religion of the Church of Rome, and that which prevailed in the Primitive Times, by W. Pulleine, M. A. now Dr. Pulleine, a Vindication of the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, in answer to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, by Thomas Church, M. A. afterwards Dr. Church. An Examination of Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, and that Miraculous Powers of the Primitive Church, by Z. Pearce, D. D. An Answer to the Second and Third Letters, and a Second Vindication of the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Church, by the Author of the Letter from Rome. Observations on the Conduct of Dr. Middleton, in answer to the Letter from Rome, by Dr. Church. A Free Answer to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, by Mr. afterwards Dr. Douglas. And a full and final Reply to Mr. Law's Unbeliever. Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Vindication of his Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Answer to Dr. Church's Observations. The Conformity considered, in a Sermon preached before the Queen, on Friday the 14th of March, 1749, being the Day appointed by Proclamation for a General Fast, and Humiliation, for the Success of His Majesty's Arms, and Counsels, and of Miraculous Powers continued in the Primitive Church, after the Decease of the Apostles. One of the most useful of these Tracts, and of the greatest use to the Author, was Dr. Lardner's Letter to a Friend, in which the Question was fairly stated, and the Argument for Miracles in the Primitive Church, from Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, and the Tracts published in their Defence, considered. Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Vindication of his Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Answer to Dr. Church's Observations, &c. &c. A Letter to Dr. Middleton, by R. Yates. A Defence of Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Vindication of his Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Middleton's Answer to Dr. Church's Observations, &c. &c. The Power of a Spirit assisted by Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, considered in a Dissertation on the Epistle to the Romans. Some Cursory Remarks upon Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c. &c. Dr. Church's Vindication of Miraculous Powers, &c. with an Observation of Some Remarks by Sandby, a Clergyman of Surrey, published under the name of Mr. Law; Conyers Middleton's Answer upon a late Controversy concerning the Miraculous Powers, and the second part of Dr. Sandby. Two Questions proposed to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, impartially considered.

plex discourse, than he would have been merely by the use of his natural faculties.

COROLLARY 1.

A book may be written without any error at all, where yet there is *no* superintendent inspiration, if the nature of the subject and the genius of the man be such, as to be capable of such a composition.

COROLLARY 2.

A book may be written by assistance of such an inspiration, in which there are *some errors*, provided they be *fewer* than in a course of nature must have been expected.

DEFINITION LXXIV.

PLENARY SUPERINTENDENT INSPIRATION is such a degree of inspiration, as excludes *any* mixture of error *at all* from the performance so superintended.

COROLLARY 1.

A book, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be written by a *plenary superintendent inspiration*, even though there are *many* things contained in it, the truth of which might have been known and recorded *without* such extraordinary assistance, if there are *others* which could not; or if, on the whole, a freedom from all error would not otherwise have been found there.

COROLLARY 2.

A book may be written by such a superintendent inspiration, in which there are many imperfections of *style* and *method*, provided the whole contents of it be *true*, and the subject of it so important, as would make it consistent with the Divine Wisdom thus to interpose, to preserve that entire credibility.

DEFINITION LXXV.

AN INSPIRATION OF ELEVATION is said to take place, where the faculties act in a *regular* and (as it seems) a common manner, yet are *raised* to an extraordinary degree; so that the composure shall, upon the whole, have more of the true sublime, or pathetic, than natural genius could have given.

COROLLARY 1.

In many cases it may be impossible to judge how far this inspiration may take place, since it is so difficult to know how far natural genius may extend, or how far corporeal causes may work upon the animal frame, so as to produce a performance greatly above the common standard.

COROLLARY 2.

There may be such an inspiration as this, where there is none of superintendency, and much less any that is plenary.

DEFINITION LXXVI.

INSPIRATION OF SUGGESTION takes place when the use of the faculties is superseded, and God does, as it were, *speak directly to the mind*, making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which such discoveries are to be communicated, if they are meant as a message to others.

COROLLARY 1.

There may be a plenary superintendency, where there is neither the inspiration of elevation nor that of suggestion.

COROLLARY 2.

Where there is an inspiration of suggestion, we may depend upon the certain truth of what is so suggested; for it is not to be imagined that God would dictate or declare a falsehood to any of his creatures, considering the veracity of his own nature: and we may also conclude there will be a plenary superintendency of direction in reporting it, if such superintendency be necessary to the exactness of that report; for it seems inconsistent with the divine wisdom, to suppose that God would suffer an inspired person to err through natural infirmity, in delivering a message with which he has been pleased so expressly to charge him.

Doddr. Fam. Exp. v. iii. *App.* No. iii. p. 38.

SCHOLIUM 1.

All the kinds of inspiration which have been described above, are possible to the almighty power of God, since there is nothing in any of them contradictory to itself, or which appears contradictory to any of the divine perfections.

SCHOLIUM 2.

There may be various ways whereby God communicates himself to his servants in the inspiration of suggestion: he may sometimes do it by immediate impressions on the mind, or by dreams and visions represented to the imagination: at other times by sounds formed in the air, or by visible appearances, in which the volition of some created spirit may or may not intervene.

Essay on Insp. p. 29. *Tillots. Ser.* vol. ii. No. ii. p. 16. *Chand. on Joel, Diss.* p. 108.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have thought it improper to distinguish between divine and diabolical inspiration, seeing, on the one hand, an evil spirit can suggest nothing without a divine agency to render its volitions effectual, *Prop.* 32. and, on the other hand, God's raising a thought immediately in the mind is no argument that it is true, unless he appears to interpose so as to give testimony to it, but we answer, That allowing both these, an important distinction is to be kept up between what God does as his own act, and what he does merely in the general course of his operations, in giving efficacy to the volitions of his creatures. A regard to the common usage of speech, and likewise to the language of Scripture, as far as that is to be considered, will require us to maintain this distinction, even while we acknowledge a dependence of all inferior agents upon God.

and his constant interposition to carry on the designs of his providence, amidst the greatest opposition which evil spirits are making to them. *Prop.* 32. *Schol.* 3.

Vandale de Orac. p. 9. *Burt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 100.

LECTURE CXXXVIII.

PROPOSITION CX.

To collect some testimonies of the primitive fathers, expressing their sentiments concerning the inspiration of the New Testament.

SOLUTION.

1. Clemens Romanus says, "That the apostles preached the Gospel, being filled with the Holy Spirit; that the Scriptures are the true word of the Spirit, and that Paul wrote to the Corinthians things that were true by the aid of the Spirit."

2. Polycarp tells the Philippians, "That none could attain the wisdom of Paul, by which he wrote to them."

3. Justin Martyr says, "That the Gospels were written by men full of the Holy Ghost; and that the sacred writers spoke by inspiration."

4. Irenæus says, "That all the apostles received the Gospel by divine revelation, as well as Paul; and that, by the will of God they delivered it to us as the foundation and pillar of our faith; that the Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God, and therefore it is wickedness to contradict them, and sacrilege to make any alteration in them."

5. Clemens Alexandrinus says, "That we that have the Scriptures are taught of God; that the Scriptures are established by the authority of God; that the whole Scripture is the law of God, and that they are all divine."

6. Origen says, "That the Scriptures proceeded from the Holy Spirit; that there is not one tittle in them but what expresses a divine wisdom; that there is nothing in the law, or the prophets, or the Gospels or the Epistles, which did not proceed from the fulness of the Spirit: that we ought with all the faithful to say, that the Scriptures are divinely inspired; that the Gospels are admitted as divine in all the churches of God; that the Scriptures are no other than the oracles of God."

7. Tertullian testifies, "That Scripture is the basis of faith; that all Christians prove their doctrines out of the Old and New Testament; and that the Majesty of God suggested what Paul wrote."

8. An ancient writer in Eusebius says, "That they who corrupt the sacred Scriptures abolish the standard of the ancient faith, neglecting the words of the divine writings, out of regard to their own reasonings; and afterwards, that they either do not believe that the Holy Spirit uttered the Divine Scriptures, and then they are infidels, or think themselves wiser than the Spirit, and so seem to be possessed."

Euc. Eccl. Hist. lib. v. c. xxviii. *Jenk. Chron.* vol. ii. p. 22. *Jort. Rem.* vol. ii. p. 48. *Bens. Epist.* vol. i. p. 318.

9. Theophilus Antiochenus says (as Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus also do) "That the evangelists and apostles wrote by the same Spirit that inspired the prophets."

10. The succeeding fathers of the church speak so expressly and copiously on this head, that it seems not necessary to pursue the catalogue any further.

Whit. Con. vol. i. *Pref.* p. 12. *La Mothe on Insp.* lib. i. c. iii.—vi. *Dupin's Canon.* part i. lib. ii. p. 49.

COROLLARY 1.

It seems to have been the judgment of many of these persons, that the New Testament was written by a plenary superintendent inspiration at least, *gr.* 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9. *Lowth on Inspiration*, p. 3.

COROLLARY 2.

It is evident that, in many of these passages, they declare not only their own private sentiments, but those of the whole church; and it is certain that their allowing any book to be, as they expressed it, *canonical*, was in effect owning its plenary inspiration; since that word imported *a rule of faith and manners*, whence there was no human appeal. *gr.* 6, 7, 8.

Fam. Expos. vol. iii. *Append.* p. 43, *note.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Some passages have been brought on the other side of the question from Jerom, who seems indeed to allow that the apostles were subject to some slips of memory.

Fine Lett. on Insp. p. 47. *La Mothe on Insp.* p. 44.

SCHOLIUM 2.

A celebrated fable, related by Pappus in his Synodicon, of a separation made in the grand Council of Nice, between the canonical books of the Scriptures, and others concerning which there was a doubt, may be seen in

New Trans. of New Test. vol. ii. p. 874.

PROPOSITION CXI.

The New Testament was written by a superintendent inspiration.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 114. *Dem. gr.* 2. *Prop.* 113. 1. The apostles were, according to Christ's promise, furnished with all necessary powers for the discharge of their office, by an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit

upon them at the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 1, &c., and a second time, Acts iv. 31.

1. 2. We may assure ourselves, that they were hereby competently furnished for all those services which were of great importance for the spread and edification of the church, and of so great difficulty as to need supernatural assistance.

3. Considering how uncertain a thing *oral tradition* is, and how soon the most public and notorious facts are corrupted by it, it was impossible that the Christian religion could be preserved in any tolerable degree of purity, without a *written* account of the facts and doctrines preached by the apostles; and yet, on the other hand, we can hardly suppose that God would suffer a doctrine introduced in so extraordinary a manner to be corrupted and lost.

4. The discourses of Christ were several of them so long, and some likewise of so curious and delicate a nature, that it is not to be imagined the apostles should have been able exactly to record them, especially so many years after they were delivered, and amidst such a variety of cares and dangers, without such extraordinary divine assistance, or, in the language of *Def.* 73. without an inspiration of superintendency. For the time when the Gospels were written see, by the way,

Fam. Exp. vol. iii. *Append.* No. iv.*

5. Many of the doctrines which the apostles delivered in their writings were so sublime, and so new, that as they could not have been known at first otherwise than by an inspiration of suggestion, so they would need an inspiration of superintendency in delivering an accurate account of them.

2, 3, 4, 5. 6. There is reason to believe, from the promise of Christ, that such parts of the New Testament as were written by the apostles, were written by an inspiration of superintendency.

Prop. 114. *gr.* 3, 4. 7. It is not to be thought that persons, so eminent for humility, piety, humanity, and other virtues, as the apostles were, would have spoken of their writings as *the words* and the *commands of the Lord, as the test of truth and falsehood*, and gloried so much in being under the direction of the Spirit, if they had not certainly known themselves to be so in their writings, as well as in their preaching; and the force of this argument is greatly illustrated, by recollecting the extraordinary miraculous powers with which they were honoured, while making exhortations and pretensions of this kind, as was hinted above.

8. There was an ancient tradition, that Mark and Luke were in the number of the seventy disciples who were furnished with extraordinary powers from Christ, and received from him promises of assistance much resembling those made to the apostles (compare Luke x. 9, 16, 19.); and if it were so, as the arguments used to prove both the understanding and integrity of the apostles may be in great measure applied to them, we may, on the principles laid down, conclude that they also had some inspiration of superintendency. But considering Col. iv. 10, 14. Acts xx. 5, 6; xxi. 1—17, *et sem.* Acts xii. 25; xv. 37—30. Phil. ver. 24. 1 Pet. v. 13. there is much more reason to regard that received and ancient tradition in the Christian church, that Mark wrote his Gospel, instructed by Peter; and Luke his by Paul's assistance; which, if it be allowed, their writings will stand nearly on the same footing with those of Peter and Paul. Vid. *Prop.* 101. *gr.* 20.

Whitb. Pref. to Luke. Mills's Gr. Test. Prol. ad Marc. et Luc. James ag. Whist. p. 46. *Benson on Prop. of Chris. App.* part i. § 1, 2.

9. It may not be improper here just to mention the internal marks of a divine original, the particulars of which must be submitted to further examination. We shall endeavour to shew, in the progress of this work, what must be evident to all who are well acquainted with the New Testament in the general, though capable of further illustration, that the excellency of its doctrines, and the spirituality and elevation of its design, the majesty and simplicity of its style, the agreement of its parts, and its efficacy upon the hearts and consciences of men, concur to give us a high idea of it, and to corroborate the external arguments for its being written by a superintendent inspiration at least.

Prop. 115. 10. There has been in the Christian church, from its earliest ages, a constant tradition, that these books were written by the extraordinary assistance of the Spirit, which must at least amount to superintendent inspiration.

6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. 11. *Last preparatio. Bennet on Scr.* § 6. p. 103. *Whitb. Gen. Pref. Cam.* vol. i. § 4. *Leath on Insp.* p. 5.

COROLLARY.

Hence we may certainly infer, That the apostles were not left in their writings to misrepresent any important facts on which the evidence of Christianity was founded, or any important doctrine upon which the salvation or edification of their converts depended.† *Fam. Expos.* vol. iii. *App.* p. 43.

* For a discussion of the question concerning the time when the Gospels were written, recourse may be had to Lardner's Credibility, vol. i., Works, vol. vi., and to Dr. Henry Owen's Observations on the Four Gospels, passim.

* Concerning the Language of the New Testament, see Mr. Locke's Paraphrase and Remarks on Mr. Mills's Proposals for printing the Greek Text, &c. Mr. Mills's Prolegomena to his Edition of the New Testament. Dr. Owen's Observations on the Four Gospels, p. 1—20. Dr. Campbell's Preliminary Dissertation to his Translation of the Four Gospels, Diss. ii. part ii. p. 31. Bowyer's Conjectures, &c. Mr. Kenrick's Essay on the Language of the New Testament. Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Remarks on Dr. Harwood's Introduction, &c. [illegible] Dr. Edwards's Sacred Classics defended and illustrated, vol. ii. [illegible] Mr. Locke's Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i. p. 1—20. Dr. Macknight's Preface to his Translation of the Epistles, vol. i. p. 1—20. Mr. Taylor's Hebrew Concordance, Introduction

LECTURE CXXXIX

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is a controversy of considerable difficulty and importance, Whether the inspiration and superintendency under which the apostles were, extended to every *minute circumstance* in their writings, so as to be in the most absolute sense plenary? Vid. *Def.* 74. Jerom, Grotius, Erasmus and Episcopius, thought it was not; and Lowth himself allows that, in matters of no consequence, "as he expresses it," they might be liable to slips of memory: but, on the contrary, it seems evident that the emphatical manner in which our Lord speaks of the agency of the Spirit upon them, and in which they themselves speak of their own writings, will justify us in believing that their inspiration was plenary, unless there be very convincing evidence brought on the other side to prove that it was not; and it is to be remembered, that if we allow there were *some* errors in the New Testament as it came from the hands of the apostles, there may be great danger of subverting the main purpose and design of it; since there will be endless room to debate the importance both of facts and doctrines.

Whitb. Gen. Pref. vol. i. p. 6. *Five Lett. on Insp.* p. 75. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 40. *P. Simon sur le texte du Nov. Test.* c. xxiii. xxiv. *Law's Theory*, p. 258. *Hart. on Man*, vol. ii. prop. 19. *Warb. Serm.* vol. i. No. vi. p. 216. *Middl. Posth. Works*, vol. ii. p. 340.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Against such a plenary inspiration of the New Testament it is objected, That there is no circumstance in which more extraordinary assistances were promised to the apostles, than when they appeared before magistrates; yet some mistakes in their conduct then show, that even this promise was to be taken with some limitations, and consequently that in other circumstances they might also be liable to mistakes. Compare Matt. x. 19, 20. Mark xiii. 11. with Acts xxiii. 1—6. To this we answer,

1. That much is to be said in vindication of the apostles' conduct in the instance to which the objection refers.—Vid. *Fam. Expos. in Loc.*

2. That the apostles might be preserved from mistakes in their apologies, and yet might be left to some human infirmities as to other circumstances in their behaviour before magistrates.

Five Lett. on Insp. p. 41. *Lowth on Ins.* p. 80.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is further objected, That the apostles did not seem to apprehend each other to be inspired; as appears by their debating with each other in the council at Jerusalem, (Acts xv.) and by Paul's blaming Peter (Gal. ii. 11.); neither, it is urged, did the Christians in those early days apprehend them to be *infallible*, since their conduct was, in some instances, questioned and arraigned. Acts xi. 2, 3; xxi. 20—24.

But to this we answer, (besides what was observed before, that some mistakes in conduct might be consistent with an inspiration of superintendency in their writings,) That in both instances in question the apostles were in the right; and the passages urged will only prove that there were some Christians even then, who did not pay a due regard to those grand ministers in the Messiah's kingdom; to which we may add, That Christ's promise to them did not import that their first views of things should always be right in the whole administration of their office; but that, on the whole, he would make proper provision for their information; and if we consider how strong a temptation they would have been under to think too highly of themselves, if they had been under a constant plenary inspiration, it may appear a beauty in the divine conduct to have left them, in some instances, to the natural weakness of their own minds (compare 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9, 10.); and sometimes to interrupt those extraordinary gifts in particular cases, as he did those of healing, (compare 2 Tim. iv. 20. Phil. ii. 27.) still providing by other hands a remedy for those ill consequences, which might have arisen from an uncorrected mistake; for, as to Dr. Morgan's pretence, That the apostles, after all, went on each in his different opinion, it is entirely a false assertion, and admirably well confuted by Dr. Leland in the passage referred to below.

Lett. on Insp. p. 56. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 86. *Watsi Mellematum*, p. 61. *Morg. Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 54. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 317. *Leland ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 398. *Middlet. Post. Works*, vol. ii. p. 289. *Lord. Rem. on Ward's Diss.* p. 157. &c. *Works*, vol. xi. p. 335. *Heath. Test.* vol. iii. p. 173; *Works*, vol. viii. p. 213. *Ben. Hist. Plant. Chris.* vol. ii. p. 45.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is further objected, That Paul, who asserts himself to have been inferior to none of the rest of the apostles, (2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11.) speaks of himself in such a manner, as plainly to show that he did not apprehend himself under such a plenary inspiration; (vid. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25, 40. 2 Cor. xi. 17.); nor do we find that any of the apostles introduce their discourses with such causes as the prophets used, to declare that they spoke as the oracles of God.

We answer, This will indeed prove that they did not imagine themselves to have been always under an inspiration of suggestion; nevertheless, if what they said was proper, and what they determined was just, their inspiration of superintendency might still be plenary; and indeed their distinguishing

in this point seems strongly to imply (especially when compared with the passage quoted before, *Prop.* 113. *gr.* 3.) that their decisions in other points of doctrine and duty were by immediate revelation from Christ.

La Mothe on Insp. p. 87. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 40. *Whith. Gen. Pref. to Com.* vol. i. p. 6. *Bens. Epist.* vol. i. p. 123.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is also objected, That there are several passages in the history of the Evangelists, which are directly contrary to each other, so that it is impossible they should both be true: particularly in the genealogy of Christ, and the story of his last passover, sufferings, and resurrection. To this we answer,

1. That there are many seeming contradictions which may be reconciled in a satisfactory manner, without doing violence to the text, as appears from our notes* on many of the passages in question.

2. There are many other difficulties, which may be removed by *various readings*, or at least by altering a few words in the text. Now, forasmuch as it is evident, from the many various readings, that the transcribers were not under a superintendent inspiration, it seems upon the whole more reasonable to suppose an error in some of the first copies, which may have extended itself to all the rest, than to suppose the original erroneous, for the reason given before, *Schol.* 1.†

3. If any cases do occur, in which neither of the former solutions can take place, it seems reasonable to conclude *(cæt. par.)* that where the writers of the New Testament differ from each other in their accounts, those of them who were apostles, rather than the others, have given us the exact truth, and were under a plenary superintendency, considering the peculiar dignity of the apostolic office; and accordingly some have observed that there is little apparent difference, if any, between Matthew and John: but there seems no necessity for having recourse to this expedient; and as to placing stories in a different order, it is certain that the best historians do not always confine themselves to that of time; and the hasty manner in which the Evangelists must write, in the midst of their labours and dangers, may be an abundant excuse for setting things down as they came into mind.

Beza in Acts vii. 14. *Calv. Harm. in Matt.* xxvii. 9. p. 351: *Acts* xii. 16. *Apud Doddr. Fam. Exp.* vol. iii. *Pref. ad fin. Jones ag. Whist.* c. iv. p. 21.

And it deserves to be seriously considered, whether what of difficulty remains from the agreement of Mark and Luke in the order of their stories, where they both differ from Matthew, may not easily be accounted for by supposing that Luke took Mark for the ground-work of his Gospel, and contented himself with changing his language into purer Greek, and adding a great number of important particulars, which had not been recounted by him, but which Luke collected from credible witnesses. (Compare Luke i. 1—4. where it is possible ἀνωθεν may refer to *early* facts omitted by Mark.) This seems rather more probable, than that Mark was an abridgment of Luke; which might be another hypothesis for solving the objection.

Middl. Posth. Works, vol. ii. p. 229. *Benson's Hist. of Christ.* vol. ii. p. 295.

LECTURE CXL.

SCHOLIUM 6.

An objection, nearly akin to the former, is taken from the difference there is between the quotations from the Old Testament, as they stand in the New, and the original; which must at least have argued some failure in the memory of the apostles.—This Mr. Whiston answers, by supposing that wherever there is a variation, the Jews have corrupted the present copies of the Old Testament, on purpose to disparage the New: but we wave this, for reasons given in *Prop.* 107. nor will it be sufficient to say the apostles quoted from the Seventy, since all their quotations do not exactly agree with that, nor indeed perfectly with each other. Compare Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. in which Isa. vi. 9, 10. is quoted or referred to with some variety. We, therefore, choose rather to allow that this is indeed an objection against their being under a plenary inspiration of suggestion; but forasmuch as they nowhere assert that their quotations were *literally* exact, they might be under a superintendent inspiration, if the sense were as they represent it, wherever they argue from the quotation; and as for other passages, which are only introduced by way of allusion, (as many evidently are,) it was much less requisite the quotations should be exact there. We may also observe, That the variety with which the Fathers quote the same texts both from the Old Testament and New, is a further argument against Mr. Whiston's hypothesis; and indeed it appears that the most accurate writers among the ancient Classics vary in many places from the originals they quote, which, considering the *form* of their books, is no wonder.

Whist. Ess. for rest. Old. Test. p. 12. *Collins's Gr. &c.* p. 97.

* Referring to the notes in the Family Expositor.

† Several instances of the scriptures which may be restored by various readings, will be found in Mr. Chandler's Observations on the Subject, in the first volume of his Introduction to the New Testament, as before referred to.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It has been urged as the strongest objection of all, That the apostles often argue from passages in the Old Testament, where not only the words, but the original sense, appears so different from the purpose to which it is produced, that it were unreasonable to imagine the argument conclusive, and consequently the superintendency of their inspiration plenary; since they assert it as a fact, that the things to which they apply such and such passages were referred to in them, of which the following quotations, among many others, are a specimen: Matt. i. 23; ii. 15, 18, 23; viii. 17; xxvii. 9, 10. Gal. iii. 16.—To this it is answered,

1. That in several of these passages the reasoning of the apostles appears to be well founded, as we have endeavoured to show in our notes upon them, and as will frequently appear upon the justest principles of analogy, even where the direct reference is not so apparent. To which it is to be added, That where the original meaning of a passage on the whole appears *dubious*, the sense given by an apostle is certainly to be preferred to another, which, from examining the text alone, might appear equally probable, especially considering how indeterminate many forms in speaking used in the Hebrew language are, and how great an obscurity lies upon many passages in the Old Testament, and may well be expected in prophetic writings. See *Prop.* 112. *Cor.* 2.

2. The phrase, *This was fulfilled*, or *this was done that it might be fulfilled*, (though Mr. Peirce makes a great distinction between these two,) does not always imply that the passage referred to was a *prediction* of the event; but only that the event recorded was attended with such circumstances, as that the prophecy quoted upon the occasion might, with great propriety of expression, be *accommodated* to it; and in this solution we choose to acquiesce, rather than to say that the misapplication of prophecies might be consistent with plenary inspiration as to the truth of facts; for, as we shall afterwards more particularly observe, the understanding the prophecies of the Old Testament was a miraculous gift, imparted not only to the apostles, but to other Christians inferior to them; and many have thought it to be *the word of knowledge* spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. 8.

Collinet's Gr. ver. part. i. c. viii. p. 39. *Sykes's Chris.* c. xiii. p. 206. *Jeffries's Rev.* c. viii. p. 164, &c. *Chand. on Mir.* part ii. c. xi. p. 338. *Pearce on Phil. ad fin.* Diss. ii. *Wake Def. Leg.* vol. ii. lib. vi. c. 6. *Middl. Postb. Works*, vol. ii. p. 340. *Har. on Man*, vol. ii. Prop. 33.* *Kennic. on Isa.* vii. 14.

SCHOLIUM 8.

There is a great deal of reason to believe that many things contained in the New Testament were written by an inspiration of suggestion; since the apostles sometimes expressly assert that they received what they wrote by revelation from Christ; and this is peculiarly applicable to the prophetic part of their writings.—Compare Eph. iii. 3, 5. Gal. i. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 10, &c.; xi. 23. It is also exceedingly probable that they were frequently instructed in an extraordinary manner, not only as to the matter about which they wrote, but likewise as to the language they should use, 1 Cor. ii. 13. and whoever peruses their writings attentively, will find they frequently express themselves, even when they wrote upon particular occasions, in phrases of such latitude and extent, as would make their writings abundantly more useful to Christians in all succeeding ages, than they could have been, had they confined themselves closely to the particular occasion, as some who have paraphrased their writings have done: a circumstance in which it is probable they had a particular divine direction, and upon observing which, the just interpretation of their writings will greatly depend; but it does not seem reasonable to believe that every word which the apostles wrote was dictated to them by an immediate revelation; for (as was before observed) there are not only many things which they might have written without such a revelation, but, moreover, on such an hypothesis there could have been no room at all for such a distinction as the apostle makes, 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25. between what *he* and what *the Lord* says; nor could we suppose that, if this had been the case, they would ever have quoted the words of the Old Testament otherwise than exactly as they were written, or that they could ever have spoken with that uncertainty, with which they sometimes express themselves as to some future events, 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6. compared with 2 Cor. i. 15—17. Rom. xv. 24, 28. compare also 1 Cor. i. 14, 16; iv. 19; xvi. 7. Phil. ii. 19, 23, 24. 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. 2 John ver. 12. 3 John ver. 14. It must also be acknowledged that there are some imperfections, and some peculiarities of style, which probably there would not have been, had the apostles always written by an inspiration of suggestion: yet this is upon the whole no dishonour to the sacred Scriptures; since by this means they are more adapted to answer their general end, as containing surer marks of their genuineness, and laying open the heart and character of the persons by whom they were written more effectually than they could have done, had these writers been

* An example of this sort of argument will be found in a work of Dr. Hunter, entitled, The Mosaical Account of the Deluge, and the Hypothetical Writers, explained and vindicated. Methodist Library.

merely the organs of the Holy Ghost, in such a manner as some have supposed.

* *Edw. of Scr.* vol. i. p. 32. *Owen on Scrip.* c. i. § 22. p. 25. *Whitb. on N. Test.* vol. i. *Pref.* § 2. p. 3. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 62. *Burnet on Art.* p. 85. *Till. Works*, vol. iii. p. 448. *La Mothe. on Insp.* part ii. chap. i.

LECTURE CXLI.

DEFINITION LXXVII.

Where supernatural GIFTS and POWERS are spoken of as distinct, the former may express some inward illumination, and the latter some extraordinary effect produced by God, in consequence of some word or action of that person, to whom the power is said to belong.

PROPOSITION CXVII.

To take a more particular survey of the *gifts* and *powers* of the apostles, according to that account of them which is given in the New Testament.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

SECT. I. The chief of their spiritual GIFTS (perhaps so called in allusion to Psal. lxviii. 18. compared with Eph. iv. 7. 8.) are most particularly enumerated 1 Cor. xii. 8—10. and seem most probable to have been thus distinguished.—There was,

1. THE WORD OF WISDOM, or a full and clear understanding of the whole scheme of Christian doctrines, whereby they were able to make men wise to salvation, 1 Cor. ii. 6. 7. Eph. iii. 10. compare 2 Pet. iii. 15. This fitted them to make the most perfect declaration of the Gospel; on account of which the apostles are represented as under Christ the foundation of the Christian Church, Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14. comp. Matt. xvi. 18.

Bens. Prop. of Chris. vol. i. p. 10. *Chand. on Joel*, p. 133. *Barrington's Misc. Sacra*. Ess. i. p. 39. *Warb. Ser.* vol. i. p. 211.

2. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE, which Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson think to have consisted in an extraordinary ability to understand and explain the sense and design of the Old Testament, and especially its reference to Christ and his gospel; compare Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 20. By this gift they were freed from those prejudices which they had imbibed, relating to the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, and the temporal grandeur of the Messiah's kingdom; by this their want of skill in the original Hebrew, or of acquaintance with the Greek version, was supplied; and they were enabled to remove scruples arising in the minds of the Jews, and to clear up and set in the strongest light that part of the evidence of Christianity which depended upon their Scriptures. *Barring. Ess.* p. 42. *Bens.* ib. p. 46.

That this was given to the apostles and primitive Christians is certain; but that it was called *the word of knowledge*, seems not fully proved by the quotations above. Dr. Chandler supposes that *the word of knowledge* was but a lower degree of *the word of wisdom*; *i. e.* a capacity of discovering the Christian scheme with a convincing evidence to the minds of others; and quotes Rom. xv. 14. 1 Cor. i. 5, 6. 2 Cor. ii. 14; viii. 7. Eph. i. 17, 18. with some other Scriptures for that purpose.

Chand. on Joel, p. 150, &c. *Warb. ubi supra.*

3. They had the gift of DISCERNING SPIRITS, *i. e.* of knowing by what spirit a man spoke who pretended to inspiration, of knowing the secrets of men's hearts in some instances, and judging of the fitness of a person's genius and character for any particular office and station in the church; but Dr. Chandler explains it only of the former, referring the latter effects to prophecy.

Bens. ib. p. 48. *Stebbing ag. Fost. Let.* 2. p. 40. *Fost. 2d Lett. to Stebb. Chand. on Joel*, p. 142.

4. They had also the gift of PROPHECY, in that superior degree which related to foretelling future, or discovering secret, events; and in that inferior sense of the word in which it is often used to express officiating in public worship, by preaching, prayer, or singing.—1 Cor. xiv. *pass. præs.* ver. 24, 25.

Bens. ib. p. 70. *Chand. on Joel*, p. 138.

5. They had also the gift of TONGUES, or an ability of readily and intelligibly speaking a variety of languages which they had never learnt; which (though infamously represented by Morgan) was a most glorious and important attestation of the Gospel, as well as a suitable, and indeed, in their circumstances, a necessary, furniture for the mission for which the apostles and their assistants were designed. Nor is there any reason with Dr. Middleton to understand it as merely an occasional gift, so that a person might speak a language most fluently one hour, and be entirely ignorant of it the next; which neither agrees with what is said of the abuse of it, nor would have been sufficient to answer the end proposed.

Morg. Moral Phil. vol. ii. p. 231. *Leland ag. Morg.* vol. ii. p. 225. *Bens.* ib. p. [illegible] *Chand.* ib. p. 143. *Middl. Free Inq. Post*

* The style of the New Testament has been a great object of examination and debate. Mr. Anthony Blackwall in his celebrated work, entitled, The Sacred Classics defended and illustrated, has endeavoured to support the purity, propriety, and elegance of the language used by the apostolical and evangelical writers. Dr. Campbell is of a different opinion, and has made some particular strictures on Mr. Blackwall's positions. The Doctor has likewise, concerned himself in the nature of the style of the New Testament, and its peculiar dialect. See the Preliminary Dissertations to his Translation of the Four Gospels, Vol. i. p. 1. ib. p. 32. The language of the New Testament is otherwise treated of very copiously, and in a critical view, by Michaelis, Introd. vol. i. p. 97. For Mr. Marsh's notes, see ib. p. 88.

p. 23. *Warb. Doct. Grace*, p. 6. sm. ed. *Justin's Rem.* vol. i. p. 15. *Mede's Essay on Gift of Tongues*, *Misc. Works*, vol. ii. p. 573, &c. *Warb. Ser.* vol. i. p. 176. *Essay on Gift of Tongues.*

6. They had also the gift of *interpreting tongues*; so that in a mixed assembly, consisting of persons of different nations, if one spoke in a language understood by one part, another could repeat and translate what he said into different languages understood by others.—Whether these versions were made of the whole discourse when ended, or sentence by sentence, we cannot certainly say; but if the latter method were used, it would not seem so strange to them as to us, if we may credit the account given of the method of interpreting the Scripture in the Jewish synagogues.—Vid. 1 Cor. xiv. 5, 6, 13.

Jones's Jew. Ant. § 318, and 334. MS. *Benson*, ib. p. 60. *Chand. on Jud.* p. 146.

Some have supposed that Paul had a gift peculiar to himself, *i. e.* of knowing in some cases what passed in his absence, as well as if he had been present, 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. Col. ii. 5. compare 2 Kings v. 25, 26; vi. 8—12. but it is certain this did not habitually reside in him; as indeed it is uncertain, whether many of the most wonderful of these gifts and powers did without interruption dwell in any mere man whatsoever. Compare John iii. 34.

SECT. II. The most considerable miraculous POWERS of the apostles were these:—

1. The power of inflicting supernatural punishments, and even death itself, by a word speaking, on bold and daring offenders.—Vid. Acts v. 1—11. xiii. 10, 11. 2 Cor. x. 6, 8, 9, xiii. 2, 3, 10. and as evil angels might sometimes be the instruments of inflicting these temporal judgments, it is probable these may be referred to when persons are said to be by the apostles *delivered to Satan*.—1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 1 Tim. i. 20.

Benson, ib. vol. i. p. 52. *Bar. Ess.* ii. p. 51.

2. The apostles seem to have been endowed with an extraordinary degree of fortitude, far beyond what they naturally had; but necessary for the scenes of extraordinary difficulty and suffering through which they were to pass.—Acts ii. 36; iv. 5—13, 19, 33; v. 28, &c. viii. 1.

Benson, ib. p. 61. *Gentlemen's Ex. Reason*, p. 35.

Their extraordinary degree of sincerity, diligence, and activity, patience, love to men's souls, and other uncommon virtues and graces, might also be mentioned as further illustrating this head.

Barrington, ib. p. 47.

3. The apostles had also a power of performing the most extraordinary cures, and even of raising the dead; and some of these kinds of miracles which were not peculiar to them, were wrought by them in a superior manner.—Vid. Acts v. 15; ix. 36—42. xix. 11, 12. xx. 12. *Barrington*, ib. p. 53.

4. The apostles had also a power (which, as it seems, was peculiar to themselves) of giving the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to others by *laying on their hands*; and there were very few who received it otherwise than by that means.—Acts viii. 14—19. John xiv. 12. Rom. i. 11, 12. 2 Tim. i. 6. Gal. iii. 2, 3, 5. 1 Thess. i. 5; v. 19, 20. 1 Cor. i. 4—7. 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Acts xix. 1—7. For the further illustration of this, Dr. Benson has asserted that the Holy Ghost never fell immediately on any but our Lord after his baptism, and the apostles, first on the day of Pentecost, and a second time mentioned Acts iv. 31. on the Eunuch, Acts viii. 39. (according to the Alexandrian reading,) on Saul after his baptism, on the first-fruits of the devout Gentiles before baptism, Acts x. 44. and on the first-fruits of the idolatrous Gentiles of Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii. 52.—but the instance of the Eunuch, with that of the devout Gentiles, is precarious; and indeed the case of the Gentiles at Antioch seems to be far from so extraordinary a one as Dr. Benson would make it; and the foundation for supposing it so, *i. e.* the different periods for preaching the Gospel to the devout, and then to the idolatrous, Gentiles, is a mere unsupported hypothesis. That the phrase of being *filled with the Holy Ghost* does not signify any thing so singular as he supposes, appears from comparing Eph. v. 18. and many other places where the phrase is used.—See *Fam. Expos.* vol. iii. on the places cited above.

Benson, ib. vol. i. p. 64; vol. ii. p. 11. *Lel. ag. Mor.* vol. i. p. 382. *Burr. Ess.* i. p. 101. *Mose's Sermon Miracles*

LECTURE CXLII

COROLLARY 1.

It does not seem reasonable to mention the power which the apostles had of binding and loosing, of remitting or retaining sins, as a gift or power distinct from the preceding (compare Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. John xx. 23.); for if this be understood of declaring in an authentic manner what was lawful under the Christian dispensation, they were furnished with that by *the word of wisdom*, with which therefore this gift or power taken in this sense would coincide:—if it be taken for inflicting or removing calamities sent as miraculous punishments of sin, it will coincide with that power mentioned § 2. *gr.* 1, 3.; and if it should be explained of declaring to particular persons that their sins were forgiven, they could only do it by virtue of their extraordinary gift of discerning spirits, § 1. *gr.*

3. whereby they would be able to judge of the sincere faith and repentance of the person concerned. *Bens.* ib. p. 50, &c.

COROLLARY 2.

This particular survey of the extraordinary furniture of the apostles for their work, confirms the arguments advanced above to prove the inspiration of their writings, which appear in fact to have been intended for the service and guidance of the church in all future ages. To this Dr. Morgan has objected, That as these gifts were plainly capable of abuse, (compare 1 Cor. xiv.) no argument could from thence be drawn as to the divine inspiration of those who were possessed of them; but, in answer to this, we must distinguish with respect to these gifts and powers. The *word of wisdom* and of *knowledge*, as explained above, could not be abused as occasion of error, the truth of the things taught being essential to the exercise of the gifts themselves, and false pretences to them being discovered by that of discerning spirits. The gift of healing was not a permanent thing (compare *Prop.* 116. *Schol.* 3. *sub fin.*); and as for the gift of speaking with *tongues*, the miracle of that lay in conferring it by imposition of hands, not in using it after it was conferred. So that, on the whole, there is no foundation to believe that any miraculous gifts or powers were used in confirmation of falsehood in any case, though they might be used in confirmation of truth by very bad men; which is all that is insinuated, Matt. vii. 22. Compare for further illustration, Gal. iii. 2, 5. Rom. xvi. 18. 1 Cor. iv. 18—20. 2 Cor. xii. 12. *et sim.* Col. ii. 4. Jude ver. 16. which passages, when compared together, further show, or intimate, that miraculous works or powers were peculiar to the teachers of truth.

Morg. Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 80. *Chapm. ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 300. *Lel. ag. Morg.* vol. i. c. xiii. p. 374. *Bens. on Epist.* vol. i. *App.* to 1 Tim.

As for 2 Thess. ii. 9. it seems the words in question might be rendered *lying signs, wonders*, and *miracles, i. e.* fictitious and pretended miracles, such as the Romish church has apparently dealt in; and Matt. xxiv. 24. evidently relates to false teachers in the early ages of Christianity, when there was a superior miraculous power in the church; such perhaps as Elymas and Simon Magus; so that, by the way, there is no proof from Scripture of any miracles having been wrought to confirm falsehood, which have not been opposed by superior miracles; nor can any one prove that this shall ever be the case, as was in part intimated above, *Prop.* 94. *Schol.* 2. *Bens. ubi supra*, 142.

COROLLARY 3.

If it could be certainly made out, which I apprehend it cannot, that there is an irreconcilable difference between any circumstances in the history, and that there was so in the original, it would *(cæt. par.)* on those principles seem most reasonable to adjust the testimony of those who were *not* apostles by that of those who *were*, according to Sir Isaac Newton's scheme of the harmony; for it is not so certain that Peter reviewed Mark's Gospel, and Paul Luke's, as that Matthew and John were the authors of those published under their name (vid. *Prop.* 116. *gr.* 8.); and the concurrence of Mark and Luke in their order, can be no just objection to this, especially if the conjecture *ib. Sch.* 5. *sub finem* be admitted.

Dodd. Diss. on Newt. Harm. ap. Pam. Lxpos. vol. iii. *App.* No. iii. *Sir I. Newt. on Proph.* lib. i. c. xi.

COROLLARY 4.

As the endowments of the apostles were so extraordinary and peculiar, there is no reason to believe they had any proper successors in the Christian church, unless it can be proved there are some who succeeded to their gifts and powers, by which they were furnished for their extraordinary work.

Boyse's Works, vol. ii. p. 274. *Barr. Misc. Sac.* vol. ii. Ess. ii. *pass.*

COROLLARY 5.

The whole foundation of Popery, as a distinct religion, is therefore overthrown; since that not only supposes the contrary to the preceding corollary, but also adds a great many other suppositions still more extravagant: for, (as we shall elsewhere more largely show,) there is no evidence that Peter had any superiority over the rest of the apostles: or if he had, that he had any who were his successors in that extraordinary power; or that those successors were Roman bishops; or that the *present* bishop of Rome is legally by succession possessed of it; yet all these things, some of which are notoriously false, and others of such a nature that they can never be proved to be true on their own principles, must be taken for granted, before that authority of declaring the sense of Scripture can be vindicated, which the church of Rome has arrogated to herself, and upon which her other most extravagant claims and most absurd doctrines are founded.

Lect. ag. Popery, No. iii. and iv. *Barrow's Four Disc.* No. iii. *Barr. on Pope's Sup. pass. ap. Opera*, vol. i. *justa fin. Nicol's and Smith's Serm. in the Salters Hall Serm. ag. Popery. Dodd. Misc. Lect. ag. Popery.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Several of the gifts and powers mentioned in the proposition, appear to have been imparted to Christians of inferior order, not only to prophets, evangelists, elders, or bishops, and other teachers, but also to those who made up the congregations under

their care; particularly the gift of prophecy, that of speaking with and interpreting tongues, and discerning spirits: with regard to the former of which Dr. Benson thinks some are called Helps; and, with regard to the latter, Governments, as they were called, to assist both in instructing and guiding of the church. 1 Cor. xii. 8—10, 28. though Dr. Chandler is of opinion, that the *helps* were persons of extraordinary liberality, raised up by God to be helpful to others by their own generous contributions; and that the *governments* were deacons, whose business it was to preside over the distribution of charities;—Acts vi. 3. Rom. xvi. 2. which may considerably illustrate Rom. xii. 8. Dr. Benson thinks it probable that there were few, if any, in the primitive church, who did not receive these gifts, though perhaps they might all of them *meet* in none but the apostles, to whom the *word of wisdom* seems to have been peculiar.

Bens. on Proph. vol. i. p. 66. *Barr. Ess.* vol. i. p. 118; ibid. p. 74. *Chandler on Joel*, p. 131.

SCHOLIUM 2.

There is a difficulty attending the gift of *the interpretation of tongues*, which has not been observed by those who have written upon the subject, and may here deserve our notice; *viz.* how a person speaking with tongues should need to pray that he might interpret, (1 Cor. xiv. 13.) without supposing that he spoke by such a miraculous impulse as rendered him merely the organ of the Spirit of God, which would be inconsistent with our answer to Morgan, under the second corollary. It is obvious to answer, That there might be persons in an audience of various nations, and consequently the person speaking (supposing to both Romans and Persians, himself being a Greek speaking Latin) might not be able to interpret to them all, as in the given instance into Persian; but then it may be answered, this was for want of another tongue, which is not here supposed to be the case; and, therefore, perhaps it will be impossible fully to remove the difficulty, without supposing there were some who, though they could speak no tongue but their own, were yet miraculously enabled to interpret into it what should be spoken in any other tongue, which would make this office, though it were only bearing a secondary part, very excellent, and the gift itself very extraordinary. *Chandler on Joel, ubi sup.*

LECTURE CXLIII

PROPOSITION CXVIII.

The Old Testament was written by a *superintendent inspiration*.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 110. 1. Moses was a person raised up by God for eminent service, favoured with miraculous powers and frequent divine revelations, on the authority with which his whole law was introduced and received. *Hurt on Mos.* vol. ii. p. 88.

2. The work which Moses undertook of writing the history, not only of his own acts and institutions, but also the dispensations of God to mankind in preceding ages, was a work of great importance, and of such difficulty, that without extraordinary divine assistance he would not have been able to perform it in such a manner as might have been depended upon, and consequently might have answered the design.

1, 2, 3. There is reason to believe that Moses wrote by a superintendent inspiration.

4. Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonas, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, were all prophets, if the historical part of the Old Testament is to be believed (which we proved above, *Prop.* 110.); and, therefore, we have reason to believe that their minds were so superintended in writing not only those historical facts which they mention, but likewise those messages which many of them declare they received from God, as that they should be preserved at least from all material mistakes, which would have brought a disgrace upon those messages which in the name of God they delivered, and so have frustrated the design of them; which in many cases could not have been answered, without an exact transmission of them to posterity, as several of those predictions referred to distant, and some of them to very complicated, events, and contain particular circumstances, which, if not exactly authentic, must have been very hazardous.

5. Many discourses recorded in the historical parts of these writings, as delivered by others, or given to them in charge by God, were so long and so circumstantial, that they could not be exactly recorded without some extraordinary divine assistance; and some of the most important of them, *i. e.* those relating to the Messiah, were not understood by the prophets themselves who delivered them, (1 Pet. i. 10—12.) and consequently were less likely to be remembered with such exactness as, according to *gr. b.* was necessary.

6. Ezra and Nehemiah were persons of such eminent stations and piety, and so intimately conversant with the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, that we may reasonably believe that proper assistances, either ordinary or extraordinary, as the case required, would be given them in their writings.

7. Though the authors of the books of Judges, Ruth, and Kings, Chronicles, Esther, and Job,

should be allowed to be unknown, there is great reason to believe they were some of those holy and prophetic men with which the nation of the Jews did so much abound; and that what was said under the preceding steps may with considerable probability be applied to them, at least in some degree.

Prop. 110. 8. The provision that was made for conducting the Jewish people by divine oracles, given (though we know not particularly how) by the *Urim* and *Thummim*, and by prophets raised up in almost every age, makes it highly probable, that those who were providentially employed in transmitting to us the history of that nation, would have some peculiar assistance, greater than could *(cæt. par.)* be expected in other writers.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 9. So far as we are able to judge, from surveying the particular characters and circumstances of the authors of the various books of the Old Testament, in comparison with the genius of that dispensation under which they lived and wrote, there is reason to believe they were under a superintendent inspiration.

10. Though it be extremely difficult to conclude from any excellency in the style and manner of writing, that a book is divinely inspired, and especially that there is that superintendency over the whole of it,—yet we must acknowledge, that in the books of the Old Testament, as well as the New, there are such important truths, such sublime figures, and such majestic and pathetic expressions, as can hardly be equalled any where else, and which appear so worthy of God, as to give some degree of additional weight to the other arguments brought upon this head.—Compare *Prop.* 110. *gr.* 3.

Nichols's Conf. vol. iv. p. 139. *Boyle's Style of Script.* p. 7.

11. The ancient Jews had a tradition among them, that these books were written by divine inspiration; and therefore received them as *canonical*, *i. e.* as a rule of faith and manners.

Joseph. contr. App. lib. i. p. 1036, *Col.* 1333, *Huds.*

12. The grand argument of all is, that Christ and his apostles were so far from accusing the Jews of superstition, in the regard which they paid to the writings of the Old Testament, (vid. *gr.* 11.) or from charging the Scribes and Pharisees (whom Christ, on all proper occasions, censured so freely) with having introduced into the sacred volume mere human compositions, that, on the contrary, they not only recommend the diligent and constant perusal of them, as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness, but speak of them as divine oracles, and as written by an extraordinary influence of the Divine Spirit upon the minds of the authors. Vid. John v. 39; x. 35. Mark xii. 24. Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 17, 18; xxi. 42; xxii. 29, 31, 43; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 54, 56. Luke i. 67, 69, 70; x. 26, 27. xxi. 31. Acts iv. 25; xvii. 11; xviii. 24—28. Rom. iii. 2; xv. 4; xvi. 26. Gal. iii. 8. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. James ii. 8; iv. 5. 1 Pet. i. 10—12. 2 Pet. i. 19—21. To this list may be added many other places, on the whole more than five hundred, in which the sacred writers of the New Testament quote and argue from those of the Old, in such a manner as they would not surely have done, if they had apprehended there were room to allege that it contained at least a mixture of what was spurious and of no authority. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 183.

9, 10, 11, 12. 13. There is reason to believe that books written by such persons, under such a dispensation, and in such a manner as has been described, received with such unanimous regard by the Jewish church, and recommended in such a manner by Christ and his apostles, were written by a superintendent inspiration. *Q. E. D.*

Jenk. on Chris. vol. i. p. 226. part ii. c. ii. p. 228. *Fam. Expos.* vol. iii. *App.* No. iii. *Posth.* p. 61.

COROLLARY 1.

Comparing this with *Prop.* 116. it appears that the *whole Scripture* received by the reformed is divinely inspired.

COROLLARY 2.

Hence it will further follow, that in all our inquiries into the nature and will of God, and the genius and design of the Christian dispensation, the Scripture will be our surest rule, and no merely human composures are to be received with an equal degree of regard.

Chillingw. Safe Way. Middl. Intr. Disc. p. 67.

COROLLARY 3.

From comparing the demonstration of this proposition with that given *Prop.* 116. it will appear that the proof we have of the inspiration of the New Testament is, on the whole, considerably greater than that which we have of the inspiration of the Old, if from thence we subtract that grand argument which arises from the testimony of Christ and his apostles; but setting that aside, there will be the strongest evidence of the inspiration of those books on which the proof of Christianity most immediately depends; since that generally follows from the truth of the *historical* part of those books, and of their genuineness, which was before confirmed; for the prophets assert it as a matter of fact, that God gave them such and such revelations.

COROLLARY 4.

From *gr.* 12. we may certainly infer, that for any to pretend to exalt the character of Christ and of Paul as divine teachers, while at the same time they pour contempt upon the Jewish institutions as a foolish and impious forgery, is a notorious contradiction and absurdity; and common sense will

teach us, that such authors, whatever they may profess, do equally intend the subversion of the Old Testament and the New.

Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. v. *ad fin.* *Lel. ag. Marg* vol. i. c. iii. p. 80.

SCHOLIUM 1.

We do readily allow, that there was a great variety in the *degrees* of inspiration in the different books and passages of the Old Testament: there is great reason to believe that the *prophecies* were written by an inspiration of *suggestion*; for many of them were so circumstantial, and the particular expressions of them so important, that we cannot imagine that God revealed only to his servants some general thoughts, *v. g.* that Babylon should be destroyed, Jerusalem rebuilt, and the like, leaving them to enlarge upon it as they thought fit, for then they might easily have fallen into certain expressions, which, not being exactly answered, might have brought a reflection upon the truth of the whole. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that in these suggestions, God might sometimes, and in less critical and important circumstances, leave them to follow their own way of conception and expression, to such a degree as might occasion such a variety of style as critics justly remark in different books. *Five Let. on Insp.* p. 13.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The arguments used *Prop.* 116. *Schol.* 1. to prove the inspiration of the New Testament to be a plenary superintendency, may in a great measure be applied to the Old, as we before observed: and it is hard to imagine that Christ and his apostles would have spoken of it in such high strains, if there had been a mixture of error and falsehood with the great and important truths it contained: nevertheless, there are so many arguments brought against the plenary inspiration of these books, from the supposed absurdities, immoralities, and contradictions, to be found in them, that it will be necessary to give some of them a more particular consideration in the following propositions.

LECTURE CXLIV

PROPOSITION CXIX.

To enumerate and vindicate some of the principal of those passages in the Old Testament, which are objected against as *absurd*.

SOLUTION.

SECT. 1. Many absurdities are charged upon the Mosaic account of the Creation, *v. g.* the making light before the sun; the dividing the water above and below the firmament by an imaginary solid partition, and the making the sun, moon, and stars, in one day; not here to mention the objection which is brought against the descent of the whole human race from one pair.

To this Dr. Thomas Burnet answers, in his Theory, by cutting the knot; and maintains that this account was merely a *fable*, though according to his own representation of it, a fable too absurd for a wise man, and much more for an inspired person, to have thrown together; and Dr. Middleton, in his controversy with the bishop of London, has declared himself strongly in the same sentiments: but there can surely be no reason to believe this, since Moses never tells us where his fable *ends*, and where his true history *begins*,—especially considering that Christ and his apostles refer to the story of the Creation, and that of the Fall, (which is inseparably connected with it, and treated by Burnet as a tale equally absurd,) not as an *allegory*, but a *true history*, 2 Cor. iv. 6; xi. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 45. Matt. xix. 4, 5. 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. and it is very harsh to suppose that God would so solemnly from Mount Sinai make the circumstance of a fable the foundation of the fourth commandment.—Ex. xx. 11. Heb. iv. 3, 4.

Burn. Archæol. l. ii. c. viii. ix. p. 403.

Dr. David Jennings, in a very ingenious discourse on this subject, supposes that the sun and the stars were created before the earth, and that the production of light, mentioned as the work of the first day, was only giving the earth its diurnal motion, expressed, as he understands it, by "the Spirit of God moving," not "upon the face of the water," but "moving the face of the deep," i. *e.* the surface of the unenlightened hemisphere; which might be called *deep*, either as remote from the sun, or in a more fluid state than that hemisphere which might have been turned towards it, and thereby dried and crusted (which last, by the way, seems ill to agree with Gen. i. 9, 10. Psal. civ. 6—9). He supposes that on the fourth day God gave the earth its annual motion, and thereby appointed those luminaries of Heaven, before created and before visible, to be for signs and seasons, and days and years; so that as the sun did, in another manner than before, rule over the day, making it unequal in different seasons, &c. the moon did with correspondent variety rule over the night and the stars. but it may be objected to the scheme,

1. That such an interpretation offers great violence to several phrases in the history, *v. g.* God's moving on the face of the water, his saying "Let there be light," his making two lights, and setting them in the firmament of Heaven, and appointing them to have dominion over the day, and over the night. To which we may add, that the moon could not with any tolerable propriety be said *to begin* to have dominion over the stars, when that little alter-

ation was made in her course, which the annual motion added to the diurnal occasions.

2. That the diurnal and annual motion of the earth being each, if not both together, impressed in a moment, would hardly be described as each of them the work of a distinct day, as the latter especially must be on this hypothesis; for it would be very unreasonable to suppose that, when it is said *God made the sun and moon*, that clause should import the creation and formation of the moon, and only the alteration of the earth's motion with regard to the sun;—not to insist upon it,

3. That if the laws of gravity took place, a projectile force must always have been necessary, to prevent the centripetal from prevailing so far as to draw the earth into the sun.

Jenn. Append. to Astron.

Mr. Whiston supposes the Mosaic story to have been a kind of journal of what would have appeared to the eye of a spectator upon the surface of the earth; and interprets the making of the sun, moon, and stars, to have been only the gradual clearing of the atmosphere of that comet, of which, according to his hypothesis, the earth was made; this defecation beginning the first day, produced some light, and increasing to the fourth, the sun, moon, and stars, then became visible and distinct; but this seems to be connected with that very absurd part of his theory, which supposes that the earth had at first no diurnal motion, but that it was impressed by the comet which occasioned the Deluge; otherwise we can never imagine that the sun, moon, and stars, bodies of such different degrees of magnitude and light, would have become visible the same natural day.

Whiston's Theory, pras. p. 3. *Edw. Everett* No. i. p. 1.

It seems, therefore, that the most probable hypothesis is that of Dr. Nichols, who supposes, first, a chaotic state of the whole solar system; then, a separation of the grosser particles of matter, of which the primary and secondary planets were to consist; whence it would follow, that the luminous particles before blended and entangled with these, would acquire a greater lustre, which he supposes the creation of light in its most imperfect state. By the *waters above the firmament*, he understands the atmospheres or seas of the planets, though they may mean no more than vapours floating in the expanse of the air, as the original word רקיע signifies. On the fourth day, he supposes the luminous particles, before more equally dispersed, were gathered in *one central body*; whereby the little planet near us became, by the reflection of its rays, *a moon*: which, being the most considerable of the nocturnal luminaries, might, by a beautiful figure, be said to rule over the night and the stars, allowing it very probable that the fixed stars, and planetary systems which may possibly attend them, were created before. It may possibly be objected against this hypothesis, that at this rate there would be no distinction between day and night before the fourth day; since this imperfect luminous matter, equally diffused on every side, would give the whole terrestrial globe a kind of equable and universal twilight. It would, therefore, be an improvement upon the hypothesis, to suppose that the luminous particles were from the first gradually turning towards the centre, though not united in it; the consequence of which would be, that the hemisphere nearest the centre would then be lighter than the other. Bishop Patrick thinks a luminous mass distinct from the sun, and nearer the earth, was first formed, which, on the fourth day, was, perhaps, with some alteration to us unknown, changed into the sun.

Patrick on Gen. i. 3.

The chief objection against this scheme is, that it does not naturally offer itself to the mind from reading the Mosaic account; but it may be replied, It is sufficient, if by any interpretation it can be shown that it might possibly have been true: and it would appear an argument of great wisdom in Moses, or indeed of extraordinary divine direction, for him, prepossessed as he probably was, in favour of the vulgar hypothesis, to give such an account of the creation as should neither directly assert it, nor yet so much shock it, as to throw the minds of ignorant and unlearned men into speculations, which might have been detrimental to his grand design, of confirming them in the belief of one Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth, and so preserving them from idolatry.

On the whole, supposing that none of these hypotheses should be satisfactory, the objection pretends to no more than this, That God did not observe such a proportion as we should have expected in some of his works; but it ill becomes us to limit him in such a circumstance, especially as we know not certainly what great ends either in the natural or moral world might be answered by a deviation from it.

Nicholls's Conf. vol. i. p. 20. ed. 12mo. *Lamy Harm.* vol. i. p. 36. fol. *Tayl. Sch. of Div.* ch. iv. or *Wats. Col. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 18. *Clayt. Vind. of O. Test.* part i. p. 4. *Jacks. Chron. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 1.*

* The Mosaic account of the Creation is particularly considered and vindicated, in Moses and Bonaparte, in Dialogues on the Mosaic of the Right Hon. ••••••• author of Dialogues on the Dead, by Samuel Eve, M.D. This work was published in 1797. In the first volume of the collection of tracts entitled Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, published by the Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Sciences, are Critical Notes on the first nineteen Verses of the first Chapter of Genesis, p. 5—61. These notes are understood to have been written by the celebrated Irish philosopher, Richard Kirwan, Esq.

LECTURE CXLV.

Sect. II. It is said that the Mosaic account of the *Fall* is absurd: not only as it represents God as suspending the happiness of mankind on so trifling a circumstance as his eating the fruit, but also supposes a brute to speak, and yet Eve to have taken no alarm at it, and out of regard to what such a creature said, to have violated the divine command, and to have been guilty of a weakness which in the perfection of human nature, of which few of her descendants in the present degeneracy of it would be capable.

Ans. As for the offence in question, it may be shown elsewhere, that how light soever it might be in itself, there were circumstances of most enormous aggravation attending it, which might abundantly justify God in the punishment inflicted on account of it. To the latter part of the objection, which is indeed the chief difficulty, some (with Abarbinel) have replied, that the serpent only spoke by his actions, eating the fruit in the presence of Eve, and seemed rather refreshed and animated than injured by it; but we wave this: nor do we choose to say, with Mr. Joseph Mede, that she took the serpent for a wise though fallen angel, who might know more of the nature of this new-formed world than she, and could have no principle of enmity against her, to lead him to wish her destruction. Neither do we say, with Dr. Thomas Burnet, at Boyle's Lectures, (after Tennison,) that she took him for some attendant spirit, sent from God to revoke the prohibition before given. It seems more probable that the fact might be, as it is beautifully represented by Milton, *i. e.* that the serpent, being actuated by an evil spirit, might pretend to have gained reason and speech by that fruit, and thence might infer, with some plausible appearance of argument, that if it was capable of producing so wonderful a change in *him*, it might exalt the *human* nature even to *divinity*. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 3. and Rev. xx. 2.

> *Burnet Archæol.* lib. ii. c. vii. p. 375. *Mede's Works*, p. 23. *Burn. at B. Lect.* vol. ii. p. 10. *Milt. Par. Lost.* lib. ix. *Rev. exam. with Cand.* vol. i. p. 10. *Berry Six Lect.* vol. i. p. 202. vol. i. p. 176. vol. 2. *Barr. Ess. on Dis. Disp. App.* Diss. i. *Hunt's Ess.* p. 304. *Un. Hist.* vol. i. p. 59. 8vo. p. 122. *Tennis. on Idol.* p. 361. *Harris on Mus.* vol. ii. p. 104. *Watts' Serm. Lessons*, vol. i. p. 12. *Skeat on Prophe.* Diss. ii. App. *Middlet. Exam. of Skeat on Prophe. Lond. Sch. of Div.* ch. xi. *or Watts. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 49. *L. Clare's Diss.* No. iv. *Christ. Sch.* vol. iv. No. iii.

Sect. III. Others have objected against the sentence pronounced on Eve and the serpent as absurd—seeing the woman could not but with pain bring forth, nor the serpent go otherwise than upon his breast, nor indeed be justly punished at all for a crime of which he was only the innocent instrument.

As to what relates to the woman's bringing forth, we answer,

1. That it is not absolutely impossible that some alteration might be made in the structure of the womb on that occasion; perhaps a small alteration might suffice, considering with how little difficulty most women in hot countries go through their labour; or,

2. God, knowing that the Fall would happen, might constitute things in such a manner as to suit a fallen state, when the event was not to take place till after sin was committed; which seems to have been the case as to other instances, *v. g.* the damage done by poisonous and voracious animals, thunder, lightning, and tempests, &c.

As to that part of the objection which relates to the serpent, it is probable his form might be considerably changed, perhaps from that of a winged animal; and as this would be the means of confirming the faith of the penitents in their expected victory over the great enemy, (of which it was indeed a kind of miraculous attestation,) and of mortifying that evil spirit whose organ the serpent had been, there could be no injustice in this, nor indeed any cruelty; for beasts being designed for the use of men, we may as well grant that one species might be debased to a lower kind of life for his instruction and comfort, as that such multitudes of individuals should be daily sacrificed to his support.

> *Mede's Works*, p. 229. *Rev. exam. with Cand.* vol. i. p. 69, &c. *Jenk. Chris.* vol. ii. p. 246. *Whiston's Life*, p. 230. *Addon.* p. 651. *Abp. King's Serm.* p. 71.

Sect. IV. It is objected, That the *Deluge* could not possibly have been *universal*, because no stock of water could be found sufficient to overflow the earth to such a degree as Moses has represented.

To this we choose not to answer by denying the universality of the Deluge, as many have done, the words of Moses being so express, Gen. vi. 12, 13, 17, vii. 4, 19—23. and indeed if it were not universal, there would have been no need of an ark to preserve a race of men and beasts. To which we may add, that the animal and vegetable *fossils*, dug up in all parts of the world, are demonstrative proofs that the Deluge extended over the whole earth, and there is little room to doubt but the number of mankind, considering their longevity, would by that time have been abundantly sufficient to people the earth. We therefore rather reply by observing, That though the quantity of water which could naturally be furnished by *rain* should indeed be allowed insufficient for that purpose, yet it is

possible, according to Dr. Burnet's scheme, that part of the outward crusts of the earth might be broken, and fall into the *abyss*, which might by that means be thrown up and dashed abroad to such a degree as to overthrow the highest mountains, which he thinks then first raised. Others, as Mr. Whiston, suppose that a *comet* (which his antagonist, Dr. Keil, was compelled by his arguments to acknowledge, did probably pass near the earth at that time) might overwhelm it by its atmosphere. Others endeavour to account for it, by supposing the centre of gravity was changed, or that the waters of the abyss were in an extraordinary manner drawn up on this occasion; but if none of these hypotheses be admitted, there is no absurdity in supposing a *miraculous* production of water, or a miraculous removal of it; since it is most certain, if the History of the Old Testament be credible, (as we have before proved,) miracles have been often wrought upon much less important occasions.

Burn. Theory, vol. i. lib. i. c. ii. iii. p. 10. c. vi. p. 89. *Whiston's Theory*, p. 376. *Keil's Exam. of Burn. and Whist.* p. 28—31, &c. *Saurin's Diss.* vol. i. p. 95. *Rev. Exam.* vi. i. Diss. x. p. 171, &c. *Nich. Conf.* vol. ii. p. 184, &c. vol. i. p. 254. *Edw. Exercit.* No. ii. p. 26, &c. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 95. fol. 8vo, p. 201. *Ray's Three Disc.* No. ii. *Clayt. Vind. Scrip.* part ii. lib. xii. p. 150. *Sence. Quæst. Nat.* iii. 27. *Har. on Man*, vol. ii. p. 106. *Le Clerc's Diss.* No. v.*

LECTURE CXLVI.

Sect. V. It is further objected, That an *ark* of such dimensions as Noah's could not hold creatures of all species, and the stock of provision for a whole year, which yet the history asserts. To this it is answered,

1. That we do not certainly know the exact length of the *cubit* by which the dimensions of the ark are computed; but,

2. Many critics have shown that, on the common computation of the cubit, the ark being 150 yards long, 251 broad, and 15 high, was at least about as large as one of our first rate men of war; nay, some say, as large as five of them; and they have endeavoured to prove, if it were so, that it might contain both the animals and their provision. The controversy is too large and nice to be represented here; but may be seen in a good abstract in

Wells's Geog. O. Test. vol. i. p. 69. *Saur. Diss.* vol. i. p. 86. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 103. *Calm. Dict.* vol. i. p. 100. &c. *Hallet on Heb.* x. 7. *Wilkin's Real Char.* part ii. c. v. § 6, 7 p. 162. *Stilling. Orig. Sac.* lib. iii. c. iv. § 7. p. 551. *Chamb. Dict. under* ARK. *Har. on Man*, vol. ii. p. 106.

Sect. VI. Seeing the *rainbow* appears a phenomenon necessarily resulting from the nature of light, and the form and situation of drops of falling rain, it is represented as an absurdity, that Moses speaks of it as created after the flood, and as the sign of a covenant then made.

To this Dr. Burnet answers, by supposing that no rain fell before the flood; Mr. Whiston, by saying there were no such heavy showers as are requisite to the producing this phenomenon; but it seems more reasonable to believe, that God took a phenomenon before appearing, and appropriated it to a particular use, directing that it should be considered as *his* bow; and that when men saw it, they should recollect and rejoice in the assurance which he had given them, that the flood should never be repeated; and accordingly, the *original* of Gen. ix. 14. may be rendered "And when I bring a cloud over the earth, *and the bow is seen* in the cloud, I will also remember my covenant."

Nichols's Conf. vol. i. p. 79, &c. 8vo ed. *Burn. Theory*, lib. ii. c. v. p. 319. *Whist. Theory*, lib. iii. c. iii. p. 258; ib. lib. iv. c. iii. p. 371. *Saur. Diss.* lib. i. p. 126. *Wotton's Script. Vind.* part i. p. 36. *Martin's Gram.* p. 214. edit. 2.

Sect. VII. It is further objected, That as the Mosaic History supposes all mankind descended from Noah, it will be impossible to account for the original of the *blacks*, admitting Noah and his wife to have been *white*.

Mr. Whiston answers this, by supposing that Ham was turned black upon his father's curse, as, according to him, Cain had before been; but if Gen. vi. 2. is to be understood (as it probably is) of the descendants of Seth and the daughters of Cain, that supposition is directly contrary to Moses's account:—at best it is a very precarious conjecture; and it seems more probable that the heat of the climate should have produced that change, or strength of imagination in some pregnant woman, which might as well blacken the whole skin of a child, for any thing we can perceive, as stain some particular part of its body, in the manner which it is plain in fact it often does.

Sludgr. Gramm. p. 51. *Wheat. on Collins' Medley's Trans. of Kolb. Hist. of Hottent.* p. 55. *Nich. Conf.* vol. i. p. 137. ed. 12mo. p. 79, &c. *Univ. Hist.* vol. i. p. 47. fol.; 99. 8vo. *Hartley on Man*, vol. ii. p. 100.† *Browne's Vulg. Err.* book 6. c. 10, 11.

* In the fifty-seventh volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society, No. 10. is a paper by Edward King, Esq. entitled An Attempt to account for the Universal Deluge.

† Lord Kames, in his ingenious discourse on the Supposed Antiquity of the Human Race, has contended for the original diversity of mankind

Sect. VIII. The peopling of America, and several islands, in which mischievous terrestrial animals are found, though many of the more useful were entirely wanting when they were first discovered by the Europeans, is urged as a strong argument against the *universality* of the *Deluge*, and therefore the credibility of the Mosaic History.

The supposition of a north-east passage for men might possibly be allowed; but how those wild creatures should be brought thither, which men could not transport, and which cannot subsist in a cold country, must remain a difficulty which we cannot undertake to solve, if the universality of the Deluge be allowed; for that there should have been so vast a tract of land in or near the Torrid Zone, as must have been necessary for the joining Africa to America, and that it is now sunk in the sea, is a mere hypothesis, which has not the least foundation in history; but it may deserve inquiry, how far it is an apparent fact that voracious animals, not amphibious, and living only in hot countries, are to be found in America. It is certain that some, to whose constitution a hot climate is most suited, will live in a colder, and sometimes propagate there; and that there are great degrees of heat in the summer months to a great height of northern latitude; which, when we consider the velocity with which these creatures run, may account for their travelling to some places where there might be a passage by water, or perhaps a passage by land, though since fallen into the sea, the straits of which are well known to be very narrow, where North America comes nearest to Tartary.

> *Witsii Misc. Sac.* vol. ii. Ex. 13. § 26; Ex. 14. § 45. *Nich. Conf.* vol. i. p. 133, ed. 12mo. p. 87. *Whist. Theory*, p. 409. *Univ. Hist.* p. 104. vol. i. fol.; vol. xx. p. 137, &c. 8vo. *Still. Orig. Sac.* lib. iii. c. iv. § 4. p. 541. *Har. on Man*, vol. ii. p. 110.*

Sect. IX. The *confusion of languages* at the *tower of Babel* is represented by some as unnecessary, seeing a diversity of tongues must naturally have arisen in process of time; but it may be answered,

1. That so vast a diversity as there is in the names of the most common things, can hardly be accounted for in a natural way, there not being the least trace of any one common original language.

2. If it might *in time* naturally have happened, it cannot thence be inferred that a miracle, whereby it should *instantaneously* have been brought about at first, was therefore unworthy of God, and consequently incredible.

Others have replied, That all that passed at the building at Babel, referred to in this objection, was only a division of *counsels* and *sentiments*, or some discord in *affection*, represented by dividing their *speech*, whereas they were before unanimous; or at most, some disorder miraculously produced in their organs of speech, in consequence of which, their language would be unintelligible to each other: both which opinions the learned Vitringa has illustrated at large, though there does not seem any great necessity for having recourse to them.

> *Still. Orig. Sac.* lib. iii. c. v. § 2—4. *Shuckf. Connec.* vol. i. p. 124. *Rev. exam. with Cand.* vol. ii. p. 105. *Vitrin. Obs.* lib. i. Diss. i. c. ix. *Hartley*, ib. p. 111. *Ward's Diss.* No. ii. *Le Clerc's Diss.* No. vi. *Rep. of Let.* vol. iii. p. 119.

Sect. X. Others have objected the impossibility of raising such an empire as the Assyrian is said to have been, within 150 years after Noah.

To this Sir Isaac Newton answers, by fixing the date of the Assyrian empire 1300 years later; and Dr. Winder has taken great pains to prove that the account we have of the series of the ancient Assyrian monarchs is very precarious. Sir Isaac's arguments are largely considered by Dr. Shuckford; who, by the way, supposes Noah to have been the *Fohi* of the Chinese, in which Mr. Whiston also agrees with him. Others make the distance between Noah and Nimrod to have been much greater than our copies of the Bible represent it. It is, perhaps, on the whole, most reasonable to conclude, that though the Assyrian empire was very ancient, yet the extraordinary accounts which Herodotus and Ctesias give us of the greatness of it under Ninus and Semiramis are fictitious, as many things related by those authors undoubtedly are.

> *Newt. Chron.* c. iii. *Whist. Rem. on Newt. Shuckf. Conf.* vol. ii. *Pref.* p. 23. *Still. Orig. Sac.* lib. iii. c. iv. § 9. *Camb. Orig. Gent. Wind. Hist. Known.* vol. ii. p. 66. *Whist. Theory*, p. 137. *Jacks. Chron. Waterl. Script. vind.* part. ii. p. 40.†

Sect. XI. It is urged, That such a *number* of inhabitants, as are said to have dwelt in the land of Canaan, could not possibly have been supported there, viz. a million and a half of fighting men, (2 Sam. xxiv. 19. 1 Chron. xxi. 5.) nor such a stock

In opposition to this assertion, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, an American gentleman, has published An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species, so much to controversy to show, that all the varieties observable in that respect may easily be accounted for, by attending to the causes just now mentioned, and his efforts proposed in Hunter, by obscurity of remote ages, expense and several late, by dint, excessive and dissonance of living. I cannot but think will probably hereafter be thought on their common support by Mr. Marsden, who, we understand, is making it the subject of particular inquiry.

* Whoever shall inquire what manner America was originally peopled, has been the object of much discussion. A comprehensive view of the subject may be seen in the first volume of Dr. Robertson's History of America. The Historical and Geographical Dissertation of M. Pauw concerning the New World, do not appear to be highly considered. Recent navigations and discoveries have added further confirmation to the opinion, that America was peopled, at least in part, from the most eastern extremities of Asia and the north west of Europe.

† The accounts of Herodotus, though he was probably much misinformed, are by no means so absurd and extravagant as those of Ctesias.

of *cattle* be furnished out there, as are said to have been sacrificed, especially by Solomon at the dedication of the temple (*viz.* an hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and twenty-two thousand oxen, 1 Kings viii. 63). To this it may be answered, That, if there be no mistake in the numbers, it is to be ascribed to the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil; to which it may be added, that as some neighbouring princes, who had been subdued by David, paid their tribute in *cattle*, they might furnish out the extraordinary sacrifice referred to. See 2 Kings iii. 4.

Maund. Trav. p. 65. *Del. Life of Dav. in Loc. Univ. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 386.

Sect. XII. It is urged as an impossibility, That David, notwithstanding all his conquests, should be able to amass those vast treasures mentioned in 1 Chron. xxix. 4, 7. which are computed by Le Clerc at *eight hundred millions* sterling: a sum, which is thought to exceed all the gold of all the princes upon earth put together. To this it is answered,

1. That the value of *gold* not being then so great with respect to *silver* as it now is, their wealth is not to be estimated merely by the quantity of gold which they had; and, on this principle, Mr. Whiston reduces the gold to less than one-tenth of the common computation, supposing its value to silver as their specific gravities, *i. e.* 19 : 11, whereas the former makes it 16 : 1.

2. There is reason to believe that a great quantity of the gold then used has long ago been destroyed and lost; yet it must be owned that more gold has probably been dug out of the mines in America in one year, than can wear out in many ages: but it is not unlikely that much may have been buried, and so have perished.

3. That there is a great deal of uncertainty in the principles on which the *worth* of those talents is computed; as appears from the different accounts which learned men give of it; and possibly the word *talent* may sometimes be put for *wedge*.

4. That, as *numeral letters* were used in the oldest copies of the Hebrew Bible, it is not to be wondered if transcribers might sometimes mistake them; and it is to be remembered, that this thought may also be applied to some certain *contradictions*, where numbers are in question.

As to that part of the objection which relates to the impossibility of expending those treasures upon the building described, we are to observe, That none can tell the curiosity of the carved work, the height of wages which artists would demand of so rich a prince as Solomon for so celebrated a building, nor the number of gems which might be used in some of the ornaments, either of vestments or other furniture. 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 8. 2 Chron. iii. 6. See *Delany's Life of David.*

Daddr. Fam. Exp. vol. ii. s. 105. p. 402. *Le Clerc Eccl. Hist. Prol.* p. 39. *Whist. Dem. of Temp.* c. xiii. *Hom. Iliad*, l. xxiii. ver. 750. *Chand. Life of David.*

Sect. XIII. As to the objections that are brought against some accounts of *miracles*, *v. g.* that of Balaam's ass speaking, the exploits of Samson, &c. it is to be remembered in general, that we are very imperfect judges what it is fit for God to do; and various things said by good commentators on these heads are well worthy of being considered. Samson's foxes, of which there might be many in that country, might be caught by *others*, or brought to him by *miracle*; not to say that a little alteration in the *points* of the word שׁוּעָלִים will justify our translating it *sheaves*, instead of *foxes*.

Mem. of Lit. vol. i. p. 43. *Patr. on Loc. Jort. Diss.* p. 186. *Browne's Rel. Med.* p. 17.

LECTURE CXLVII.

PROPOSITION CXX.

To inquire into and vindicate several passages of the Old Testament, which are charged by the enemies of revelation as *immoralities*.

SOLUTION.

Sect. I. The command of God to Abraham to sacrifice his own son, is said to have been no other than a command to commit *murder* in its most horrid form and circumstances. Dr. Warburton has taken a singular method of removing this difficulty, by maintaining that the command was merely symbolical, or an information by *action*, instead of words, of the great sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, given at the earnest request of Abraham, who longed impatiently *to see Christ's day*. John viii. 56. Compare Heb. xi. 19.

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. ii. p. 589; ed. 1. part ii. p. 374.

On the common interpretation it may be replied, That God, as the great Lord of life, may, whenever he pleases, command one creature to be the instrument of death to another, though it must be owned, that where such circumstances as these attended the trial, there would have been great reason for Abraham to have suspected this pretended revelation to have been a delusion, had he not been before fully and certainly acquainted with the method of God's converse with him, to such a degree as to exclude all possibility of mistake. Vid. *Prop.* 95. *Schol.* 2.

Chubb's Prec. Ques. Tril. Works, vol. ii. Ser. ii. p. 12. *Rec. exam. with Cand.* vol. ii. *Diss.* vii. viii. *Bayle's Dict.* vol. i. p. 95. *Hal*

let's Inun. of Mor. Phil. p. 14. *Leland ag. Morg.* vol. i. c. x. p. 155. *Chand. ag. Morg.* part i. § 7. *Grove's Works*, vol. ii. § 6.

Sect. II. The Israelites borrowing by the divine command vessels of the Egyptians, upon their retreat from Egypt, which they never intended to restore, is objected as an evident act of injustice. To this it has been replied,

1. That the word שאל which we render *borrow*, may be rendered *demand*, and so their vessels might be required as an equivalent for the labours they had so many years given to the Egyptians;—or,

2. Had they intended only at first to *borrow* them, the pursuit of the Egyptians afterwards, with an intent to destroy them, would have given them a right to have plundered their country as well as their dead bodies, and therefore much more evidently to retain those goods of theirs already in their hands.

Burn. at B. Lect. vol. ii. p. 190. *Till. Works*, vol. ii. p. 24. *Pharmr.* vol. ii. p. 420. *Hoph. Works*, p. 195. *Jenn. Jew. Ant.* vol. ii. p. 10. *Waterl. Script. Vind.* part ii. p. 9. *Shuckf. Con.* vol. ii. p. 440. *Exod.* iii. 21, 22; xi. 2, 3; xii. 36. *Patr. in Loc.*

Sect. III. The dreadful execution to be done on the Canaanites by the divine command, is urged as an act of the greatest cruelty and injustice. Some have endeavoured to extenuate this, by arguing from Deut. xx. 10. compared with Josh. xi. 19, 20. that conditions of peace were to be offered them: but waving that, in consideration of Deut. vii. 1, 2, 5, 16. and many other parallel texts, (compare Deut. xx. 15, 16. Josh. ix. 6, 7, 24.) it may with greater certainty be replied,

1. That God, as their offended Creator, had a right to their forfeited lives, and therefore might as well destroy them and their posterity by the sword of the Israelites, as by famine, pestilence, fire, and brimstone, rained from heaven, or any other calamity appearing to come more immediately from himself.

2. The wickedness of this people, especially as aggravated by the destruction of Sodom, was such as made the execution done upon them a useful lesson to neighbouring nations. Compare Gen. xv. 16. Lev. xviii. 20—28. Jude 4—7. Wisd. xii. 3—7.

3. That the miracles wrought in favour of the Israelites, not only at their coming out of Egypt, but their entrance on Canaan, proved that they were indeed commissioned as God's executioners, and consequently that their conduct was not to be a model for conquerors in ordinary cases.

4. That there was a peculiar propriety in destroying those sinners by the sword of Israel, as that would tend to impress the Israelites more strongly with an abhorrence of the idolatry and other vices of those nations, and consequently subserve that design of keeping them a distinct people adhering to the worship of the true God, which was so gracious to mankind in general, as well as to them in particular. After all, had any among the Canaanites surrendered themselves at discretion to the God of Israel, a new case would have arisen not expressly provided for in the law, in which it is probable God, upon being consulted by *Urim* and *Thummim*, would have spared the lives of such penitents, and either have incorporated them with the Israelites by circumcision, or have ordered them a settlement in some neighbouring country, as the family of Rahab seems to have had.

Shuckf. Conn. vol. iii. p. 432. *Lel ag. Morg.* vol. i. p. 136. *Ditto ag. Tind.* vol. i. p. 429. *Lamm. Heb. Grav.* p. 220. *Sykes' Conn. c.* 13. p. 330.

Sect. IV. The punishing *children* for the sins of their *parents* has been charged as injustice. It is replied,

1. That generally speaking, this was forbidden to the Israelites, (Deut. xxiv. 16. Ezek. xviii. 20.) excepting the singular instance mentioned in Deut. xiii. 12, &c.

2. That the general threatening in the second commandment may only amount to a declaration, that idolatry should be punished with judgments which should affect succeeding generations, as captivity and war would certainly do.

3. That in particular instances, such as Josh. vii. 24, 25. Numb. xvi. 27—33. and the destruction of the houses of the wicked kings by a divine sentence, the terrible executions customary in the East abated something of the horror of it; and where innocent children were concerned, God, as the Lord of all, might make them recompence in a future state: and when we consider him under this character, and remember that we are to judge of his conduct towards any creatures, not by what befalls them in this life, any more than by what befalls them in any particular day or place of their abode, the greatest part of the objection will vanish; which seems to be grounded on this obvious mistake, that it is not righteous in *God* to do what it would be unjust for *man* to do in the like circumstances, forgetting the infinite difference of the relation.

4. It is so plain in fact, that children often suffer in their constitutions, and sometimes lose their lives even in their infancy, by means of the sins of parents committed before such children were born, that nothing can vindicate the apparent conduct of Providence in such instances, but such principles as will likewise vindicate the passages of Scripture here under consideration.

Dr. Warburton has a peculiar notion on this subject, that while the Israelites were under an

equal Providence, and the state of future rewards and punishments was little known, this was a kind of additional sanction to their laws, which was afterwards reversed when a future state came more in view, in the declining days of their commonwealth: but, perhaps, it might rather be intended as an oblique insinuation of this state, since certainly, with relation to individuals, it was an *unequal* providence. Compare Matt. xxiii. 29—36.

Warb. Div. Leg. vol. ii. p. 162: part ii. p. 147. *Grove's Posth. Works*, vol. iv. p. 198.

Sect. V. God's *hardening* the heart of Pharaoh, in the circumstances in which he threatens to do it, (Exod. vii. 3—5.) is further charged as inconsistent with his holiness and justice.

Ans. 1. By God's *hardening the heart* of any person, we are to understand his exercising such providential dispensations, as he knew in fact would be perverted by that person as an occasion of more obstinate sin, God at the same time not interposing to prevent this effect (compare Exod. vii. 22; viii. 15, 32.); and thus prophets are said to harden mens' hearts, by taking measures which, though in their own nature adapted to subdue them, would in fact (as God knew and revealed to them) be attended with their greater hardness.—Isa. vi. 9, 10.

2. That the foreknowledge of such an event, supposing as we do that it was not rendered *necessary*, would nevertheless leave a righteous God at liberty to take such measures as the circumstances of the case would otherwise admit; for if we did not allow this, it would be equally impossible to vindicate the main course of God's conduct towards his creatures, especially the universality of his providence, and the certainty of his prescience.

3. If we should say with M. Saurin and others, That this hardening the heart was the *immediate operation* of God upon the mind, in consequence of which the obstinacy of Pharaoh became unavoidable, and which was itself a punishment of former sin, it must be allowed that it is not inconsistent with justice to inflict such a punishment, which is indeed no other than a terrible kind of lunacy; but whether a man in that state could be said to be *punished* for that *hardness*, remains a further question. Compare Exod. ix. 12, x. 20, 27, xi. 10. with vii. 22; viii. 15, 32.

Limb. Theol. l. vi. c. ix. *Fleetw. on Mir.* p. 64. *Turret. Loc.* vi. *Quæst.* i. 5. 7. 14, 15. *Saur. Diss.* vol. ii. p. 116. *Sherl. on Proph.* p. 189.

Sect. VI. The law which appointed idolatry to be punished with *death*, is objected to as an invincible bar to all freedom of inquiry, and a foundation for persecution, which has already been proved to be contrary to the light of nature. Deut. xiii. *pass.* Vid. *Prop.* 77.

Ans. 1. Though we readily allow that persecution is an evil in a state of nature, yet perhaps it may be asserted, that as the Divine Being knows what degree of evidence will attend any doctrine of religion in any given circumstances of time, place, and person, which we cannot judge of, *He* may pass sentence upon idolaters and other profane persons, where *human* laws cannot safely do it.

2. As God was the temporal King of Israel, and even their kings were only to be considered as his viceroys, idolatry was looked upon in the nature of *high treason*; and therefore justly punishable as by their *statute* laws. *Jenn. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 172.

3. It is also to be remembered, That God gave the land of Canaan, with many temporal emoluments, to the Israelites, as a reward of their obedience to him; it was therefore equitable that, in case of disobedience to some of his most important laws, they should be subject to some peculiar temporal penalties, and even to death itself, if this act were committed during their abode in that land.

4. Nevertheless, it is to be observed, that the Israelites are never commissioned to make war upon their neighbours, or exercise any violence towards any of them, in order to *compel* them to worship the God of Israel, nor to force them to it ever after they were conquered (Deut. xx. 10.); nor are they empowered thus forcibly to attempt to recover any native Israelite who should revolt to idolatry, and go to settle in a Gentile country.

5. As God had placed the Israelites under such an extraordinary equal providence, that the prosperity of the country should depend upon their adherence to the true God, in opposition to idols, his commanding them to put to death the beginner of a revolt, was a wise precaution: and such a one as, in these circumstances, even human prudence might have suggested to subordinate governors, if such governors had been permitted to make capital laws.

6. When we consider how great a good it would have been to the *whole world* that Israel should have continued to maintain the knowledge and worship of the true God, in opposition to all idolatry, it will further appear, that a constitution deterring them from idolatry would be merciful to *the world* in general, as well as their nation, in proportion to the degree in which it was severe to any particular offenders.

* *Burnet's Pref. to Lact.* p. 18. *Locke on Tol.*

* [illegible]

Let. i. p. 31. *Works*, vol. iv. p. 247. *Doddr. Serm. on Pers.* p. 29. *Lel. on Mary*, vol. ii. p. 129. *Jenk. on Christ.* vol. i. p. 59.

LECTURE CXLVIII.

SECT. VII. The execution of the descendants of Saul, (2 Sam. xxi. 2.) is further urged as an instance of human sacrifice, entirely inconsistent with the light of nature.

To this we answer, not by saying that the persons here condemned to death might be personally concerned in the cruelties before exercised on the Gibeonites, which some of them, on account of their infant age, must have been entirely incapable of; neither do we ascribe it to the supposed injustice of keeping possession of the Gibeonitish cities, on which Dr. Delany lays so much stress on the slender evidence of 1 Sam. xxii. 7. compare 1 Sam. viii. 14. and Josh. xviii. 25. neither do we say that it was merely an act of cruelty in the Gibeonites, and unacceptable to God, since it is said "he was on this entreated for the land."—It must rather be answered,

1. By saying, on the principles laid down in § 4. (to which indeed this instance does properly belong,) that we cannot reasonably affirm universally, That it is unjust in God, or unbecoming any of his perfections, to inflict temporal calamities, or even death itself, on one person, for the crimes of another, to whom the person suffering was nearly related; nor can the death of those descendants of Saul be called *a human sacrifice*, on any other principle than that on which the execution of malefactors with their families in any instance may be so called.

2. That the circumstances of the case here were such, as might well justify some extraordinary severity, and make it on the whole a blessing to the public; as it would be a useful lesson to all succeeding princes, to take care how they violated any of the laws of the theocracy, when they saw the breach of one of those treaties made at the time of their first settlement, so terribly avenged on the house of their first king; and it would probably be a means of awakening the people to some sense of religion, when they saw such a remarkable hand of God interposing, in the death of those persons, to remove the famine which had lain so long upon them.

3. That sufficient provision was made by the express law of God, to prevent their bringing such extraordinary instances as this into a precedent to direct their own conduct by in common cases. Vid. § 4. *gr.* 1. compare 2 Kings xiv. 5, 6.

Clar. in Loc. Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xxi. § 14. *Chaud. Life Dav.* vol. ii. b. iv. c. 7. *prax.* p. 378.

SECT. VIII. Some have thought that *human sacrifices* in general were authorized by Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. on which they suppose that Jephthah proceeded in the sacrifice of his daughter. Concerning this precept, (which common sense would teach us requires some limitation,) we observe,

1. It is evident that God expressly forbade the Israelites to sacrifice their children to him:—Deut. xii. 30, 31. Jer. vii. 31. compare Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2. Psal. cvi. 37, 38. Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.

2. There is no reason to believe that he allowed even of the sacrifice of *slaves*: (1.) Because no peculiar rites are prescribed for that dreadful sacrifice, though a distinction is made in the burnt-offerings of herds, flocks, and birds. Lev. i. *pass.* (2.) Because none of the Canaanites (accursed as they were) are directed to be reserved for the altar, not even kings taken alive, though they might have seemed the noblest sacrifice. (3.) Because the sacrifice of *a man* is proverbially used to express what is as abominable to God as that of a dog or swine. Isa. lxvi. 3. (4.) Because a Jewish priest would have been rendered *unclean*, and incapable of attending the sanctuary, by the touch of a *dead body*, though it had fallen down in the temple by chance,—much less can we imagine he would have been allowed to cut it to pieces and lay it on the altar.

3. Nothing that was *devoted* could be sacrificed at all; so that this text cannot in any clause of it refer to sacrifice. 1 Sam. xv. 3. 15—22.

4. This, therefore, refers to a vow to destroy the inhabitants of any place which they made war against, and was intended to make them cautious in laying themselves under such obligations. Compare Numb. xxi. 1—3. Deut. xxv. 17—19. Josh. vi. 17, 18; viii. 24—26. See also Judg. xxi. 5. 1 Sam. xiv. 24, 39.

5. The words therefore should be rendered, "No devoted thing which a man shall *have devoted* to the Lord," and the *field* of his possession may be equivalent to the *land* of it, and may include any such place as Jericho, which, by the way, might be a lasting and very useful memorial, and (as it were) a sepulchral monument of the pride and strength of Canaan.—Comp. 1 Chr. i. 46. Psal. lxxviii. 12. Neh. xiii. 10. in all which places, *field* is put for land or country.

6. On this interpretation, it would by a strong consequence imply, that none had a power of pardoning those that were condemned to death by God's law; which may be more expressly intimated Lev. xxvii. 29. compare Exod. xxii. 20. Deut. xxi. 22, 23. xiii. 12—17.

7. The law forbidding murder in general, was equivalent to a prohibition devoting any human creature to death, unless in some extraordinary cases by public authority. As for the invidious turn which is given to the law of *redeeming* the first-born, as if it implied they must otherwise have been *sacrificed*, since, says Morgan, there is no reason to believe they would have been redeemed from a *benefit*,— it may be questioned whether the eldest sons of families would have chosen the life of Levites; but waving this, the insinuation may be sufficiently answered, by observing, that God having asserted a peculiar right to the *first-born*, and yet, by the choice of the Levites, having precluded other families from serving at his altar; had not such a pecuniary acknowledgment been made, he might probably have punished the neglect of the parents, by taking away their children in their infancy. Exod. xiii. 2, 13. Compare Exod. iv. 24—26.

Morg. Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 128. *Immor. of Mor. Phil.* p. 11. *Lel. ag. Tind.* vol. ii. p. 468. *Fam. Exp. on Luke* ii. 23. Note *b*. *Seld. de Jure*, lib. iv. c. vi. vii. § 9—11. *Hal. on Heb.* xi. 32. p. 46. *Festus et Paul. in Verb.* sacer et sacrat. *leg. Finlay ap. Mon. Rev.* vol. xliv. p. 463. *Jenn. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 68.

What Dr. Sykes has advanced in favour of his interpretation, which supposes the meaning of Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. to be, "Whatever shall be consecrated to the service of God, shall die in its devoted state," has not altered my judgment of this text; because it seems that the חרם always implies the *death* of any living creature, whether man or beast, to which it is applied; and consequently though מות ימות signifies *dying* in the general, yet in this connexion it must signify (as it is generally allowed to do) being *put to death*; nor does it any where signify dying in the state in which a person is, but always implies death by *a divine sentence*, if not by a *violent stroke*. *Sykes's Connec.* c. xiii. *pras.* p. 310.

Sect. IX. The putting a *lying spirit* into the mouth of Ahab's prophets, is a circumstance often mentioned upon this occasion, 1 Kings xxii. 19. but the plain answer to this is, That Micaiah's speech was merely a *parable*; and the intent of it, according to the eastern manner, was only to declare that God had permitted the prophets of Baal to impose upon Ahab by a falsehood.

Patrick in Loc.

Sect. X. It is said that the whole book of Job turns upon a *wrong moral*, and represents God as overbearing Job by superior power, rather than convincing him by rational arguments. Vid. Job xxxviii—xli.

Ans. 1. In these chapters not merely the *power*, but also the *wisdom*, of God is insisted upon, as illustrated in the works of creation and providence; and nothing could have been more proper to convince Job how unfit it was for him to censure any of the Divine proceedings, as in the transport of his grief he had sometimes done.

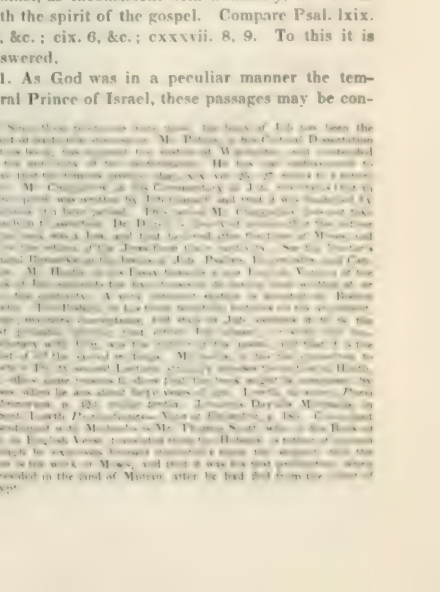
2. That the awful display here made of the Divine Power and Sovereign Majesty, was by no means improper; because it would tend to convince Job of his fault, in treating this tremendous Being with so little reverence in some of his late discourses; and also as it would, by consequence, prove the equity of God's administration, since it could be no profit to him that he should oppress; and would give Job such a sense of the malignity of every sin, even those imperfections which were consistent with the general integrity and piety of his own temper, as might teach him to accept all his severest afflictions as no more than what he had justly deserved; and accordingly we find it had this effect on the mind of that good man. Job xl. 3—5; xlii. 1—6.

If Dr. Warburton's ingenious hypothesis concerning the book of Job be admitted, that it was written by Ezra, upon the plan of a true ancient story, with some particular view to the state of the Jews in his time, the difficulty concerning the morality of it, and the foundation of this solution, will continue much the same.

Warb. div. Leg. vol. ii. p. 483. *Grey's Let. to Warb.* p. 121.*

Sect. XI. That *inveteracy of spirit* which is sometimes expressed in the Psalms, is excepted against, as inconsistent with humanity, as well as with the spirit of the gospel. Compare Psal. lxix. 22, &c.; cix. 6, &c.; cxxxvii. 8, 9. To this it is answered,

1. As God was in a peculiar manner the temporal Prince of Israel, these passages may be con-



sidered in the same view as petitions offered to a prince by an oppressed subject, demanding sentence against such criminals as were the proper objects of his public justice; and the natural manner in which the sense of injury and hope of redress are expressed, is no inconsiderable internal argument of the credibility of Scripture,—as Dr. Jackson, according to his usual penetration, has well observed.

2. That in many of these places, the genius of the Hebrew language will allow us to suppose that the *imperative* is put for the *future*; so that they might be understood as *prophetic denunciations* rather than imprecations. Compare Acts i. 18—20.

3. That if we suppose the prophets to have received a revelation from God, that such and such calamities should be inflicted on the obstinate enemies of God and his people, it may be defended as a temper of mind no way inconsistent with virtue, thus to pray for their destruction, and thereby to express an acquiescence in the justice and wisdom of the divine proceedings; and accordingly, celestial spirits are represented by that benevolent apostle John, as addressing such prayers to God. Rev. vi. 9—11; xvi. 5—7; xviii 4—7. Or if none of these, which have all their weight, should be admitted as applicable to every case, it might be said,

4. That we have nowhere asserted the degree of inspiration to be such in all the poetical composures of Scripture, as to leave no room for small irregular workings of human passions in the hearts of those good men by whom the Scriptures were written. Jer. xx. 14—18.

Jenk. Chris. vol. ii. c. xix. p. 335. *Lowth on Insp.* p. 216. *Jacks. Cred.* lib. i. part ii. § 1. c. iii. p. 36. *ap. Op.* vol. i. p. 26. *Five Let. on Insp.* p. 23, &c.

Sect. XII. It is said that in the whole book of Esther there is no mention of God, though the interposition of Providence there be so remarkable; which seems very little agreeable to the genius of the rest of the Old Testament.

To this some would answer, by allowing it doubtful whether this is to be included among the canonical books; and, indeed, there is hardly any more dubious. Others conclude that the additional chapters preserved in the Greek translation were originally a part of the book, which, if they are, there can be no room at all for the objection here proposed; but we choose rather to say, there is a plain acknowledgment of divine providence supposed in Esther's *fasting*, which no doubt was attended with prayer to the God of Israel. The custom of speaking, at the time and in the place where this was written, might be different from that used at the time and place in which the other penmen of Scripture wrote; and, on the whole, the omission of the name of God, where there were so many proper occasions to introduce it, would rather be an argument against its being written by *suggestion*, which there is no apparent reason to assert, than against the *truth* of the history; nevertheless, it is proper here to observe, how great an argument it is in favour of the credibility of all the other books, that such a continued regard to God runs through the whole of them; and there is in this respect so great a resemblance and harmony between all the writings of both Testaments, as is well worthy of our admiration.

Jacks. Works, lib. i. c. v. vol. i. p. 19. *Jenk. Chris.* vol. ii. c. iv. p. 90. *Five Let. on Insp.* p. 164. *Lowth's Insp.* p. 200. *Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 251. *Lee's Diss. on Esdras*, p. 24.

LECTURE CXLIX.

Sect. XIII. It is objected, That the Song of Solomon seems to be an amorous poem, and that there are some passages in it which shock common decency. To this we must answer, either by supposing (as some have done) that it is no part of the canon of Scripture, or otherwise, by interpreting it in an allegorical sense, as referring to the Messiah and his church (compare Psal. xlv. *passim.* with Heb. i. 8, 9). If it be said, that on this interpretation there are some indecent figures in it, as there are in Ezek. xvi. xxiii. and in many other places, it is answered, That the simplicity of the eastern nations made some of these phrases much less shocking to them than the delicacy, or perhaps the licentiousness, of these western parts make them to modest people among us.

Patr. on Cant. Pref. pass. Whist. Appen. to Ess. for rest. Can. of O. Test. Saur. Serm. vol. iii. p. 157. *Carpzov. Def.* c. iv. p. 195. *Obs. St. Revem.* vol. iv. p. 126. *Wanth. Rev.* vol. v. p. 492. *Jortin's Rem. on Eccl. Hist.* vol. i. p. 236.*

Sect. XIV. Tindal has endeavoured to show that there are many passages in the Old Testament

* [illegible]

which give us a mean and unworthy idea of God: but the particular passages themselves, and the vindication of them, may be seen in the following references; by which it appears that some of these objections are built upon our translation; others of them upon the want of due candour, which would lead a reader of common understanding to expound those expressions figuratively, and to allow for the idiom of the age and country in which they were written; especially considering how plainly those perfections of God are asserted in other passages of this book, which evidently tend to give us the sublimest ideas of him, and lay in an easy and certain remedy against whatever danger could be supposed to arise from the passages excepted against. Compare *Prop.* 125.

Tind. on Chris. c. xiii. *Fost. ag. Tind.* p. 215. *Lel. ag. Tind.* vol. ii. c. xi. *Clarke's Posth. Ser.* vol. i. p. 160. *Guardian*, vol. ii. No. 88.

SECT. XV. As for the objections which Tindal and Morgan have urged against the *character* of some of the Old Testament *saints*, it is answered,

1. That some of those facts are expressly condemned by the historians themselves.

2. That others of them are barely mentioned, without any intimation that they are to be commended or imitated.

3. That God might judge it necessary that the faults of the great founders and heroes of the Jewish nation should be thus circumstantially recorded, that the Jews might be humbled, who were so very ready to grow vain and insolent, and despise all the rest of mankind on account of their relation to them:—for this reason also, among others, it may be that Melchizedek and Job, and some other good men, not of the Jewish church, are mentioned with so much honour.

4. That notwithstanding this, if the characters of many, who were most faulty, be fairly examined, they will be found, on the whole, to have been excellent men; as may particularly be evinced in that of David, whose blemishes were so remarkably great.—See Delany's Life of that prince.

Chandler's Life of David, vol. i. book 2. c. 25; *and Recapit.* vol. ii. p. 482, *ad fin.*

5. That the mention of their imperfections and miscarriages, in such a manner as they are mentioned, is so far from being any argument against those books, that it is a very convincing proof of the integrity of the persons who wrote them, and a glorious internal proof of the truth of the Old Testament, which must be transmitted with it to all succeeding ages.

SECT. XVI. It is objected, That 1 Kings xv. 5. seems to intimate that the character of David was blameless, except in the business of Uriah; whereas his behaviour in the court of Achish, and on many other occasions, was grossly criminal. It is answered, Not equally so as in the case of Uriah; not to say that there is not the same evidence for the inspiration of the History of Kings, as most of the other books of Scripture; nor to insist on the possibility of some intimation received from God, which might have made it entirely lawful for David to have fought against Israel under Achish.

Nearly akin to this is the objection that Jephthah and Samson, though both men of bad moral characters, are reckoned among *the believing worthies* in the eleventh of Hebrews. Some have replied to this, by attempting to defend their characters; but perhaps it is sufficient to say, that Heb. xi. 39. only relates to such *a faith* as might be found in those who were not truly virtuous and religious; which, though it might entitle them to some degree of praise for the heroic actions they performed by means of it, could have no efficacy to secure their future and everlasting happiness. Compare 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Matt. vii. 22, 23.

Ab. Tayl. ag. Watts, p. 96. *Owen on Heb.* c. xi. *ad fin.* *Saur. Ser.* vol. ix. p. 47. *Jen. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 56. *Hallet on Heb.* xi. 36. *Chand. Life of Dav.* vol. i. b. ii. c. 7.

PROPOSITION CXXI.

To enumerate some of the chief *contradictions* charged on the Scripture, and to give some general solution of them.

PART I.

The enumeration of the chief passages which appear contradictory.

Besides the difference about the *genealogies*, *passover*, and *resurrection* of Christ, the following passages are urged, in which the Old and New Testament disagree with each other; or the Old disagrees with itself.

1. The Old and New Testament disagree,

Matt. xxvii. 9. comp. with		Zech. xi. 12, 13
Mark ii. 26	—	1 Sam. xxi. 1
Luke iv. 25	—	1 Kings xviii. 1
Acts vii. 4	—	Gen xi. 26, 32; xii. 4
Acts vii. 14	—	Gen. xlvi. 27
Acts vii. 16	—	Gen. xxxiii. 18—20
Gen. xxiii. 9	—	Gen. xlix. 29—32
Joshua xxiv. 32	—	Gen. xxv. 9, 10
Acts vii. 43	—	Amos v. 27
Acts xiii. 20, 21 / 2 Sam. v. 4	—	1 Kings vi. 1
1 Cor. x. 6	—	Numb. xxv. 9
Heb. ix. 4	—	1 Kings viii. 9

2. In the Old Testament the following passages are objected to as contradictory:—

Ezra ii.	—	Neh. vii. 6, &c.
Deut. x. 8	—	Numb. xx. 23—29. xxxiii. 30, 37, 38
Exod. vii. 19, 22	—	Exod. vii. 22

Isa. vii. 4, 8. comp. with		2 Kings xvii. 1, &c.
2 Sam. viii. 13 1 Chr. xviii. 12	—	Psalm lx. *title*
1 Sam. xviii. 19	—	1 Sam. xxv. 44
2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9	—	2 Sam. iii. 15
2 Chron. xv. 19	—	1 Kings xv. 16, 33
2 Chron. xvi. 1	—	1 Kings xvi. 8
1 Kings xxii. 43	—	2 Chron. xvii. 6
2 Sam. xxiv. 24	—	1 Chron. xxi. 25
1 Kings vii. 26	—	2 Chron. iv. 5
2 Sam. xxiv. 13	—	1 Chron. xxi. 12
1 Kings ix. *ult.*	—	2 Chron. viii. *ult.*
2 Kings i. 17	—	2 Kings viii. 16, 17
1 Kings iv. 26	—	2 Chron. ix. 25
1 Chron. xviii. 4	—	2 Sam. viii. 4
2 Sam. x. 18	—	1 Chron. xix. 18
1 Chron. xxi. 5	—	2 Sam. xxiv. 9
1 Chron. xi. 11	—	2 Sam. xxiii. 8
2 Chron. xxxvi 9	—	2 Kings xxiv. 8
2 Chron. xxii. 2	—	2 Chron. xxi. 20 2 Kings viii. 26
2 Chron. xiii. 2 1 Kings xv. 2	—	2 Chron. xi. 20—22
2 Chron. xxii. 29	—	2 Kings ix. 27
2 Chron. xxxviii. 20, 21		2 Kings xvi. 7—9

PART II.

To give the general solution of them.

It may be observed concerning these difficulties in general, that most of them, though not all, relate to *numbers*, *names*, *measures*, *dates*, and *genealogies*; for the particular solution, see the commentators on each of the places. We shall only offer the following remarks, by way of general solution.

1. Many of the *seeming* contradictions may be reconciled to each other, without doing any violence to either of the texts opposed, as the commentators have often shown; the reigns of kings being supposed by different writers to begin from different eras, as they reigned alone or in partnership, and the same person being often called by different names, and different men by the same name.

Sir Isaac Newton's Chron. pass. præs. p. 265.

2. In other cases, it cannot greatly affect the religious use and end of the Old Testament, to acknowledge that some *numeral* mistakes at least may have crept into our present copies, though perhaps they were not to be found in the first original.

3. It is also to be remembered, that by far the greatest part of these difficulties, indeed nearly three-fourths of them, arise from the book of Chronicles, the author of which is unknown, and the evidence of its inspiration less than that of most other books in the Old Testament. See *Prop.* 118. *Grad.* 7.

Rudyley's Dis. vol. i p. 39. *Burn. Four Diss.* p. 60. *Turret.* vol. i. Loc. ii. Q. v.*

* Many of these difficulties, especially those which regard the books of Chronicles, are considered in Dr. Kennicott's two volumes on the State of the printed Text of the Old Testament. It may not be amiss here to observe, that independently of the professed commentators, Corrections of Remarks on detached Passages of Scripture are particularly needful; and the acuteness of Clerk, with his usual sagacity, has been recommended by Lord Bacon. The Essay on a New Translation, Baldwin's Notes, Pilkington's Remarks on several Passages of Scripture, Kennicott's Remarks on Select Passages of the Old Testament, Bowyer's Critical Conjectures and Observations on the New Testament, Hussey's Observations on divers Passages of Scripture, and other works of a very useful cast on this head. Young on the use of particular words as dependent on the customs of the Theologic Dispensations, and on the Connection of one part of Scripture with another, and Locke's Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles, are of the same kind. The first great principles of the sacred writings, Hooker, Bull, Barrow, Stillingfleet, Kidder, Wilkins, Mede, and others, with peculiar call to the attention of the student in divinity

LECTURE CL.

PROPOSITION CXXII.

To state and answer those objections against the authority of the Old Testament, which have been taken from the fundamental branches of the whole Jewish Economy, and are not referred to *Prop.* 120.

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. It is urged, That an institution so overloaded with *ceremonies* as the Mosaic was, could not be of divine original. It is answered,

1. That the genius and circumstances of that people required a more pompous form of worship than God would otherwise have probably chosen, especially considering their education in the land of Egypt, where such worship was so much practised; and thus far Spencer seems right, in the general design of his celebrated piece on the Laws of the Hebrews, though he has carried the matter too far in his particular illustrations.

2. Some of the ceremonies prescribed appear not even to *us* useless and unaccountable, but, on the contrary, answered some valuable ends; *v. g.* they might serve to guard them against the idolatries and superstitions of their neighbours, many of which these rites are so far from imitating, as some learned men have maintained, that (as Witsius has largely and excellently proved in his Ægyptiaca) they directly oppose them; a subject which Dr. Young has well illustrated in his late discourse on idolatry, c. iv. v. They might also bring to their frequent recollection illustrious deliverances wrought out for them, or some important hints of morality, which they represented in such an emblematical way as suited their apprehensions: and, above all, they were fitted to make way for the dispensation of the Messiah; partly by the affecting and perpetual display which was therein made of the divine majesty, purity, and justice, (which not only tended in general to promote morality, but might especially show how proper and needful it was that such mean, polluted, and guilty creatures should approach him by a *mediator*,) and partly by the representations of many gospel doctrines, especially relating to the incarnation, atonement, and intercession of Christ, as is shown at large by the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews.

3. It is exceedingly probable that, if we had a more particular account of the usages of the neighbouring nations, we might find out the reasonableness of many of those institutions, which at present appear to us unaccountable; and what we know of the wisdom of some of them, should engage us to judge favourably of others.

4. Those precepts for which we can give no other reason at all, did at least serve to keep the Jews a distinct people from all others, which was very proper, in order to preserve the worship of the true God among them, and has since been the foundation of all that evidence which arises to Christianity from their continuing so distinct, even in the midst of all their dispersions. Compare *Prop.* 113. Cor. 1, 2.

5. They were expressly assured again and again, in the plainest words, that the principal stress was not to be laid on ceremonial observances, but that the great duties of morality were of much higher esteem in the sight of God. Vid. 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Micah vi. 6—8. Prov. xxi. 3; xv. 8. Hos. vi. 6. Jer. vii. 4—15. Isa. lxvi. 1—3; lviii. 3—10; i. 11—17. Amos v. 21—24. Psal. l. 8—23. To which we may also add the distinction made between the ceremonial and the moral law, by writing the chief branches of the latter on tables of stone, after they had been pronounced by an audible voice from Heaven; not now to insist upon such precepts in the Pentateuch as Deut. vi. 4, 5. and the many parallel passages which must be sufficient to show that no ceremonial observances could in themselves alone render them acceptable to God. Compare Deut. xxvii. 14—26.

Leland ag. Tind. vol. i. p. 63. *Limb. Collat. Resp.* iii. Q. iv. c. ii. 5. p. 315. *Wits. Ægyp. pass. Watts's Misc.* No. lix. p. 251; *Works*, vol. iv. p. 556. *Lel. ag. Morg.* c. ii. p. 45. *Lowman on Heb. Ritual. Bulk. Economy of the Gospel*, book i. c. 2.

Sect. II. To *circumcision* it is objected, That it was cutting off a part of the human body, which, had it been superfluous, would not have been given to man in the most perfect state; and that it was an operation attended with some danger. It is answered,

1. That it is plain, in fact, it is not attended with danger; and allowing there might be pain in it, yet that mortification was by no means comparable to the advantages accruing to the Jews from that covenant of which it was the sign.

2. That very mortification might be intended to remind them of their obligations to mortify their irregular desires and sensual affections. Vid. Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4. Acts vii. 51. Rom. ii. 25—29.

3. Such an indelible mark thus impressed might be a proper token of that covenant, in which succeeding generations were interested, and which contained so great and important a reference to a person who was in future ages to be born, and who was the foundation of the blessings promised to Abraham in that covenant of which circumcision was the sign. Not to insist upon what Drake has observed, as to the *natural* benefits which might attend this rite, by which, as he supposes, it was recommended to some neighbouring nations.

Rev. exam. with Candour, vol. ii. Diss. v. p. 162. *Chris. as old as Creat.* p. 90. *Letter to Waterl.* p. 33. *Answ. of Circum. pass. præs.* p. 10. *Leland ag. Tindal*, vol. i. p. 65. *Drake's Anat.* vol. i. lib. i. c. xx. p. 127. *D. Forb. Thoughts on Rel.* p. 84. *and Let.* p. 33.

Sect. III. It is also objected, That *sacrifices* are in themselves an absurd and cruel rite, and therefore could not be made a part of a divine institution.

We acknowledge, that without a divine revelation, there could be no reason to believe they would be pleasing to God; but as it is plain they were of very early date, (Gen. iii. 21; iv. 4.) and prevailed almost universally, it is more probable they were of divine original. (Compare Heb. xi. 4.) They might be intended to promote humiliation, by impressing the mind of the offerer with a conviction that death was due to sin; and, as a more perfect atonement was gradually revealed, might lead on their thoughts to it. And when the death of beasts might serve this end, it must certainly be lawful to kill them for sacrifice, as well as for food.—As to their being so much multiplied under the Mosaic law, it is to be remembered that a great part of them went to the priest, and in many cases to the offerer; not to insist on the opinion of some, that the burnt-offerings were not entirely consumed. In some instances (*v. g.* in the case of sin-offerings) sacrifices were to be considered as a kind of fine imposed on the offender; and in many others, as a tribute paid to God, the great Proprietor and King of the country, for the support of the offices of his household: and there is, from the genius of that religion, great reason to believe that a peculiar blessing attended those who presented them, and gave them a more abundant increase in proportion to their pious zeal. Compare Prov. iii. 9, 10. Mal. iii. 8—11. Ezek. xliv. 30.

Blount's Orac. of Reason. Burnet at B. Lee. vol. ii. p. 75. *Tind. of Chris.* p. 78. *Pers. Sat.* ii. ver. 44. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 95. *Whit. on Heb.* ix. 19. *Taylor on Deism*, p. 219. *Rev. exam.* vol. i. Diss. viii. *Lel. ag. Tind.* vol. i. p. 66. *Phil. to Hydas.* Let. v. *Jen. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 26. *Law's Theory*, p. 45.

Sect. IV. It has further been objected, That the whole mystery of the Jewish religion was a con-

trivance to enslave the people to the power of priests, and exhaust their revenues to maintain that order. Compare Deut. xvii. 8—13. To this it is answered,

1. That the tribe of Levi had a right to the twelfth part of the land in common with their brethren; so that the allotment of the cities mentioned Numb. xxxv. 1—8. cannot be fairly brought into the objection, unless it could be proved that, in consequence of this allotment, the Levites possessed above one twelfth of it.

2. That the *tithes, first-fruits, &c.* appointed to be paid them, were in part a just equivalent for their attendance upon the service of the sanctuary, as well as their care in instructing the people out of the law; and in the payment of this, an extraordinary blessing might be expected, as above.

3. That there was also a *magistracy* among the people, to which the priests and Levites were in the same subjection as the rest of the Israelites: nor does there appear to be any such exemption in their favour, as many laws established in Popish countries have since given to their clergy.

4. That it can never be proved the *Urim* and *Thummim* was an oracle of such a kind, as to put it in the power of the high priest to produce any new model of government, or in particular instances to rescind such acts of the state as were disagreeable to him, or to grant protection to whom he pleased; for all this goes upon a very precarious supposition, that the high priest might consult the oracle whenever he pleased, and on whatever question he thought fit; and that the way of answering in that oracle was by the supposed inspiration of the person wearing the breastplate. And indeed, when we consider in how awful a manner God punished Nadab, Abihu, Korah and his associates, Uzza, and many more, who presumed to adulterate or profane his institutions, one can never imagine he would have permitted a high priest in this greatest solemnity to deliver a false oracle in his name, without immediately inflicting some remarkable judgment upon him: and it seems, that had he pretended to be inspired in any case, about which he was not consulted, he would have been liable to be tried, as another person falsely pretending to prophecy.

Morg. Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 141. *Lel. of Morg.* vol. i. p. 218. *Lowm. Civ. Gov. of Heb.* c. xi. p. 191. *Jen. Jew. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 290; *præs.* p. 299. *Ward's Diss.* No. v.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may not be improper to observe here, that the very foundation of Dr. Morgan's strange calculation to justify his assertion that the Jewish priests had *twenty shillings* in the *pound*, or that the people paid the value of *a rack rent* for their pretended freeholds, depends upon several falsities, especially this, that he takes it for granted without any proof, that every male was obliged to pay half a shekel at each of the yearly feasts, which he computes at 1,200,000l. per annum.

Morg. ibid. vol. ii. p. 136. 142.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Much in the same strain is that instance of priest-craft which Morgan pretends to find in the institution of the *water of jealousy*, which he represents as a contrivance to make it safe for women to commit adultery with the priests, and none but them. Numb. v. 11—31.

In answer to this impious thought, it is sufficient to observe, that nothing can be more unjust than to charge so stupid and villanous a contrivance upon so wise and virtuous a person as Moses appears to have been, who, in the system of his laws, has made adultery punishable with death, no less in a priest than any other person. Considering the consequences attending this trial, in case either of innocence or of guilt, it would, on Morgan's supposition, be a very ill-judged contrivance: and all that was said under the preceding section, concerning the danger of a priest's solemnly profaning the name of God to any fraudulent purpose, would here have the most apparent weight: besides that, the person appointed to preside on this occasion was to be the chief of the *priests then in waiting*, which would render such a conspiracy as Morgan supposes utterly impracticable.

SECT. V. It has further been objected, That the Mosaic law does not lay a sufficient stress upon the duties of *sobriety*, *temperance*, and *chastity*, nor make a proper provision against the contrary vices:—but to this it is replied,

1. As to *riot* and *drunkenness*, it is spoken of with great abhorrence, Deut. xxix. 19. and in order to discourage it, there was a special law, which empowered parents even to put their children to death by a legal process, if they continued incurably addicted to it; which was such a provision against the first advances to debaucheries of this kind, as is quite unequalled in the laws of any other nation, Deut. xxi. 18—21. To which it may be added, that such provision was made for punishing injurious acts which drunkenness often produces, as would consequently have a further tendency to restrain it.

2. As to *lewdness*, it was provided against, (1.) By a general law, forbidding whoredom in any instance, Deut. xxiii. 17. and making it dreadfully capital in the case of *a priest's daughter*, Lev. xxi. 9. (2.) *Adultery* was punished with death, Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. which extended not only to women whose marriage had been consummated, but to those who were only *betrothed*, Deut. xxii. 23. and considering how young their girls were generally betrothed, this would have a great effect. (3.)

Rapes were also punished with death, Deut. xxii. 25–27. (4.) If a person debauched a young woman *not betrothed*, he was obliged to marry her, how much soever his inferior in rank; and could never on any account divorce her, Deut. xxii. 28, 29. (5.) A person lying with a female *slave* was fined in the loss of her ransom, Deut. xxi. 14. (6.) Universally, if a woman pretended to be a virgin and was not, whether she had been debauched before or after her espousals, she was liable to be put to death: which was such a guard upon the chastity of all young women, as was of a very singular and elsewhere unequalled nature, Deut. xxii. 20, 21. (7.) The law by which *bastards* in all their generations were excluded from *the congregation of the Lord*, *i. e.* probably from the liberty of worshipping among his people in the place where God peculiarly dwelt, (Deut. xxiii. 2.) was a brand of infamy which strongly expressed God's abhorrence of a lewd commerce between the sexes; and considering the genius and temper of the Jewish nation, must have a great tendency to suppress this practice; so that, upon the whole, sufficient care was taken in the Mosaic institution to convince the Jews that lewdness and other kinds of intemperance were highly displeasing to God: and there seems to be no remaining objection, but that *future punishments* were not denounced against them; and that is only one branch of the objection taken from the omission of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, which will be considered elsewhere.

Selden de Diis Syr. Synt. i. c. 5. *Synt.* ii. c. 2, 4, 6. *with Boyer's Additamenta.*

LECTURE CLI.

PROPOSITION CXXIII.

To propose and answer some other objections against the inspiration of Scripture, taken from the general manner in which the books of it are written, and some other considerations not mentioned above.

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. Some have objected the *inelegancy* of the *style*, especially in several parts of it: to which we answer,

1. That the inspiration of a book is not to be judged of by its *style*, but by its *fitness* to answer its *end*, which was something of greater importance than to teach men to write in an elegant and polite manner.

2. The different genius of different nations is to be considered in judging of the style of books;—and it would be absurd to condemn every thing in eastern and ancient books, which does not suit the western or modern taste.

3. Many of the supposed solecisms in Scripture may be vindicated by parallel passages in the most authentic writers, as Mr. Blackwall, and many others mentioned in the Preface to the Family Expositor, have largely shown.

4. There are multitudes of passages, not only in the original, but even in the most literal translations, which have been accounted inimitably beautiful, pathetic, and sublime, by the most judicious critics; and those in which there seems to be least of artful turn and antithesis, do so much the more suit the majesty and importance of the occasion.

Burn. 4 Disc. p. 66. *Boyle's Style of Scrip. Nich. Conf.* vol. iv. p. 120. vol. ii. p. 69. *Spect.* vol. vi. No. 405. *Fam. Expos.* vol. i. Pref. p. 5. *Warb. Doctr. of Gr.* p. 52. *Brown on Charac.* Ess. iii.*

SECT. II. Others have objected the want of a regular *method* both in the Old Testament and the New, which makes it a work of great labour to collect the several doctrines and arguments therein dispersed, and to place them in an orderly and systematical view. To this, besides what is said above, it may be answered,

1. That it now gives agreeable employment to those that study the Scriptures, thus to range and collect the several passages relating to the same subject, which are dispersed up and down.

2. That considering the Scripture as a book intended for the common people, who are by no means exact judges of method, this is no important deficiency: and indeed, on the contrary, the way of teaching men doctrines and truths in such loose discourses, especially as illustrated by historical facts, is much more fit for popular use, rendering these things more easy to be understood and retained.

3. By this means, such a foundation is laid for arguing the truth of a revelation from the genuineness of those books which contain it, as could not otherwise have taken place; as will abundantly appear by consulting the demonstration of *Prop.* 108.

Nich. Conf. vol. iv. p. 157. vol. ii. p. 90. *Owen of Underst. Scrip.* c. iv. p. 163. *Boyle on Script.* p. 53. *Macku. Truth of Gosp. Hist.* p. 78.

SECT. III. The *obscurity* of many passages both in the Old and New Testament, and the number of controversies amongst Christians to which they have given rise, is also objected, as a further argument against their divine authority. To this it is answered,

* Though Mr. Blackwall may have failed in his attempts to prove the exact purity and elegance of the style of the New Testament, he has undoubtedly succeeded in establishing the genuine beauty of many particular passages. With respect to the Old Testament, a knowledge of the poetical parts of the Old Testament might be informed in what is derived from "Lowth's Prælections on the Poetry of the Hebrews," from Michaelis's Notes upon that work.

1. That it was, humanly speaking, impossible that there should not be many obscure passages in such very ancient writings, the languages of which have been so long dead. And indeed in any language it might be expected that there would be some obscurity, when some of the subjects were so sublime, and in many respects so incomprehensible, and when others related to future events, which were to come to pass so long after the prediction, the clearness of which might have frustrated their accomplishment.

2. That this obscurity generally lies upon those things which are of the least importance; and where it relates to momentous doctrines, as sometimes it must be acknowledged it does, it affects what is circumstantial rather than essential in them.

3. That the difficulties in many passages in Scripture afford an agreeable exercise to pious and learned men, by whose labours many of them have been happily cleared up.

4. That in other instances, they may tend to promote our humility, as the secrets in nature and Providence do.

5. They leave room for the exercise of mutual candour among those of different opinions, which, were it generally to prevail, would do a greater honour to Christianity than the most exact agreement in principle, or uniformity in worship, could possibly do.

Nich. Conf. vol. iv. p. 167. vol. ii. p. 96. *Limb. Theol.* l. i. c. vi. § 7, 8. *Lel. ag. Tind.* vol. ii. c. vii. *Atterb. Posth. Serm.* vol. i. Serm. ix. p. 235. *Fost. ag. Tind.* c. iii. p. 191. *Rym. Rev. Rel.* p. 247. *Bourn's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 89. *Boling. on Hist.* p. 178. *Boyle on Scrip.* p. 30. *Mackn. Truth of Gosp. Hist.* p. 138. *Watts's Orthod. and Charity.* Ess. viii.

Sect. IV. Another set of objections is drawn from the *trivial* nature of some passages, which are to be found especially in the Old Testament, and sometimes in the New. The vast *abundance of words* used to relate some facts, (*v. g.* Gen. v. Numb. viii. Exod. xxv—xxviii; xxxv—xxxix.) while others perhaps of much greater importance are entirely omitted, or passed over in a very slight manner, as also the frequent *repetition* of the same story and the same sentiments, are objections nearly akin to this. It is answered,

1. That great allowance is to be made for the genius of *eastern* nations, in many of whose modern histories we find the persons concerned introduced as speaking, and a much greater number of words used than was necessary for giving us some competent idea of the fact.

2. Nevertheless, this makes the story more popular, and tends in a more forcible manner to strike the minds of common readers, suggesting many instructive and entertaining thoughts, which in a more concise abstract could not have been introduced, at least with so great advantage.

3. An exactness in many particulars might be useful to those for whom these writings were more immediately intended,—where it is not so to us.

4. Nevertheless, we do not insist upon it that the Scripture is the most perfect model of style, nor pretend to establish such a degree of inspiration as would make that assertion necessary.

5. The *repetitions* were often very necessary: the same circumstances of the same or of different persons, required the review of the same important thoughts in the poetical, prophetic, and epistolary writings; and the repetition of the same fact by different historians, who do not appear to have borrowed from each other, is a great confirmation of the truth of it.

Nich. Conf. vol. iv. p. 177. vol. ii. p. 101. *Boyle on Scrip.* p. 78.

LECTURE CLII.

Sect. V. It is further objected, That if the Old and New Testament had been of divine original, we can hardly imagine they would have been the cause of so much *mischief* in the world, which is imputed to the great stress laid on *believing* certain doctrines. To this it is replied,

1. That the genius of them both, and especially of the *New* Testament, is so apparently full of meekness, benevolence, and goodness, that nothing can be more unjust than to charge the bigotry and persecuting zeal of its professors upon that.

2. That this evil has its origin in those lusts of men, which this revelation was peculiarly intended to restrain.

3. That there have been penal laws, and some considerable degree of persecution among Heathens on religious accounts, where Christianity has not been in question.*

4. That if there has been more among or against Christians, it has generally been, because Christian principles have spirited up those who have cordially received them to bear greater hardships, as well as engaged them more openly to profess their own religion, and more expressly to condemn those follies and crimes which have passed for religion among other men, much to the danger as well as reproach of those by whom they have been maintained.

* Proofs that there has been more persecution among the heathens than has often been supposed and represented will be found in Bishop Watson's Apology for Christianity, and in Dr. Leland's Lectures, passim, lately published. Lastly, the obscure exercises of Emperor Marcus Antoninus was a persecuting has been shewn by Mr. Mayor in a discourse that is published in the first volume of the Theological Repository; and by Dr. Lardner in his Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. ii. p. 178—220. Works, vol. viii. p. 406—447.

5. Because that hereby occasionally greater evidence has been derived to Christianity, as appears from the preceding argument.

6. That the eternal salvation of a few is, upon the whole, a rich equivalent for the greatest temporal damage sustained: nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that they have much to answer for who, by persecuting under pretence of defending the Gospel, have brought such a reproach upon it.

7. It is also observable, That men have seldom been persecuted by Christians for denying those doctrines which are evidently contained in the Gospel; but much oftener for refusing to submit to human explications, and very frequently to most corrupt additions; which has been the case of Popish persecution, which indeed furnishes out the greatest part of this argument.

8. The extraordinary piety, temperance, and charity, especially of the primitive Christians, and the joy of good men in the midst of the severest persecutions, must be allowed an evident proof that the world has been generally the better for Christianity, and a vast balance to what is urged in the objection: not to mention the influence Christianity has had in reforming the doctrines of morality among the Heathens; as appears from comparing the writings of the Pagan philosophers *after* Christ's time with those *before* it.—For the illustration of the former part of this step, see Cave's Primitive Christianity; and for the latter, Tillard against Warburton, *ad finem*.—And we may add here, That the good effects to be produced by the expected prevalency of true Christianity at last, are to be taken in as further balancing the account.

9. When all possible allowances are made to the objection, it can be of no weight; for since *reason* is the accidental occasion of all this persecution about Christianity, and of all others, whether among Mahometans, Jews, or Pagans, they will as well prove that God is not the Author of our reason as that he is not the Author of the Christian religion: and indeed nothing can be more apparently absurd than to say that God could not give what man may grossly abuse.

10. As to the stress laid upon *believing* the Gospel, it is ridiculous to make that an objection against the truth of it; for if the disbelieving of it had not been represented as a very dangerous thing, it had been in effect acknowledging its own evidence so defective, as not to be sufficient for the conviction of an honest inquirer,—and its own importance to be so small, as almost to bespeak a neglect, when yet its pretended apparatus was so amazing, as at the very first view it must appear to have been: so that here would in effect have been a self-contradiction, which few writers on either side the question seem to have been sufficiently aware of.

Jur. Nat. xv. *pass.* *Chand. Pers.* p. 1. *Works.* *Div. Leg.* vol. i. p. 296. *Let. to the Minister of Moffat; Answ. to it. Hoad. Tracts*, p. 67. *Let. ag. Tind.* vol. ii. p. 576. *Chand. Serm.* vol. iv. p. 194. *Bourn's Serm.* vol. i. No. xiv. *Let. to Waterl.* p. 52. *Fam. Expos.* vol. i. p. 469.*

Sect. VI. It has further been objected, That the Scripture rules of morality are given in very *loose terms*, without such particular *limitations* as particular circumstances require, or without the *reason* on which they are founded. To this it is replied,

1. That if this concludes against any thing, it will conclude against all books of morality whatever,—since they can do no more than lay down general rules, without being able to descend to every personal circumstance.

2. Though God might have written such a book, it would have been too voluminous ever to have been read.

3. There are many excellent general rules, which, if men would honestly attend to, they would seldom be at a loss as to their particular duty, especially that of studying to show ourselves approved to God, of doing all to his glory, and of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

4. The reasons are sometimes suggested, especially those taken from the consequence of men's actions.

5. If there had been such a laboured deduction as in our ethical writers, few would have understood it.

6. It would not have suited the Majesty of the great Legislator, since human laws do not use this method. The declaration of the will of God, and a view to the sanctions and other motives suggested in Scripture, are of far greater importance than numerous decisions in casuistry, and laboured refinements of abstract argument.

Let. ag. Tind. c. xx. p. 298. vol. ii. p. 243. *Dod. Fam. Expos.* vol. i. c. 39. Note. *Attersb. Posth. Serm.* vol. i. p. 268. *Boyle on Script. Style*, p. 101. *Mackn. Truth of the Gospel*, p. 141.

Sect. VII. The *imperfect promulgation* of the Jewish and Christian religions has always been reckoned one of the chief objections against their divine authority, and urged as entirely inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, if he be supposed the Author of them. To this it is replied,

1. That the objection seems to take it for granted, that it is a part of the revelation that the express knowledge of it is absolutely *necessary* for the final happiness of every human creature, otherwise God

* The first part of the Christian religion, consisting chiefly of faith, trade and love, and a sacred mystery, illustrated by Dr. Doddridge in three discourses from 2 Tim. i. 7. See also his Sermons, vol. . No. . Dr. Leechman has an admirable discourse on the same subject, and from the same text, entitled 'The Excellency of the Spirit of Christianity.'

was not (for aught appears) obliged to give it to *any*, and if not to any, then certainly not to *all*.

2. Though it be acknowledged that the revelation has given great advantages, especially that of the New Testament, yet that can be no reasonable objection against its being true, though not universal, since it plainly appears, that if there be a universal Providence, and God be just and good, then it must be consistent with justice and goodness to give different men very different advantages for religious improvement, since (considering the diversity of men's tempers and circumstances) it is plain in fact God has done it.

3. The supposition of the truth of Scripture, (allowing as above, No. 1.) is so far from *increasing* the difficulty of accounting for the divine conduct which would arise on the foot of natural religion, that indeed it rather *lessens* it, both with respect to those who *have* enjoyed and embraced this revelation, and those who have *not*: for as to Jews and Christians, it represents them not as being left to error and superstition, (which, if Scripture be false, it must be allowed they are,) but as having received several distinguishing favours from the Divine Being, and glorious advantages for eternal happiness. And as to *others*, it shows us, *First*, That God has already done more for them than it can otherwise be proved that he has: particularly in the following instances: (1.) By discovering himself in various methods of revelation to Adam and Noah, who had such extraordinary facts to relate with such peculiar advantage from their relation to the rest of mankind (see Winder's History of Knowledge, vol. i. c. iii. and v.); and also to others in the earliest ages of the human race, from whom, on this supposition, useful traditions might be handed down to posterity, the remainders of which seem evident in Job and his friends, Melchizedek, Abimelech, and many others, and even in some of the Heathen writers. Compare *Prop.* cix. *sub init.* (2.) By the remarkable removes and dispersions of the Abrahamic family, and the singular appearances of God for them and the Jewish nation, previously to their settlement in Canaan; which were peculiar advantages to Egypt and Canaan, had they been wise enough to have improved them. (3.) In constituting the Mosaic religion in such a manner, as to encourage strangers to live among the Jews, and to oblige the Jews to endeavour to promote the knowledge of the true God abroad as well as at home. (4.) By remarkable appearances of God in their favour, both in the conquest of Canaan under such great natural disadvantages, and during their abode in it, especially in the victories of David, the time of Solomon's magnificence and wisdom while he continued faithful to God, which he no doubt would improve for the spreading of religion among the many sages and princes who resorted to his court (compare 1 Kings iv. 29–34, x. 23–25); but especially by the train of providences to Israel in and after the Babylonish captivity, which occasioned remarkable proclamations through the whole Babylonian and Persian empires, by which vast numbers of people must be admonished. (5.) By the dispersion of the Jewish Scriptures themselves when translated into Greek. (6.) By the mission of Christ and his apostles, and the early and extensive propagation of his Gospel by them. (7.) By all the advantages which have since been given, by the settlement of European and Christian colonies in almost all the principal, especially the maritime, parts of Asia, Africa, and America, whereby indeed immense numbers have been converted; and the number might have been yet greater, if those advantages had been properly improved.—*Secondly*, Revelation encourages us to hope that the time will come, when there shall be a universal prevalence of the knowledge of God, and all the Heathen nations shall be gathered in, *Prop.* 112. *Solut. gr.* 1.—*Thirdly*, In the mean time, it not only assures us that God will make all gracious allowances for the circumstances and disadvantages in which they have been placed,—but seems to point out a way, in which virtuous and pious Heathens, if such there be, may be accepted with God (*i. e.* through the atonement and mediation of Christ) with greater honour to divine justice than we could otherwise conceive.

Jenk. of Chris. vol. i. p. 13. *Waterl. Script. Vind.* part ii. *Postsc. Twd. Chris. Ld. ag. Trad* vol. ii. c. xvi. p. 554. *Fast. ag. Trad.* c. ii.; *Serm.* vol. ii. p. 144. *Young on Idolat.* vol. ii. p. 247. *Ridl. on Spirit.* p. 235. *Ditto on Chris. Rev.* vol. i. c. 19. *Bourn's Ser.* vol. ii. p. 183. *Hodges's Ser.* p. 309. *Law's Theory of Religion*, part i. ii iii *passim*. *Hartley on Man*, vol. ii. prop. 42. *Brekell's Serm.* p. 18.

LECTURE CLIII.

DEFINITION LXXVIII.

The books of the Apocrypha are those which are added by the Church of Rome to those of the Old Testament received by Protestants, and take their name from their having been supposed to have *been hid* a considerable time after they were written.

SCHOLIUM.

The names of these books, as they stand in the vulgar Latin Bible, are two of Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the remainder of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon,

Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, with Jeremiah's Epistle, the Song of the Three Children, the Story of Susannah, of Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and two books of Maccabees. The second of Esdras is not extant in Greek; but the most authentic copy of it is the Latin: but in some copies of the Greek Bible there are two other books of Maccabees added; the third of which contains chiefly the history of the Jewish affairs under Ptolemy Philopater.

Prid. Con. vol. ii. p. 185, &c.

PROPOSITION CXXIV.

The books of the Apocrypha are not to be received as written by a plenary superintendent inspiration.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Josephus only mentions 22 books of the Old Testament as inspired, in which these cannot be included; and he expressly says, that those which were written after the time of Artaxerxes (*i. e.* probably Artaxerxes Longimanus, from whom Ezra and Nehemiah had their commission) were not looked upon by the Jewish church as of equal authority. Compare *Prop.* 105. *gr.* 4.

Joseph. ag. App. l. i. c. viii. p. 1333.

2. They never appear to have been quoted in the New Testament, as most of the books of the Old are, though some passages of them might have been much to the purpose of the sacred writers.

3. The author of the first book of Maccabees, which is one of the most valuable in the whole collection, intimates that there had not for a considerable time been any prophet in Israel divinely inspired, 1 Mac. iv. 46. and x. 27. and the author of the second book seems expressly to own that he had no supernatural assistance, 2 Mac. xv. 38, 39. and ii. 19—28.

4. There are some passages in these books which seem in themselves absurd and incredible, *v. g.* the angel's lying to Tobit, and afterwards driving away the devil by a fumigation, Tobit v. 12. compared with Tobit xii. 15. Tobit vi. *pass.* the story of fire being turned into water, and *vice versâ*, 2 Mac. i. 19—22. the march of the tabernacle and ark after Jeremiah, *ibid.* ii. 4—8. to which most writers add what they think the inconsistent and contradictory account of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is said to have died of grief, 1 Mac. vi. 8, 16. and to have died miserably in the mountain, consumed with worms, 2 Mac. ix. 5—12, 28. 2 Mac. i. 16. is also quoted, as relating that his brains were beaten out, but that Antiochus must probably have been another person.

5. There are other passages which are inconsistent with some parts of the Old Testament; *v. g.* Judith (c. ix. 2.) justifying the murder of the Shechemites, condemned in Gen. xlix. 7. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon, speaking in the person of that prince, represents Israel as under oppression, which it was not in Solomon's days, Wisd. ix. 7, 8; xv. 14. compared with 1 Kings x. 27. (Yet some have urged 1 Kings xi. 14, 25. as an answer to this objection.) Baruch is here said to have been carried into Babylon, at the same time when Jeremiah tells us he was carried into Egypt, Bar. i. 2. Jer. xliii. 6. to which we may add the false account of the fact related, Lev. x. 46—20. in the reference to it, 1 Mac. ii. 11. Compare also Esth. xii. 5. with vi. 3, 6; to which may be added the applause of self-murder, 2 Mac. xiv. 41, &c.

6. There are some other passages relating to the history of foreign nations, so inconsistent with what all other historians say, as not to be admitted without much greater evidence than belongs to these books. 1 Mac. i. 6, 7; viii. 16.

1, 2, 3—6. 7. From comparing all these steps, on the one hand, and considering on the other that there is no positive evidence for their inspiration, it follows that these books are not to be admitted as written by a plenary superintendent inspiration. *Q. E. D.*

Burn. on the Art. p. 89. *Turret. Loc.* ii. *Q.* ix. *Limb. Theol.* l. i. c. iii. § 5. *Bennet ag. Popery*, p. 71.

COROLLARY.

The insisting upon reading some portion of these books, instead of lessons from Scripture, in the daily offices in the church, was an unreasonable and cruel imposition in those who fixed the terms of conformity in England in the year 1662.

Hist. of Nonconf. p. 235. *Old Whig*, vol. ii. No. 87. *Calamy's Abridg. of Baxt. Life*, c. x. p. 252.

SCHOLIUM 1.

We allow that some of the Christian fathers cited these books with great regard: nevertheless, most of them place the *apocryphal* books in a class inferior to those which they call *canonical*; and the first council which is said to have received them was the provincial council of Carthage, A. D. 397. who evidently come too late to be more competent judges of this question than the Jews themselves were. Nevertheless, we acknowledge these books to have been of considerable antiquity: and as some of them are very valuable, on account of the wise and pious sentiments they contain, so the historical facts, and references to ancient notions and customs, in others of them, make them well worthy an attentive perusal.

Dupin on the Canon. l. i. c. v. § 1—6. *Cosin's Hist. of the Canon.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is exceedingly probable that the chief reason for which the authority of these books is maintained

by the Church of Rome is, that some passages in them countenance their superstitions, particularly the intercession of angels, Tobit xii. 15. — and praying for the dead, 2 Mac. xii. 40—45. which is represented as prevalent even in favour of those who died idolaters.

SCHOLIUM 3.

A more particular critical account of most of these books may be found in

Lewis's Ant. vol. iv. l. viii. c. 46. *Prid. Con.* vol. i. p. 36. &c. vol. ii. p. 111. &c. *Lee's Dissert. on Esdras.*

PART VII.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE RELATING TO THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD, AND THE DIVINITY OF THE SON AND SPIRIT.

LECTURE CLIV.

PROPOSITION CXXV.

THE account given us in the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Testament, of the *nature*, *perfections*, and *providence* of God, is agreeable to that which the *light of nature* discovers concerning them.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The Scripture expressly asserts that there is a God, the *Creator* of all things. Gen. i. 1. Psal. xxxiii. 6. Acts xiv. 17. Heb. xi. 3.

2. The Scripture asserts that God is an *Eternal Spirit*. John iv. 24. Heb. xi. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Psal. xc. 2.

3. That he is *omnipresent*. 1 Kings viii. 27. Psal. cxxxix. 7—10. Jer. xxiii. 24.

4. That he *knows* all things. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Job xxxvi. 4; xlii. 2. Psal. cxlvii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 19. Acts xv. 18. And that future *contingencies* are not excepted from this general assertion, appears from his having foretold some of the most contingent events, (vid. *Prop.* 111, 112.) as well as from the following passages, Isa. xlii. 9; xlviii. 3; xlvi. 10; xli. 22—26. Psal. cxxxix. 2.

5. He is perfectly *wise*. Job ix. 4. 1 Tim. i. 17. Isa. xl. 13, 14.

6. That he is *omnipotent*. Jer. xxxii. 17. Rev. xix. 6. Psal. cxlv. 3. Job ix. 4, &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12.

7. That he is perfectly *good*. Psal. lii. 1; cxlv. 9; Matt. xix. 17. James i. 17. Exod. xxxiv. 6. 1 John iv. 8.

8. The *justice* of God is asserted, Psal. xxxvi. 6, cxxix. 4; cxix. 137. Rom. ii. 6. Acts x. 34, 35. Rev. xv. 3.

9. That he is *true* and *faithful*. Numb. xxiii. 19. Deut. vii. 9. 2 Sam. vii. 28. Tit. i. 2.

10. That he is perfectly *holy*. Isa. vi. 3; xliii. 15; lvii. 15. Psal. cxlv. 17. Rev. xv. 4.

11. That he is *immutable*. Exod. iii. 14. Mal. iii. 6. Heb. i. 10—12. James i. 17.

12. That he is *incomprehensible*. Job xi. 7. Psal. cxxxix. 6. Eccles. iii. 11; viii. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Rom. xi. 33.

13. That his *providence* extends to every event, preserving, disposing, and governing all things, Psal. xxxvi. 6; cxxxvi. 25; civ. cvii cxlv. 15, &c. Job xii. 10. Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 28. Matt. x. 29, 30. And it may be observed in the general, that all the vast number of Scriptures, in which the operations of inanimate bodies, such as the sun, rain, &c. as well as the actions of brutes are ascribed to the *divine agency* and direction, do entirely agree with *Prop.* 32. Vid. Prov. xvi. 33. Psal. lxv. 9, &c.; civ. 13—30; cxlv. 15, 16; cxlvii. 16—18. Amos iii. 6; iv. 7. Job xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.

14. That he is the *one only God*, is expressly asserted, Deut. vi. 4; iv. 39; 2 Sam. vii. 22. Psal. lxxxvi. 10. Jer. x. 10, 11; xlv. 5. Matt. xix. 17. John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. 1 Tim. vi. 15; ii. 5.

15. That he is a being of *all possible perfections*, Matt. v. 48. 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Psal. viii. 1.

Gast. Chris. Inst. c. 11. *Gayton's Scrip. Acc. of the Faith and Practice of Christians*, c. i.

COROLLARY 1.

So great an agreement between the doctrine of Scripture and reason with regard to the being and attributes of God, is a considerable internal evidence in proof of the revelation itself, considering how much of religion depends upon forming right notions of the Supreme Being.

Scott's Chris. Life, vol. ii. p. 318; *Works*, vol. i. p. 310.

COROLLARY 2.

Considering how very clearly these things are taught in the forecited passages, and in such a multitude of others parallel to them, there can be no just reason to apprehend, that those *popular* passages, in which the members of the human body, or the passions of the human mind, are ascribed to God, should be taken in *a literal* sense, so as to mislead any impartial and attentive reader, how moderate soever his capacity may be: so that no just objection against the preceding corollary can be drawn from such passages. Compare *Prop.* 120. *gr.* 14.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To the Scriptures urged *gr.* 4. in proof of the prescience of future contingencies, it has been replied, That those passages only relate to God's knowledge of *his own works*: but as this solution can only be applied to *some* of those Scriptures, so it is evident with regard to *them*, that as the equity, wisdom, and goodness, of God's works towards his rational creatures, depends upon the correspondency between them and the moral character of those creatures, God would not have a complete view of his dispensations towards them if he were ignorant of future contingencies; nor can the contrary doctrine be reconciled with those other Scriptures, which represent the divine volitions as immutable. Compare 1 Sam. xv. 29. Job xiv. 5; xxiii. 13, 14. Psalm xxxiii. 11. Isa. xlvi. 10. Mal. iii. 6. Acts xv. 15—18; xvii. 26. *Limb. Theol.* l. ii. c. xviii. § 27.

SCHOLIUM 2.

To that part of the argument, *gr.* 4. which is drawn from *predictions*, it has been replied, That when God foretells future events, he determines to make them *certain* by making them *necessary*; and in order to reconcile this with his justice, it has been added, that his creatures in these actions are not considered as in a state of probation, but that in these particulars it is suspended: but this objection is sufficiently answered, *Prop.* 111. *Cor.* 1. and may further be illustrated by comparing Gen. xv. 16. Exod. iii. 19, 20; vii. 3. 4. Matt. xxvi. 24. to which may perhaps be added Acts i. 16—20. See (besides Colliber in the place referred to above)

Saurin's Serm. vol. ii. p. 199. *Ridgley's Body of Divinity*, vol. i. p. 69.

SCHOLIUM 3.

That God is not *the Author of sin*, expressly appears from all the texts relating to the holiness of God, and those relating to his justice and goodness when compared with the threatenings denounced against sin, as well as from James i. 13.; whence it appears that scriptures urged on the contrary side, such as Prov. xvi. 4. 2 Sam. xii. 11; xvi. 10. are to be interpreted as not to express an irresistible influence on the mind of man, but only proposing in the course of his providence such occasions and temptations, as he knew would in fact, though not necessarily, prevail, to draw man to the commission of sin: and that God should act thus, is not a difficulty peculiar to Scripture, since it is agreeable to what we see every day, if we allow the universality of his providence.

Limb. ib. l. ii. c. xxx. § 1—7.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Scripture does expressly assert, not only that all things are foreknown by God, but that he *works all according to the counsel of his own will*, Eph. i. 11. and that even *the death of Christ* happened *according to his determinate purpose*, Luke xxii. 22. Acts ii. 23; iv. 28. whence it follows, that to make this consistent with what is said elsewhere, we must allow that in Scripture language those things are said *to be determined*, or decreed, by God, not only which he wills himself by his own irresistible agency to effect, but which he *foresees* will come to pass, in consequence of his previous volitions relating to preceding circumstances, through the intervention of free agents, and which on that foresight he determined to permit: and in this sense it must be admitted on the preceding principles, that all things which happened are *decreed* by him, and that the light of nature teaches us they are so.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding this agency of God, even about the sinful actions of his creatures, which the light of reason evinces, and those passages of Scripture assert; forasmuch as the word *temptation* carries with it an ill sense, and implies some malignity of design in the being said to tempt another, we acknowledge, according to James i. 13. that it is not proper to apply it here; and great care should be taken in popular discourses to avoid this way of representing things, which, though it be strictly and philosophically true, yet may be so mistaken by common hearers, as to be injurious rather than subservient to the purposes of practical religion.

LECTURE CLV.

PROPOSITION CXXVI.

That glorious Person, who appeared in the world by the name of JESUS CHRIST, did not begin to exist when he was conceived by his *virgin mother*, but had a being, not only before that period, but before the creation of the world.

Theol. Repos. vol. ii. No. 2.

DEMONSTRATION

1. It is he who is spoken of by John, under the name of the LOGOS, and is expressly said to have been *in the beginning with God*, and afterwards to have been *made flesh*, i. e. to have appeared in a human form. John i. 1, 2, 3, 14. Compare Rev. xix. 12. See also Heb. ii. 14.

2. Our Lord himself frequently asserted his *coming down from Heaven* as his Father's Messenger, which he could with no propriety have done, had he not existed before his incarnation; for what the Socinians assert, that he ascended into Heaven before he opened his public ministry, to receive instruction from thence, is a fact which cannot be proved, yet was surely important enough to have been recorded; since Moses's converse with God in the mount, and Christ's *temptation*, are both so largely mentioned. It will also be found, that some of the texts quoted below refer to a *settled abode* in Heaven previously to his appearance among men, and not to a transient visit thither: John iii. 31; vi. 38, 50, 62; xiii. 3; xvi. 28; xvii. 5. As for John iii. 13. the latter clause is a much stronger argument *against* the opposite hypothesis, than the former is *for* it.

Clarke on Trin. No. 574. *Fam. Expos.* vol. ii. § 179. p. 487. *Lowm. Tracts*, p. 237. *Unitarian Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 25.

3. Paul asserts that Christ *emptied himself* of some glory which he was before possessed of, that in our nature he might become capable of suffering and death, Phil. ii. 6, 7. (Greek); with which may well be compared the following texts, which, though not equally evident with the former, seem to have some reference to the same matter: John viii. 58. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Clarke on Trin. No. 535, &c. *Dawson on Logos*, p. 109.

4. Christ seems to have been the Person who appeared to Isaiah (compare Isa. vi. *pass.* with John xii. 41.); from whence, as well as his being called the *Logos*, and some other considerations hereafter to be mentioned, it seems reasonable to conclude that Christ is the Person who is called the *Angel of God's Presence*, by whom he revealed himself to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and the other Old Testament saints; Isa. lxiii. 9. Exod. xxiii. 20, 21;—but the particular examination of this branch of the argument will be reserved for a distinct proposition.

Watts's Script. Doct. of Trin. Prop. viii. p. 51. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 433.

5. The work of creation is so expressly ascribed to him in Scripture, that this alone might be a sufficient proof of his having a real existence before the world was made: John i. 3. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. Heb. i. 2, 8, &c. Eph. iii. 9.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 6. *Valet propositio.*

Pearson on Creed, p. 407. *Fowler's Descent of Christ. Watts's Diss. on Trin.* No. iv. § 1, 2, 4. *Watts on Glory of Christ, Diss.* ii. *Emlyn's Vindic. of Fowler, ap. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 363. *Hist. of Unitar.* p. 37. *Lard. on Logos*, p. 12; *Works*, vol. xi. p. 89. *Lowm. Tracts*, No. 3. *Dawes on Logos*, p. 286.*

COROLLARY 1.

Forasmuch as in several of the preceding Scriptures there is such a *change* and *humiliation* asserted concerning Christ, as could not properly be asserted concerning an eternal and immutable being, as such, there is reason to believe that Christ had before his incarnation a *created* or *derived* nature, which would admit of such a change; though we are far from saying he had *no other* nature, and that all the texts quoted above refer to this.

COROLLARY 2.

This glorious Spirit, or *Logos*, must undoubtedly have been a most wonderful Person, possessed of vast and unknown degrees of natural and moral perfections, (for both must be included in the expression of the *image of God*,) beyond any of the creatures both in Heaven and upon Earth who were produced by his operation. Vid. *Ax.* 10.

Watts's Diss. on Trin. No. iii.; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 518.

COROLLARY 3.

His *emptying himself* for our sakes, and taking upon him the form of a servant (as it is expressly said he did, that he might become capable of suffering and death for us, vid. Phil. ii. 7, 8. Greek, Heb. ii. 9—17.) was a most amazing instance of condescension, and lays those, for whose benefit it was intended, under the highest obligation to love, reverence, and obey him.

Bulkley's Econ. of the Gospel, ii. 2.

COROLLARY 4.

The ample revelation of such a Person, who by the light of nature was entirely unknown, must be a glorious peculiarity of the Christian scheme, which recommends it to our highest regard, and demands our most serious attention.

COROLLARY 5.

They who, neglecting to inquire into the evidences of Christianity, bring themselves under a necessity of disregarding this glorious Person, bring guilt upon themselves by their neglect, proportionable to the excellency of his nature, the greatness of our obligation, and the opportunity they had of

* In addition to the writers who contend that the creation ascribed to Christ in the New Testament refers only to his being the Author of the Gospel dispensation, may be mentioned Mr Lindsey and Mr Cornelius of Cambridge. In the second volume of the Theological Repository are three Sermons by the former, and three Discourses by the latter, on this head, which are well worthy the serious attention of those who have leisure and opportunity to peruse them. Mr Lindsey has likewise published a Discourse on the Second Volume of Conversations and Essays published by the Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures, p. 3—14. Theophilus Lindsey, A.M. Unitarian Doctrine of St Paul's Doctrine concerning the Creation of all things by Jesus Christ.

being acquainted with him, if they had diligently improved the talents lodged in their hands.

LECTURE CLVI.

SCHOLIUM 1.

There are many who will not allow of any pre-existent, created, or derived nature of Christ, but explain all the phrases quoted above relating to his *coming into the world*, by *the glory* he *originally* possessed, and understand his *emptying himself* of it at his incarnation, merely as expressing a more or less *sensible manifestation* of a nature properly *divine* or immutable; alleging, that whatever may be asserted concerning either the divine or human nature, may be predicated of Christ as θεανθρωπος. To prove this doctrine and interpretation they plead, not only that *God* is said *to have redeemed the church with his blood*, and to have *laid down his life for us*, Acts xx. 28. (Vid. *Mills, Enty.* and *Hallet in Loc.*) and, according to some copies, 1 John iii. 16. (Vid. *Mills in Loc.*) but that Heb. ii. 9, 11, 16. are utterly inconsistent with the notion of such a pre-existent *super-angelic* Spirit as is supposed, *Cor.* 1.

Ans. It is difficult to say what inconsistency there is between that doctrine and the two former of these forecited texts, if we allow the glorious Spirit of Christ (which there is no reason at all to call *human* in its pre-existent state) to have been reduced to the condition of a human infant; since we have no notion of the nature of a *human* soul, but that of a created rational spirit united to and acted by a human body, as our own spirit is: and as to Heb. ii. 16. if επιλαμβανεται be interpreted *took hold of*, as it may naturally signify, and is plainly used, Luke xxiii. 26. all form of objection from these words will vanish.

Ab. Tayl. ag. Watts, p. 82. *Hughe's 2d Def. Pref.* p. 12. *Whist. Prim. Chris.* vol. iv. p. 229. *Lard. on Logos*, p. 1; *Works*, vol. xi. p. 83. *Watts Gl. of Chr. Disc.* iii. § 6.

SCHOLIUM 2.

What *change* was made in the *Logos* when united to human flesh, must be acknowledged to exceed our conceptions, and therefore to be incapable of full explication. The *fathers* frequently speak of a *quiescence* of its perfections.—If it be objected, That to suppose such a being divested of its will, of its knowledge, and power, as it must certainly have been, if it became the human soul of Christ (Luke ii. 52; xxii. 43. 2 Cor. xiii. 4.) is in fact to suppose it *annihilated*, and *another* being substituted in its room, it may be answered, That whether we do or do not suppose some degree of actual thought and perception essential to the human mind, such a consequence will not follow from such a supposed change; seeing here will still continue in the same subject either actual thought, or a power of thinking.

Emlyn's Exam. of Bennet's New Theory, vol. ii. p. 313. *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 217. *Lard. on Logos*, p. 22; *Works*, vol. xi. p. 95. *Watts on the Glory of Christ*, p. 335. *Clayt. Vind.* part iii. p. 132.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The sentiments of the ancient Jews concerning the *Logos*, are to be found in

Philo Jud. p. 195. *Euseb. Prep. Evan.* l. vii. c. xiii. xiv. l. xi. c. xv. *Watts's Diss.* No. iv. § 3. *Scott's Chris. Life*, vol. iii. p. 550, &c. *Pears. on Creed*, p. 118. *Tayl. on Trin.* p. 258.

To which it may not be improper to add, That the Mahometans held an eternal ancient word, subsisting in God's essence, by which he spoke, and not by his simple essence; and the Platonics had a notion nearly resembling this, though Dr. Cudworth insists upon it, that it was not the same with that which the Arians afterwards held.

Ockley's Sarac. Hist. Pref. p. 88. *Cudworth's Intel. Syst.* p. 573. *Mosh. Eccl. Hist. in Sec. Quart.* part ii. c. v. § 10. *Ess. on Sp.* § 40.

LECTURE CLVII.

APPENDIX TO PROPOSITION CXXVI.

PROPOSITION

CHRIST was the Person in and by whom God appeared to men, under the Old Testament, by the name of JEHOVAH.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. There was often a visible appearance of Jehovah, the God of Israel.—Gen. xviii. *pass.* Exod. xxiv. 10. Isaiah vi. 1.

2. Scripture, as well as reason, assures us, the Father was not, and could not be, seen.—John. i. 18; v. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Heb. xi. 27.

3. The Person spoken of as Jehovah, when visibly appearing to men, is sometimes expressly called *the Angel of the Lord*.—Gen. xviii. 1, 2; xxii. 15, 16; xxxi. 11, 13. Exod. iii. 2, 4; xiii. 21. compared with xiv. 19, 24. Exod. xxiv. 9—11. Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. Numb. xx. 16. compared with Exod. xx. 2. Judges vi. 12, 14. Isa. lxiii. 9. Zech. iii. 1, 2; xii. 8. He is also called the *Captain of the Lord's Host*. Joshua v. 14, 15. compared with vi. 2. and the *Angel in whom the name of God was*, Exod. xxiii. 21.

4. There is no hint of a plurality of persons suc-

cessively employed as the medium of those divine manifestations.

5. When there is a reference to past transactions, they are referred to one Person as speaking, though numbers be sometimes described as present. Psal. lxxiii. 17; lxxviii. 15, &c. Hos. xii. 4, 5.

1—5. 6. There was one glorious Person, called both Jehovah and his Angel, who was, as above, under the Old Testament, the medium of divine manifestation.

6. 7. It is exceedingly probable that some great regards would be paid to this glorious Person in the whole dispensation of God, and that we should learn something of his dismission, if he were dismissed from that office, or of his present state, if he were not.

8. We learn from various passages in the New Testament, that Christ is the *Logos* of the Father. (John i. 1-3. Rev. xix. 1—3, 16.) by whom he made the world, and by whom he governs the kingdom of providence.—See the texts quoted *Prop.* 126. *gr.* 5.

9. We do not read in the New Testament of any *other* person, who had *before* been the medium of the divine dispensations,—but upon this occasion *resigned* his office to Christ.

7—9. 10. From the general character of Christ in the New Testament, compared with the account of the divine manifestations in the Old, and the silence of both with regard to any other person who was such a medium, we may infer, that it is most probable Christ was that Person.

11. Various things said to be spoken by or addressed to Jehovah in the Old Testament, are said in the New to be spoken of, done by, or addressed to, Christ, when such passages are referred to in the New, 1 Cor. x. 9. Heb. xi. 26; i. 8—12. compared with Psal. cii. 25, &c. John xii. 41. compared with Isa. vi. 9, 10. but Acts vii. 38. cannot properly be introduced here; for the word there must rather be understood of Moses than of Christ.

12. Several Scriptures not directly testifying this, will admit of the easiest interpretation, by supposing a reference to it;—John i. 11. Heb. xii. 25—27. compared with Psal. lxviii. 1 Cor. x. 9.

13. The primitive fathers of the Christian church represented this as the case.—See especially Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho.

14. It is also urged that the Chaldee Paraphrase shows it to have been the sense of the ancient Jews; and that there are many passages in their other most ancient writings, which speak the same language, and which can only be understood on this hypothesis.

10—14. 15. Christ was the Person by whom God appeared, under the Old Testament, by the name of Jehovah. *Q. E. D.*

Momma, vol. i. lib. ii. c. vii. § 34. *Watts on Ord. of Chr.* Diss. i. *Lowth on Cr. Gov. of Heb. App. Clarke on the Trin.* No. 616. *Townson on Idol.* p. 573. *Wits. Econ. Fœd.* lib. iv. c. iv. § 4. *Harris on Mess.* p. 130. *Barrington's Essay on Dis. Dispens.* part i. Appen. Diss. ii. *Flem. Chris.* vol. ii. p. 255, &c. *Towle, Appeal*, p. 131. *Essay on Spirit*, § 53—73. *Unit. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 31.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, That this weakens St. Paul's argument in Heb. xiii. 2. and utterly destroys that in cap. ii. 2, 3. as both Grotius and Peirce have urged. As to the former of these texts, it is said that, if the hypothesis in the proposition were true, the apostle would have recommended hospitality not merely from those instances in which persons had unawares entertained angels, but in which they had received Christ himself, appearing under the character of the *Angel of the Lord*; but it may be sufficient to answer, that it does not seem necessary, in order to maintain the honour of Scripture, to assert that upon every occasion the apostles urged the strongest arguments that could possibly be proposed; besides, that this argument would not really have so much force in it as at first view it might appear to have; for as Christ had now left the earth, there would no longer be any opportunity of showing such hospitality to him again. Compare Acts iii. 21. As to Heb. ii. 2, 3. it is pleaded that if Christ was personally concerned in giving *the law*, there was no room to argue (as the apostle does) the superiority of the Gospel dispensation from its being published by our Saviour's ministry, since in this respect they were both equal. With regard to which, if it should not be allowed (as some have thought) that *angels* in this place only signify *messengers*, which indeed the context does not seem to favour,—yet this may be reconciled with the hypothesis in the proposition, if we suppose Christ to have been present in some visible form on Mount Sinai, but to have used the *voice of angels* in proclaiming that law which he publicly gave to Israel from thence; not to urge that these texts may in general refer to *any* message delivered by angels, and not particularly to *the law*; for it must

* [illegible]

be owned, that the following Scriptures show that the giving the law on Mount Sinai must be comprehended, if it were not principally referred to. See Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Psal. lxviii. 17. On the whole, considering that in the places quoted above, God is said to have been among those angels, it seems impossible to defend the apostle's argument, if we suppose an extraordinary presence of the Father among them, on any topic, which will not also sufficiently defend it if we suppose Christ to have been so present. His appearance in human flesh, to preach the Gospel with his own mouth, and seal it with his blood, was so much greater condescension, than his encamping among the legions, whom he used as his heralds to proclaim his will, that it argues the Gospel to lie much nearer his heart than the law; and consequently the danger of despising the former, to be greater than that of despising the latter.

Peirce on Heb. ii. 2. *Saur. Diss.* vol. ii. p. 170.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is further objected, That God himself must sometimes have spoken as a distinct Person from Christ, of which Exod. xxiii. 20—23; xxxiii. 1—3. are urged as probable, and Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. John xii. 28. as certain, instances. To this it is replied, That though we allow the Father to have spoken *sometimes* without the mediation of the Son, it will not thence follow that he was not the medium *generally* made use of, especially when there were visible appearances to the church of the Jews.

Owen on Heb. vol. i. p. 164.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Mr. Lowman has objected, That the name of *the Angel of the Lord* might be given only to a *material substance*, which was not animated by any inferior spirit whatever (which seems indeed to have been the Sadducean hypothesis with regard to angels in general). *Lowm. Civ. Gov. App.* p. 45—48. but it is answered, As this does not agree with several other passages quoted above, so least of all with Exod. xxiii. 20, &c. and since the phrase *Angel of the Lord* does, generally at least, signify a distinct rational being, (as will afterwards be abundantly proved,) it is necessary to interpret it so in the present case, unless convincing reasons could be assigned for confining ourselves to this unlikely interpretation.

SCHOLIUM 4.

As for Mr. Peirce's hypothesis of Christ's undertaking the care of the Jewish people in such a manner as that he might be called their *Guardian Angel*, while other angels were guardians to other countries, (Dan. x. 13.) and that for administering his providence so remarkably well, he was appointed by God to be the head over all principalities and powers; and that those angels were divested of their former authority, that they might be made subject to him, to which he refers Eph. iv. 8. Col. ii. 15.—there is this great objection against it, That it seems not to make sufficient allowance for that superior dignity which the *Logos* must be possessed of, as the Creator of angels, and as more excellent than any of them. Vid. Heb. i.

Peirce on Col. ii. 15. and *Heb.* i. 9.

SCHOLIUM 5.

What has been said above, may perhaps give light to that much-controverted text, Phil. ii. 6, 7. the sense of which seems to be, "That Christ, who, when he appeared in divine glory to the Old-Testament saints, did not think he was guilty of any usurpation in speaking of himself by those names and titles which were peculiar to God; nevertheless, divested himself of those glories, that he might appear in our nature."

Clarke on Trin. No. 934. *Taylor on Trin.* p. 190. *Peirce and Whit. in Loc. Pearse on Creed*, p. 121. *Moore's Prop.* p. 168. *Confut.* p. 25. *Bos. Exer. v.* xxiv. § 5. p. 127. *Fort. Sac.* p. 178. *Wolf. in Loc.* vol. iv.

LECTURE CLVIII.

PROPOSITION CXXVII.

To enumerate the principal Scriptures in which *names*, *titles*, *attributes*, *works*, and *honours*, which are frequently appropriated to God, are, or seem to be, ascribed to Christ.

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. As for divine *names*,

1. The name Jehovah, which is appropriated to God, Psal. lxxxiii. 18. Isa. xlv. 5; xlii. 8. is given to Christ, Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. xlv. 23—25. compared with Rom. xiv. 10—12. Isa. xl. 3. compared with Luke i. 76. and Isa. vi. 1, 9, 10. with John xii. 40, 41. To these some also refer Zech. xi. 12, 13; and whereas some urge, on the other side, Exod. xvii. 15. Judges vi. 24. Ezek. xlviii. 35. in which names, compounded of the word *Jehovah*, are given even to *inanimate* beings, it is answered, That there is a great deal of difference between that and the case of giving it to *persons*, since in such instances as those here produced, there was so evident a reference to the Divine Presence, that there could be no mistake concerning the meaning of the name: see also Jer. xxxiii. 16. But if the reasoning in the preceding proposition be allowed, there is no need of insisting on such particulars; it being indisputable, that on those principles Christ is called Jehovah many hundreds of times.

2. He is not only called *God* frequently, Matt. i. 23. John i. 1, 2; xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 16. (vid. *Mills*

in Loc.) and perhaps 2 Pet. i. 1.—but he is called *the true God*, 1 John v. 20, 21. compare 1 John i. 2. and John xvii. 3. the *great* and *mighty God*, Tit. ii. 13. Isa. ix. 6. compare Deut. x. 17. Jer. xxxii. 18. Christ also seems to be called the *only wise God*, Jude ver. 24, 25. compare Eph. v. 26, 27. See also Rom. xvi. 27. the *only God*. Isa. xlv. 15. 17, 21—23. compared with Rom. xiv. 11. and *God blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. compare 2 Cor. xi. 31. and Rom. i. 25.

It is pleaded, in answer to these texts, That the word *God* is often used in a *subordinate sense*, *e. g.* 1 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Exodus vii. 1. Psalm xcvii. 7; lxxxii. 6. John x. 34—36. but it is answered,

1. That in most, if not all, of these places, a subordination is expressly intimated.

2. That such *additional titles* as those mentioned above are never used; to which some add,

3. That *o Θεος* is never used concerning any who are Gods, only in a subordinate sense; but 2 Cor. iv. 4. is an instance of the contrary.

Sect. II. *Titles* appropriated to God, are also applied to Christ.

1. He (if the preceding reasoning be allowed) calls himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, Exod. iii. 6. compare Acts vii. 30—32. Hos. xii. 3—5.

2. *Lord of Hosts*, Isa. viii. 13, 14. compared with the following passages: 1 Pet. ii. 6—8. Psal. cxviii. 22. Matt. xxi. 42. and 2 Sam. vi. 2. to which some add Isa. liv. 5. compared with 2 Cor. xi.

3. *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 13—16. compared with Deut. x. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15.

4. *The First and the Last*, Rev. i. 17, 18; ii. 8. compare Isa. xli. 4. and xliv. 6. To the former of these especially it is objected, That Christ, though a created Being, might use such language as the *Ambassador*, and therefore *Representative*, of God. It is answered, That it is not usual for ambassadors to assert that they are the persons from whom they are sent; upon the same principles, any angel or prophet might have used the same language, and the temptation to idolatry would have been greater than it is reasonable to suppose God would have permitted. These arguments are further confirmed, by considering, on the one hand, how averse to idolatry the Jews were at the time when the New Testament was written, and how propense the Gentiles, which would have made such bold figures of speech in that book peculiarly dangerous.

Burn. on Art. p. 44. *Herres on Mess.* p. 137.

Sect. III. *Attributes* sometimes appropriated to God, are applied to Christ.

1. *Omniscience*, Col. ii. 3. Rev. ii. 23. to which many add John xxi. 17; ii. 24, 25. Matt. xii. 25. compared with 1 Kings viii. 39. and Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

2. *Omnipresence*, or a power of perception and operation in distant places at the same time, Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. *ult.* Col. i. 17. to which many add Heb. i. 3. compare Jer. xxiii. 24. To these some add John i. 18; iii. 13. compare John ix. 25. (Greek); and also Gen. xix. 24. concerning which see Calvin's Notes on that place, and compare Hos. i. 7.

3. *Almighty power*, Phil. iii. 21. to which many add Rev. i. 8. It is indeed debated, whether that be spoken of *Christ* or the *Father*, but Rev. i. 11, 17, 18; ii. 8; xxii. 12, 13, 20. make it probable, that it refers to *Christ*. See also *Prop.* 126. *gr.* 5.

4. *Eternity*, Rev. i. 11, 17. Heb. vii. 3. Some also add Heb. xiii. 8. Prov. viii. 22, 23. compare Psal. xc. 2.

5. *Immutability*, Heb. i. 12; xiii. 8. compare Mal. iii. 6. James i. 17. and some have argued from John xvi. 15. that this, and all the other attributes of God, are claimed by Christ as his. See John v. 26.

Saur. Ser. on Heb. i. 12. *Owen and Sykes in Loc.*

LECTURE CLIX.

Sect. IV. Divine *works* of creation and universal support are ascribed to *Christ* as above, (see *Prop.* 126. *gr.* 5.) with this remarkable circumstance, that all things are said to have been made *for* as well as *by* him, Col. i. 16, 17. It is objected, That *God* is said to have created all things *by* Jesus Christ in several texts: compare 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iii. 9. To this it is replied, That *δια* often signifies *for* as well as *by*; so that it may import their being made *for the glory* of Christ, or rather that the *created* or *derived* nature of Christ was the *instrument* by which the world was made. Compare Rom. xi. 36. *Moore's Prop.* p. 121.

Sect. V. *Religious worship*, though appropriated to God, Deut. vi. 13, 15; x. 20. Matt. vi. 10. was by divine approbation and command given to *Christ*, Heb. i. 6. John xx. 28. Acts vii. 59. Phil. ii. 9—11. compare Rom. xiv. 11. John v. 23. To this it is in the general objected, That we are to distinguish between *supreme* and *subordinate* worship, the former of which is due to God alone; the latter may be given to creatures: compare 1 Chron. xxix. 20. Matt. xviii. 26. It is replied, That in this case the worship addressed to man was apparently a *civil*, not a *religious*, homage; and that if it be the Christian scheme to introduce any *inferior* God, to whom religious adoration is to be paid, *i. e.* to whom we are to pray, whom we are to praise, in whom we are to confide, by whom we are to swear, (all which acts

of worship are addressed to Christ in the following passages, John xiv. 1. answered by Exod. xiv. 31. and 2 Chron. xii. xx. 20. Rom. x. 13. 1 Cor. i. 2. Rom. xv. 12. 2 Cor. xii. 8. Rom. ix. 1.) one would have supposed that there should have been the strictest care to adjust the *degree* of worship due to him, that it might not interfere with that of the *Supreme* God: and it is hard to reconcile this with its being so often declared to be the design of the Gospel to bring men to the worship of *the only true God*, (Acts xiv. 15; xvii. 23, 24. Gal. iv. 8. 1 Thess. i. 9.) or with the force of Christ's reasoning in Luke iv. 8. This branch of the argument is likewise much illustrated by a multitude of texts, in which the apostles express an unlimited veneration, love, and obedience to Christ, and that dependence upon him and devotedness to him, which can only be justified in this view, and would indeed be very criminal, if he were to be considered only as *an exalted man*, or *a mere creature*; which two expressions, by the way, when applied to Christ in his present state, seem to coincide more than some have been willing to allow. Compare Phil. i. 20, 21. Col. iii. 11. Rom. xiv. 7—9. and many other texts quoted by Mr. Jennings in his discourses on *preaching Christ*.

COROLLARY.

It appears by the tenor of this proposition, that *most* if not absolutely *all* those names, titles, attributes, and works, which are ascribed and appropriated to the one eternal and ever-blessed God in Scripture, are also ascribed to *Christ*; and that such divine worship is required or encouraged to *him*, as is elsewhere appropriated to the one eternal and ever-blessed God.

Watts on the Trin. p. 35—84; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 428. *Clarke and Tayl. on Trin. pass. Moore's Prop.* p. 129. *Emlyn's Inquiry, ap. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 83. *Boyse's Ans. Eml. Worship of Christ, ap. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 207. *Shuckford's Hist.* vol. i. p. 293.

DEFINITION LXXIX.

The word PERSON commonly signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or conscious being; and this we choose to call the *philosophical* sense of the word; but, in a *political* sense, it may express the different *relations* supported by the same philosophical person; *v. g.* the same man may be father, husband, son, &c. or the same prince King of Great Britain, Duke of Brunswick, and treasurer of the empire.

Dr. D. Scott's Ess. tow. a Dem. of Trin. Def. ii. *Jenkins on Christianity*, vol. ii. c. 26.

COROLLARY.

One *philosophical* person may sustain a great number of persons in the *political*, or, as some call it, the *modal* sense of the word.

Watts's Diss. No. vi. p. 180; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 619. *Sir Isaac Newt.* 2 *Letters*, p. 103.

SCHOLIUM.

Besides this, some have given various definitions of *person* in the *theological* sense of the word; of which few are more remarkable than that of Marcus, That "personality is a positive mode of being, ultimately terminating and filling a substantial nature, and giving to it incommunicability." To describe the Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as "expressing that perfection of the Divine Nature, whereby it subsists three different ways, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each of which, possessing the Divine Essence after his peculiar manner, thereby becomes a distinct Person," may perhaps be a definition much of the same import.

Marci Medulla. l. v. § iii. *Sloss on the Trin.* p. 28, 29.

PROPOSITION CXXVIII.

God is so *united* to the derived nature of Christ, and does so *dwell* in it, that, by virtue of that *union*, Christ may be properly called *God*, and such regards become due to him as are not due to any *created* nature, or mere creature, be it in itself ever so excellent.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 127. *Cor.* 1. Such divine names, titles, attributes, and works, are ascribed, and such divine worship demanded or encouraged, to Christ, as are elsewhere appropriated to God.

2. Christ cannot be a being distinct from God, and yet coordinate with him, since that would infer such a plurality of Gods as is contrary both to natural and revealed religion (*Prop.* 39, 125. *gr.* 14.); besides, a multitude of things are said of Christ in Scripture, which undoubtedly prove him to be really and truly *a man*, and cannot be said of the one living and true God in himself considered; *v. g.* that he hungered, felt pain, died, &c.—Compare 1 Tim. ii. 5.

1, 2. 3. There must be some wonderful union of God with the man Christ Jesus, to lay a foundation for such ascriptions and regards.

4. The Scripture expressly speaks of such a union, and of God as *dwelling in* Christ.—John x. 28—30, 38; xvii. 11, 20—23. Col. i. 19. compare Eph. iii. 19. Col. ii. 19. John xiv. 9, 10.

4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Calamy on Trin. p. 31. *Watts's Diss.* No. ii.; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 511.*

* Some think I am too severe upon the question concerning the Divinity of Christ, as if I had not allowed matter for reasonable and pious inquiry and discussion. As I would by no means discourage, and indeed recommend to conscientious and pious persons to search into every proposed matter that concerns us most, and to form our own judgments, the most considerable part of them, with relevancy so far as we are able, to the Scriptural grounds and arguments of the controversy. There was a question (viz. whether Christ, head of Christ, being, as a man, a Deity of the Arian persuasion. This was the case with Mr. Hopkins, a worthy man of Newark, who published a solemn and serious Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian People, concerning an important Point of Doctrine, supposed upon

SCHOLIUM I.

Against this it is objected, That Christ acknowledges himself *inferior* to the Father. John xiv. 28.

that the Father is called *his God*. John xx. 17. 2 Cor. xi. 31, that he disclaims the infinity of knowledge, power, and goodness, Mark xiii. 32. John v.

thair Consciences by the Authority of Church Government and in pertinence to the Members of the Church of England.—In reference to this work see pamphlets, A modest Conference between the Author of the Common Sense of all Christian Prophets, in a Letter to the Reputed and the Rev. Doctors Mr Bennett, D. D. Mr. Hopkinson's Treatise gave occasion, we believe, to two or three other pieces in support of the common doctrine of the Trinity.

The most important publication of the Arian kind was the Essay on Spirit, ascribed to Dr. Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, and which was the beginning of a considerable controversy. The publication of the Bishop's antagonists were as follows:—A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Clogher, occasioned by his Lordship's Essay on Spirit. A Dissertation on the Scripture Expression, the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of Jehovah, considered; in Answer to a late Essay on Spirit. As also the most easy, Demonstration, from Principles justly pleasing to all the Trinitarians, of the several scriptural Glories of the Godhead by the Rev. John Kelly. A second Letter to the Bishop of Clogher. In Answer to the Essay on Spirit. By Thomas Rosse, M. A. A Vindication of the Essay on Spirit, from the misrepresentations of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, Jones, who had appeared some time before as accusers, it seems absurdly for the Trinity. The Author was then Question. Whether is the Arminian Method, or Socinian Explanation and Defence, by Simon Reade, M. D. A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, from the Exceptions of a late Pamphlet, entitled, An Essay on Spirit. Being the Substance of the Rev. Dr. Randolph's Sermon preached. The Doctrine of the Trinity proved and vindicated, in answer to the Essay on Spirit, and a pleasant proper Answer to the Question Why does not the Bishop of Clogher resign his Preferments? The two last tracts are supposed to have been the productions of Dr. Clayton himself. In this controversy, the books of principal importance were on the one side Mr. Hopkins's Sequel, and on the other side, Dr. Randolph's Vindication.

A much feebler Vindicator of the Arian hypothesis, was Mr. Henry Taylor, in his Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai to his Friends for embracing Christianity, to whom may be added Dr. Harwood in his Five Dissertations on the first of which he opposes the Arminian Doctrine, and in the second, the Socinian Scheme. Dr. Price enters the lists with regard to both these Schemes in his Sermons on the Arminian Doctrine. A Defence of the Arian hypothesis may also be seen in the fourth volume of the Theological Repository, p. 145—167, and in Mr. Cornish's Tract on the Preexistence of Christ.

Of late years, the controversy relative to the Divinity of Christ, has chiefly been between the defenders and opponents of the Socinian System; among the former of whom Dr. Priestley stands particularly distinguished. Previously however to the Doctrine of things upon the subject, several works were published of the same tendency. Among these, the most elaborate were Mr. Hopkin Haynes's Scripture Account of the Attributes and Worship of God, and of the Character and Offices of Jesus Christ. Dr. Lardner's Letter, written in the Year 1730, concerning the reason to Whether the Logos meant of the Plato of the Human Soul in the Person of Jesus Christ?—and Mr. Cardale's True Doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ considered; wherein the misrepresentations that have been made of it, upon the Arian hypothesis, and upon all Trinitarian and Athanasian Principles, are exposed; and the Honour of our Saviour's Divine Character and Mission asserted.—Mr. Cornish and likewise the author of A Comparison of the Socinian and Arian Principles in Christ's Power at the Close of his public Ministry; being a Supplement to the true Doctrine of the New Testament;—and of a Treatise on the Application of certain Terms and Epithets in Jesus Christ, shewing that they have no Foundation either in the modern Revelation, or in any Principles of sound Reason and Philosophy. We may add to these, as the most lately published, till the year 1781, Dr. Lardner's Six Sermons of the Trinity considered, and the Divine Unity asserted. Dr. Price's Sermons on Phipps's Life, 1778. The reasons referred to by Dr. Lardner, besides the separate impressions of them, may be seen in his Works, vol. xi. p. 720. 2nd ed. 8vo. edit.

Dr. Priestley's publications relative to the present subject are, An Appeal to the serious and candid Professors of Christianity. No. 1. A Letter to Illustration of certain Passages of Scripture. A Free View of the Arguments for the Unity of God, and the Personality and Preexistence of Christ, from Reason, from the Old Testament, and from History. A History of the Corruptions of Christianity. A Reply to the Animadversions on the History of the Corruptions of Christianity, in the Monthly Review for June 1782. Letters to Dr. Horsley's Charges of Socinianism, and Unfair quotations from Dr. Priestley's Writings. Letters to the Members of the Church of England. Letters to Dr. Horsley's Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Letters to the Members of the Church of England. Letters to Dr. Horsley's Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to the Members of the Church of England. Letters to Dr. Horsley's Charge to the Clergy. Additional Letters to Dr. Horsley

18, 19. Matt. xix. 17; that he often prays to his Father; that he declares himself to have received from the Father those things for which he is most eminent; and that, throughout the whole of his administration, he is described as *the servant of God*, Isa. xlii. 1; lii. 13; liii. 11. (by which some have explained his *taking upon him the form of a servant*, Phil. ii. 6.) referring all to his glory, and assisting his creatures in their approaches to him; to whom he shall finally give up the kingdom, 1 Cor. xv. 24—29.

With regard to all these texts, it is to be observed that we by no means assert (as some few have done) that the human nature of Christ is *absorbed* in the divine, which would indeed make the objection unanswerable; but acknowledging the *reality* and *perpetuity* of it, we reply, That all these things must be understood as being spoken by or of him *as man* and *mediator*, without a reference to that union with God established in the preceding proposition.

Eml. Enq. ap. Tracts, vol. i. p. 83. *Calamy on Trin. Serm.* iii—v. *Watts's Diss.* No. ii. p. 40; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 515. *Hallet on Script.* vol. ii. p. 214. *Dr. Scott's Ess. tow. Demonst. of the Trin. Prop.* vi. &c. *Mosh. Hist. Eccl. Seculum* v. part. ii. c. v. § 22.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Dr. Clarke asserts the *Logos* to be something *between* a created and self-existent nature. But it is difficult to enter into the foundation of this distinction, unless the idea of *a creature* be, not a thing produced *out of nothing* by the *Divine Power*, but a thing produced by the Father, through the *agency of the Son*; which is a very unusual sense of the word. *Clarke on Trin.* p. ii. *Prop.* xiv. xvii.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The doctrine of the divinity of Christ has generally been expressed, by saying that the human and divine nature of Christ are united in one person, which has generally been called *the hypostatic* or *personal union*: and those were condemned as *heretics* in the *fourth* century, who either, on the one hand, maintained there was but *one nature*, or, on the other, that there were *two persons* in Christ. It is evident that Scripture does not use this language in what it teaches us on this head; nor is it easy to determine the idea which has been affixed to the word *person*, when used in this controversy. It has been pleaded, that we may as well conceive the union of the divine and human nature in one person, as of the soul and body in man: but it is plain this is far from being entirely a parallel case, since here are not two *conscious* beings united; and that God and the creature should have *one* and the *same consciousness*, certainly exceeds our comprehension. It seems, therefore, that those who have fixed any idea at all to the term *person* here, rather mean it in a *political* sense, to express the concurrent operation of the Deity with the human nature of Christ, in order to constitute a perfect mediator.

Dr. Waterland's definition of the word *person*, as used in this question, is this:—"A single person is an intelligent agent, having the distinct characters *I*, *Thou*, *He*, and not divided or distinguished into more intelligent agents capable of the same characters:" where it is proper to observe, he does not say it is not *divisible* or *distinguishable*, which is not here the case, but not *divided* or *distinguished*.

Waterl. Vind. of Christ's Divin. Q. xv. *Watts's Diss.* ii. p. 43. *Pears. on Creed*, p. 161. *Baxt. End of Contr. Pref.* c. iii. § 5. *South ag. Sherl.* c. iii. p. 72. *Eml. Enq.* c. ii. § 2. *ap. Tracts*, vol. i. No. ii; No. i. p. 16. *Taylor against Watts*, p. 76.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It has been hotly debated, whether Christ be called *the only-begotten Son of God*, with regard merely to his being the promised Messiah, or to his extraordinary conception and exaltation to his kingdom as mediator; or whether the expression refers to the eternal generation of the divine nature. The texts brought to prove the latter, are chiefly Psal. ii. 7. Prov. viii. 22, 23, 25. Micah v. 2. Heb. i. 2, 3. Col. i. 15. John i. 14, 18. but others have explained these texts of the production of the *created* or *derived* nature of Christ, which, according to the preceding hypothesis, was prior to the creation of the world; and with regard to some of them, have attempted to prove their application to Christ's Deity uncertain, and that the first of them relates to his *resurrection*. Compare Acts xiii. 33. urging that it is utterly inconceivable that a nature truly and properly *divine* should be *begotten*, since *begetting*, whatever idea is annexed to it, must signify some kind of *derivation*.

Owen on Christ's Person, p. 138. *Waterland's Vind.* p. 199, &c. *Ridg. Div.* vol. i. p. 124. *Proced. of Underst.* p. 302. *Dr. Brown's Doct. of Trin.* p. 104. *Watts's Impor. Quest.* p. 45; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 647.

LECTURE CLX.

LEMMA TO PROPOSITION CXXIX.

It is evident that frequent mention is made of the HOLY SPIRIT in the New Testament, as an agent of great importance in carrying on the Christian cause.

have been written by Mr. Nisbett, the first with a particular view to Dr. Priestley's exceptions on the subject, and the second in answer to a private letter, addressed to him by Mr. John Pope. Mr. Pope has published a reply to Mr. Nisbett.

PROPOSITION CXXIX.

To enumerate the principal of those Scriptures, in which divine *names, titles, attributes, works,* or *worship,* are, or seem to be, ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

SOLUTION.

1. Many plead that the Holy Spirit is called *Jehovah* in the Old Testament, by comparing Acts xxviii. 25. with Isa. vi. 9. and Heb. iii. 7—9. with Exod. xvii. 7. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. with Heb. x. 15. 16. That he is called *God*, Acts v. 4. seems probable; to which some add 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19. 2 Cor. iii. 17.

2. Divine *perfections* are certainly ascribed to the Spirit of God,—particularly *Omniscience*, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. Isa. xl. 13, 14. to which some add 1 John ii. 20; *Omnipresence*, Psal. cxxxix. 7. Eph. ii. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 26, 27; *Omnipotence*, Luke i. 35. 1 Cor. xii. 11; *Eternity*, Heb. ix. 14.

3. Divine *works* are evidently ascribed to the Spirit; Gen. i. 2. Job xxvi. 13; xxxiii. 4. and Psal. xxxiii. 6; civ. 30. *et sæp.* Some likewise add those texts in which miracles, inspiration, and saving operations upon the heart of man, are ascribed to the Spirit.

4. The chief texts produced to prove that divine *worship* is given to the Spirit, are Isa. vi. 3. compared with ver. 9. and Acts xxviii. 25, &c. Rom. ix. 1. Rev. i. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. and above all, Matt. xxviii. 19.

Calam. on Trin. Serm. vi. *Evil. Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 255. *Burn. on Art.* p. 38. *Watts on Trin. Diss.* v. § 2; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 597. *Chris. Doct. Trin.* p. 85; *Works*, ib. p. 142. *Barrow's Works*, vol. ii. p. 367.

COROLLARY.

The blessed Spirit is spoken of in such a manner as we cannot imagine would be used in speaking of a mere creature, and consequently must be possessed of a nature properly *divine*.

Clarke on the Trin. part i. c. iii. *Taylor on the Trin.* part iii. p. 477—517.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The chief controversy on this head is, Whether the Spirit of God be a person in the *philosophical* sense, or merely a divine *power* or energy. That he is a *person*, is argued from his being described as having understanding, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11; willing, 1 Cor. xii. 11; speaking, and sending messengers, Isa. vi. 8. compared with Acts xxviii. 25; viii. 29; x. 19, 20; xiii. 1—4. 1 Tim. iv. 1. yea, as Dr. Barrow interprets it, sending Christ, Isa. xlviii. 16; as pleading, Rom. viii. 26; as being grieved, Isa. lxiii. 10. Eph. iv. 30; as teaching and reminding, John xiv. 26; as testifying, John xv. 26; as reproving, John xvi. 8. &c.; as executing a commission received from God, John xvi. 13, 14.

Owen on Spirit, l. i. c. iii. § 9. &c. *Taylor. ag. Watts*, p. 64. *Bar. Works*, vol. ii. p. 361. *Peirce, on Cr.* p. 511. *Clarke on Trin.* part ii. § 22. *Evil. Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 295. *Dr. D. Scott's Ess. conc. Demon. of the Trin. Prop.* iii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Those who assert the Spirit to be a divine *power*, plead chiefly the sense of the word in the *Old* Testament; where they say it generally has that signification; and that it would be absurd to suppose that the idea should be so greatly changed, when Christ and his apostles addressed those who had been bred up in the Jewish religion, and must therefore have been used to conceive of the Spirit according to the representation made in their sacred oracles.

It is also pleaded, that the *pouring out* one *person* on another, is both unscriptural and unintelligible language; but not so, if it relates to a divine *power*, influence, or operation. They urge in favour of this explication of the doctrine, Luke i. 35. and reply to the Scriptures urged above, by observing, that nothing was more common among the ancients, and especially the *eastern* nations, than to represent powers, properties, and attributes, by personal characters: thus *wisdom* is represented as contriving, rejoicing, inviting, pleading, reproving, &c.; Prov. i. 20, &c.; iii. 13, &c.; iv. 6, &c.; viii. 1; ix. 1, &c.; *charity*, as believing, rejoicing, &c. 1 Cor. xiii.; and *death*, as being plagued, Hos. xiii. 14; the *Scripture*, as foreseeing and preaching, Gal. iii. 8; the *sun*, as rejoicing, Psal. xix. 5; a *famine*, as coming at God's call, 2 Kings viii. 1; *righteousness*, as walking before him. Compare Psal. lxxxv. 10—13; and the *wind*, as willing, John iii. 8. But it is answered, That none of these come up to the preceding texts; especially considering how frequently the personal term ἄγγελος is used, when spoken of the Spirit, and that not in poetical, but in the most plain and simple, discourses: but the strongest objection against this opinion arises from the form of baptism, and the forementioned John xvi. 13. 14.

Watts's Diss. v. § 4. p. 144; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 605. *

SCHOLIUM 3.

Among those who grant the Spirit to be a person, it is debated whether he be the same philosophical person with the Father, or another distinct from him. To suppose the latter (supposing him at the same time equal with the Father) is making him *another God*. Some therefore have represented him as a created spirit, in his own nature inferior both to Father and Son; against which the passages enumerated in the preceding proposition have been

* A hypothesis [illegible] contrary to God in the text may be seen in Dr. Lardner's 2nd part of his [illegible] vol. ii. [illegible] an explication of those words, The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and That Spirit of God as used in the Scriptures. Vol. ii. p. [illegible]

strongly urged; as it has also been, that the Spirit is never mentioned as a creature called upon to praise God, when a large enumeration of such is made. Others consider him as a created Spirit (called, as one thinks, *Michael the Archangel*) so united to God, and so acted by him, as by virtue of that union to become capable of such representations and regards as the Son is, though acting in some subordination to him in the economy of our redemption; while many others have contented themselves with asserting that there is only a *political*, *modal*, or *economical* distinction, in the personality of Father, Son, and Spirit. Others again have maintained that the Spirit is a *third* distinction in the Deity; and when he is called a *person*, the word is to be taken in a sense below the philosophical and above the modal; though what determinate idea is to be affixed to it, they do not more particularly say.

Bar. Works, vol. ii. p. 368. *T. Burn. Doct. Trin.* p. 58. *Clarke on Trin.* part ii. §3, 19. *Dr. D. Scott's Essay tow. Demonst. of the Trinity, Prop.* vii.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Divines have commonly taught, that the Holy Spirit *proceeds from* the Father and the Son: and the Popish schoolmen introduce the phrase of *spiration*, to signify the manner in which his personality was derived from them. He is indeed said to *come* or to be *sent forth* from the Father, John xv. 26. and Christ often promises that he would *send him*; but for that notion of his spiration, mentioned above, it cannot be explained, and therefore cannot be defended.

Watts's Diss. p. 155; ib. p. 166; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 609. *T. Burn. on Trin.* p. 118. *Mosh. Hist. Eccles. Le Seculum* viii. part ii. c. iii. § *ult.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

On the whole, forasmuch as the Spirit is plainly spoken of in Scripture under a personal character, it is proper to retain that language in discoursing of him and praying for him, even though we should not be able certainly to determine in our own minds as to the nicety of some of those questions which have been touched upon in the preceding scholia.

Clarke on Trin. part ii. § 53, 54.

LECTURE CLXI.

PROPOSITION CXXX.

The Scripture represents the Divine Being as appearing in, and manifesting himself by, the distinct persons of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, each of whom has his peculiar province in accomplishing the work of our redemption and salvation, and to each of whom we owe an unlimited veneration, love, and obedience.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. That God appears under the character of *Father* in Scripture, *i. e.* the Father of Christ, and through him the Father of all his people, is so clear from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that it would be superfluous to enumerate particular texts in proof of it.—John xx. 17. 2 Cor. i. 3.

Prop. 127. *Cor.* 2. The Scripture represents the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, as a divine person, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt, by whom the Father manifested himself to us, and who, with the Father, is God over all.

Prop. 129. *Cor.* 3. The Scripture also represents the *Holy Spirit* as a divine person, possessed of those attributes and perfections which are to be found in God alone.

4. There are various texts of Scripture, in which Father, Son, and Spirit are mentioned *together*, and represented under distinct *personal* characters; *v. g.* Matt. xxviii. 19; iii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. 2 Cor. xiii. *ult.* Eph. iv. 4—6. Heb. ix. 14. to which some add Rev. i. 4, 5. As for 1 John v. 7. the authority of it is contested; nor is the importance of it so very great as some have imagined, since it does not exactly determine *in what respects* the *three* there spoken of are *one*. Vid. *Calv. in Loc. et Instit.* l. i. c. xiii. § 5, 6.

5. It is every where represented in Scripture, that our redemption was *contrived* by the Father, *purchased* by the Son, and is *applied* by the Spirit, through whose assistance, in the name of Christ, we are to make our approaches to the Father. Eph. i. 3, 4. Tit. iii. 4—7. Rom. xv. 16. Eph. ii. 18.

5. 6. Hence it appears that correspondent regards are due to each, which are accordingly required in many passages of Scripture, John v. 23. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Eph. iv. 30.

1—6. 7. *Vide supposititium.*

Berry-St. Lec. vol. i. p. 94. *Butl. Anal.* p. 153. *Whit. Last Thoughts, pass. Dr. D. Scott's Demonst. of the Script. Trin.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

If it be asked, *How* these divine persons are *three*, and how *one*?—it must be acknowledged an inexplicable mystery: nor should we wonder that we are much confounded when inquiring into the curiosities of such questions, if we consider how little we know of our own nature and manner of existence. Vid. *Prop.* 18.

SCHOLIUM 2.

If it be inquired, In what sense the word *person* is used in the proposition? we answer, It must at least be true in a *political* sense, yet cannot amount to so much as a *philosophical* personality, unless we

allow a plurality of Gods: and if there be any medium between these, (which we cannot certainly say there is not,) we must confess it to be to us unsearchable, and the higher our notions of distinct personality are carried, the more difficult does it appear to our feeble reason to clear up the Supreme Divinity of each, and *vice versa*.

Watts's Disc. No. vi. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 619.

SCHOLIUM 3.

We must acknowledge that Scripture seems sometimes to neglect this distinction of persons; and *God dwelling in Christ*, is sometimes called the *Father*, and sometimes the *Holy Spirit*. Vid. John xiv. 9, 10. Matt. xii. 28. John i. 32. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Acts v. 38.

Watts's Unif. Q. No. iv. v. p. 130; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 696.

SCHOLIUM 4.

From several texts above quoted, compared with some others, *viz.* Isa. lxi. 1, 2. John iii. 34. Acts x. 38. Matt. xii. 28. Heb. ix. 14. Rom. i. 4; viii. 11.) in which Christ is spoken of as qualified for his work by the descent of the Spirit upon him, and its indwelling in him, an argument has been deduced in proof of the Deity of the Spirit; which is also hinted at by Dr. Barrow.

Barrow's Works, vol. ii. p. 367.

SCHOLIUM 5.

As to the celebrated controversy concerning the genuineness of 1 John v. 7. a view of the most considerable arguments on both sides may be seen in

Encl. Tracts, vol. ii. No. i. *New Trans. of N. Test.* vol. ii. p. 921. *Twells's Exam.* part ii. *Mart. Diss. in Loc. Cal. Serm. in Loc.* No. i—iii. *Ab. Tayl. on Trin.* p. 31. *Mills's Gr. Test. in Loc. Cypr. Epist.* p. 203. *Tenet.* p. 109. *Sir. I. Newt.* 2 *Let. to Le Clerc. Brev. Diss. Par. and Not. on Epist.* vol. ii. p. 631. *Bengel. on var. Read. of the N. Test.**

SCHOLIUM 6.

Some have supposed that the plurality of persons in the Deity is every where intimated in the Old Testament, by the use of the plural אלהים to signify the one living and true God. (Which word, by the way, Mr. Hutchinson and his followers would read *Elahim*, or *Alaim*, as supposing it refers to the *oath*, or *covenant*, into which they have entered with each other and the church.) To confirm this opinion, it is further argued, that plural verbs (Gen. xx. 13. xxxv. 7.) and plural adjectives (Jer. xxiii. 36. compare Deut. xxxii. 17.) are sometimes joined with it.

Rudd. at Moger's Lec. Ser. ii. p. 74. *Forbes's Th. on Rel.* p. 134. *Forbes's Let. to a Bp.* p. 40. *Sharp's Diss. on the word Elohim.*†

* [illegible] Mr. Archdeacon Travis in his Letters to Edw. Gibbon, Esq. on occasion of the unfounded insinuations in the 37th and 38th chapters of that work, and Mr. Porson in his Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, in answer to his Defence of the Three Heavenly Witnesses. Mr. Porson, in his Introduction to the New Testament, mentions every material argument for and against that the Text is not genuine; and it is well known that Wetstein and Griesbach have rejected it from their editions. Will [illegible] where that text is wanting. And Mr. Travis's answer upon the point of [illegible] ing in the controversy, in a third edition of his Letters to Mr. Gibbon.

† Some of the publications relating to Mr. Hutchinson's [illegible] principally by Romaine, on the Scripture Doctrine and Revelation, by the Rev. Benj. Holloway. The Harmony of Christianity confirmed in the Hebrew Words ALLYM and ELOHYM stated and defended, by the Rev. James Muncey. A Reply to Dr. Sharp's Remarks and Dissertation on the Scripture Meaning of Elohim and Berashith, by Julius Bate, A. M. A [illegible] by the same author, and Strictures upon some Passages in Dr. Sharp's Dissertation, on the Doctrine of Elohim. Dr. Thomas Sharp's Answer to Mr. Hutchinson, and his Comments upon the Hebrew Text, considered in the Discourses upon Scripture. Messrs. [illegible] Hebrew words Elohim and Berith, referred to in the Text. A Review of Dr. Sharp's Dissertation on the Scripture Meaning of Elohim, and Mr. Hutchinson's Explanation of Genesis, upon the Hypothesis, notwithstanding them established. The principles of Mr. Hutchinson has found advocates in Dr. Horne, Mr. Jones, Rev. Mr. Spearing, and the Rev. William Jones.

LECTURE CLXII.

PROPOSITION CXXXI.

To inquire into the opinions of the most *ancient* Christian writers concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

SOLUTION.

For a more particular solution we choose to refer to Bull, in his *Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*, Waterland, Clarke, and Jackson; especially the notes of the latter on NOVATIAN, which contain an enumeration of all the most important passages which are urged from them on any side of the controversy. The chief passages from the writers of the *two first centuries* may be seen in the fourth volume of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity*: a particular account of what each has said would take up a disproportionate room here; we must therefore content ourselves with the following general remarks.

1. Most of these writers speak of Christ and of the Holy Spirit as *distinct persons* in the *philosophical* sense of the word, and as the objects of the worship of Christians.

2. *Before* the Council of Nice, they generally spoke of the Son as having had a glorious nature pre-existent to his incarnation: they represented him as derived from the Father, and nevertheless so partaking of the Father's nature, as to be called *God of God, Light of light*; and they illustrate this in general by the simile of one taper being kindled by another, and of rays proceeding from the sun: this *after* the Council of Nice was explained by the word ὁμοούσιος: and it was reckoned heretical to say that the Son was ὁμοούσιος.

3. They, about the time of that council, counted those to be heretics, who asserted the Son to have been produced *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*, or who reckoned him in the number of *creatures*.

4. This doctrine is only touched upon by the *earliest* fathers in an incidental manner: Origen and Tertullian treated most largely of it; and Novatian is the only writer of the three first centuries, whose entire treatise on this subject is come down to us.

5. It must be acknowledged that several of the fathers talked in a very loose and sometimes a very inconsistent manner; and several of them used expressions which, after the Council of Nice, would have been condemned as heretical.

6. After the time of this celebrated council, which was near the beginning of the fourth century, they ran into several subtilties of expression, in which one would imagine they studied rather to conceal than to explain their sentiments: yet they grew so warm upon the subject, as to anathematize, oppose, and murder each other on account of some of those unscriptural phrases, much to the dishonour of their common profession.

Chandler's Hist. of Pers. p. 39, &c.*

7. Most of the oldest Post-Nicene fathers carried their notion of the distinct personality and Supreme Divinity to a very great height; and seemed to have imagined they sufficiently supported the unity of the Godhead, by asserting that Father, Son, and Spirit had each of them the same *divine*, as three or more *men* have each of them the same *human*, nature.

Le Clerc's Life of Greg. Naz. p. 249. *Dr. T. Burnet on the Trin.* p. 135.

SCHOLIUM.

The subject of this proposition may receive some further illustration by mentioning some of the most considerable of those opinions, which were generally accounted *heretical* by the ancient Christians.

1. That of the Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Carpocratians,—who seem to have asserted that Christ was a mere man, and had no existence before his incarnation. This is the same doctrine which was revived in the fourth century by Photinus, as it had been before by Paulus Samosatenus.

2. The Arians, who held him to be only the first and most glorious creature of God, denying he had any thing which could properly be called a *divine nature*, any otherwise than as any thing very excellent, may by a figure be called divine, or his delegated dominion over the system of nature might entitle him to the name of *God*: and they seem also to have thought, that the *Spirit* was another distinct inferior being, created by the Son; but they did not employ themselves much in this part of the controversy. This is a heresy which most largely prevailed, and in some places and times seems to have almost entirely swallowed up what is commonly called the *orthodox* or *catholic* faith.

3. That of Nestorius, who asserted there were *two persons* in Christ, as well as two natures; to which was directly opposed that of Eutyches, who asserted but *one nature*, as well as one person, teaching that the human nature was *absorbed* in the divine: and these different extremes occasioned the most violent agitations in the disordered churches during the fifth and sixth centuries.

4. That of Macedonius, who denied the Holy Spirit to have any proper divine substance, and represents him only as a created power, which was diffused over all other creatures.

5. That of Sabellius, who taught that the Father, Son, and Spirit were only *names* and *offices* of the *same person*, who was in heaven called the Father, on earth the Son, and, as exerting his power on the creation, the Holy Spirit.

For the most ancient account of these, consult Eusebius, Sozomen, and Theodoret, in their Ecclesiastical History, and also Bayle's or Collier's Dictionaries, under their names. Many of the most material passages are collected and exhibited by Dr. Berriman and Dr. Ab. Taylor in their treatises on the Trinity.†

LECTURE CXXIII

PROPOSITION CXXX.

To give a brief account of some of the most celebrated of the opinions among the moderns, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, especially of the English writers.

SOLUTION.

1. Mr. Baxter seems, as some of the schoolmen did, to have thought the three divine persons to be one and the same God, *understanding*, *willing*, and *beloved* by himself; or wisdom, power, and love; which he thinks illustrated by the three *essential primalities* (as he calls them) in the soul of man, viz. vital active *power*, *intellect*, and *will*; and in the sun, *motion*, *light*, and *heat*.

Baxt. End of Contr. c. ii. *Baxt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 130—132; ib. vol. iii. p. 568.

2. Dr. Clarke's scheme is, that there is one Supreme Being, who is the Father, and two subordinate, derived, and dependent beings: but he waves calling Christ *a creature*, as the ancient

* An ample discussion of this subject will be found in the authors referred to in the note annexed to the demonstration of the hundred and twenty-eighth proposition.

† For an account of the controversy between Dr. Waterland and Dr. Clarke, see the Memoirs of Clarke, by Dr. Robert Clarke, and the Life of Waterland, by Dr. Van Mildert. See also Dr. Waterland's Vindication of the latter work, vol. i. of the octavo edition.

Arians did, and principally on that foundation disclaims the charge of Arianism

Clarke on the Trin. part iii. *Prop.* 7, &c.

3. Dr. Thomas Burnet maintains one self-existent and two dependent beings, but asserts, that the two latter are so united to and inhabited by the former, that by virtue of that union, divine perfections may be ascribed, and divine worship paid to them. *Burnet's Script. Doct.* p. 173.

4. Mr. Howe seems to suppose that there are three distinct eternal Spirits, or distinct intelligent hypostases, each having his own distinct, singular, intelligent nature, united in such an inexplicable manner, as that upon account of their perfect harmony, consent, and affection, to which he adds their mutual self-consciousness, they may be called *the one God*, as properly as the different corporeal, sensitive, and intellectual natures united may be called *one man*. *Howe's Works*, vol. ii. p. 560.

5. Dr. Waterland, Dr. Ab. Taylor, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three proper distinct persons, entirely equal to and independent upon each other, yet making up one and the same being; and that though there may appear many things inexplicable in the scheme, it is to be charged to the weakness of our understanding, and not to the absurdity of the doctrine itself.

Tayl. on Trin. part i. c. i. *Waterl. Vind. and Serm.*

6. Bishop Pearson, with whom Bishop Bull also agrees, is of opinion, that though God the Father is the *fountain* of the Deity, the whole divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit; yet so as that the Father and Son are not separate, nor separable from the Divinity, but do still exist in it, and are most intimately united to it. This was likewise Dr. Owen's scheme.

Bull's Serm. vol. iii. p. 829. *Owen on the Heb.* i. 3. p. 83. *Pears. on the Creed*, p. 134, &c.

7. Dr. Wallis thought that the distinction between the three persons was only *modal*; which seems also to have been Archbishop Tillotson's opinion.

Wallis's Letter on the Trinity. Tillotson, vol. i. p. 492—494.

8. Dr. Watts maintained one supreme God dwelling in the human nature of Christ, which he supposes to have existed the first of all creatures; and speaks of the divine *Logos* as the *wisdom* of God, and the Holy Spirit as the divine *power*, or the influence and effect of it; which he says is a Scriptural *person*, *i. e.* spoken of figuratively in Scripture under personal characters.

Watts's Diss. No. viii. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 630—639. *Flem. Christol.* vol. i. l. ii. c. v. p. 188.

9. Dr. Jeremiah Taylor says, "That he who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, &c. and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something he knows not what; but the good man, that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad, this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity."

Jer. Tayl. on John vii. 17. *ap. Bessie's Def. of Quakerism*, § 8.

COROLLARY 1.

Considering the excellent character of many of the persons above mentioned, whose opinons were most widely different, we may assure ourselves, that many things asserted on the one side and on the other relating to the Trinity, are not fundamental in religion. See Mr. Simon Browne's *Sober and charitable Disquisition concerning the Importance of the Trinity.*

Watts's Works, vol. vi. p. 715; ibid. p. 730. *Fawc. Cand. Refl. on the Doct. of the Trinity.*

COROLLARY 2.

We may hence learn to be cautious how we enter into unscriptural niceties in expressing our own conceptions of this doctrine, which is by all allowed to be so sublime and so peculiar to revelation.

Flem. Christol. vol. i. p. 187—191.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Some traces of this doctrine are supposed by many in the writings of Plato, and yet more probably in those of Philo the Jew, and in some of the Targums. See the references to *Prop.* 126. *Schol.* 3.

Kidder on Mess. part iii. c. v. vi. p. 92. *Flem. Christol.* vol. i. l. ii. c. i. p. 136. *Tenn. on Idol.* c. v. p. 77. *Cudw. Intel. Syst.* c. iv. § 36, &c. p. 546, &c.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Many have supposed there are some traces of this doctrine imprinted on all the works of God.

Baxt. Works, vol. ii. p. 14. *Cheyne's Phil. Prin. of Rev. Rel.* part ii. *Prop.* 17. *Cor.* 4. *Sch.* 2. *Collib. of Rev. Rel.* p. 99.

* On this subject reference may be made to the work before mentioned, in which many learned things are collected from the "Universal Restitution." The first quotation is from Plato (the second in the note is also from him), and the third is from Parmenides. See the fourth volume of the Repository, p. 77—97, and p. 481—520.

PART VIII.

OF THE FALL OF HUMAN NATURE, AND OUR RECOVERY BY THE MEDIATORIAL UNDERTAKING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

LECTURE CLXIV.

PROPOSITION CXXXIII.

MANKIND is at present in a *degenerate* state; and there is reason to believe that there never has been, since the transgression of Adam, and never will be among his adult descendants, a sinless mortal on earth, Christ excepted.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Our own observation on ourselves, and those adult persons with whom we are conversant, may convince us that the philosophical liberty of our minds and theirs is in some considerable degree impaired (*Prop.* 17.); and so far as the most credible history of all nations can inform us, this seems to have been a universal phenomenon.—See *Prop.* 89. and *Schol.*

2. There are many passages in Scripture which assert, not only that this was in fact the case with regard to those generations in which the authors lived,—but some of them plainly intimate that it always had been, and was likely to continue so: Gen. vi. 5. compared with viii. 21. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Psal. xix. 12; cxxx. 3. cxliii. 2. Prov. xx. 19. Eccles. vii. 20. Rom. vii. 14, &c. Gal. iii. 22; v. 17, 24. Eph. ii. 1—3. Tit. iii. 2—7. James iii. 2. John i. 8. to which we may add all those texts that assert the necessity of *regeneration*, and of *mortification*, and which speak of the sinful principle as *the old man*, Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 22—24. Col. iii. 9. and indeed the whole of the apostle's argument in the beginning of the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, as well as all those other texts that are afterwards to be produced, to prove the universal necessity of believing in Christ for salvation, are conclusive to the same purpose; because they suppose mankind to be in a state of death and ruin, brought upon them by sin. Compare John iii. 16, 36; v. 24. 1 John iii. 14. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Luke xxiv. 47. and especially Rom. iii. 9—20. in which the apostle seems expressly to assert that the passages there quoted from the Old Testament contain a just representation of what is in general the moral character of mankind; and to this last argument John seems evidently to refer. 1 John i. 10.

3. Many of these evil inclinations begin to work very early, and appear even in children from the first dawn of reason. Compare Psal. lviii. 3. Isaiah xlviii. 8. Prov. xxii. 15.

1, 2, 3. 4. Mankind is at present in a very corrupt and sinful state.

5. It seems, in the nature of things, very improbable that so holy and good a God should have formed mankind in the original constitution of their nature in so corrupt and sinful a state.

Prop. 89. *Cor.* 3. 109. *gr.* 3. 6. There has prevailed among many nations a *tradition*, that mankind was once in a much more holy and happy state.

7. There are various passages of Scripture, besides the Mosaic History of the Fall, which plainly intimate that mankind was once in a better state; but that now a corrupted nature is derived from one generation to another. Eccles. vii. 29. compare Gen. i. 31; v. 1, 3. Job xi. 12; xiv. 4; xxv. 4. Psal. li. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. John iii. 5. compare viii. 7.

4, 5, 6, 7. 8. Mankind is in a state of degeneracy, in which the original rectitude and glory of the human nature is in a great measure lost.

9. That Christ is not comprehended in this assertion, appears from *Prop.* 113. *gr.* 5.

8, 9. 10. *Vide propositio.*

Limb. Theol. lib. iii. c. iv. § 1, 2. *Turret. Inst.* vol. i. Loc. ix. Q. x. p. 694. *Taylor. Orig. Sin.* p. 100, &c. *Jen. Ans. pass. Edw. Orig. Sin*, i. 51. 8. 2. ii. iii. *Chandl. Posth. Serm.* vol. iv. No. vi. part 1.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Against that part of *gr.* 7. which relates to the propagation of a corrupt nature from one generation to another, it is objected, That the phenomenon of universal corruption in all the adult may be accounted for another way, *i. e.* by ascribing it entirely to *imitation*.

Ans. 1. The Scriptures quoted there, seem evidently to place it higher.

2. There often appear in children propensities towards those vices, of which they have seen no examples.

3. There are many examples of eminent virtue in the world, which yet are not so frequently or easily imitated as those of a vicious nature; which plainly shows a bias on the mind towards vice.

4. In consequence of this, those who have most

carefully studied human nature, even among the Pagans, have acknowledged and that in very strong terms) an inward depravation and corruption, adding a disproportionate force to evil examples, and rendering the mind averse to good.

Watts's Ruin and Rec. p. 37. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 200. *Hooker's Lec. Temp.* part ii. c. iv. § 4—6. *ap. Op.* vol. i. p. 147. *Reh. on Sp.* p. 169. *Watts's Cont. betw. Flesh and Sp. Tayl. Serip. Doct. of Orig. Sin*, p. 190. *Edw.* ib. p. 131.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is objected, That a propensity to sensual enjoyments is the inseparable consequence of our existence in a body, and of the weakness of reason in our infant state, when the sensitive and passionate powers are so strong.

Ans. 1. This propensity is not merely in proportion to the degree requisite for the good either of the individual or the species, and consequently is itself (so far as it prevails) the very corruption of our nature of which we speak.

2. That the degrees of goodness observable in the natural tempers of some children, may evidently convince us that it would have been very possible for the human constitution to have been so adjusted, that from the beginning the temptations to sin should have been much smaller than they generally are.

Tayl. Serip. Doct. p. 224. *Sup.* p. 50. *Edw. on Orig. Sin*, p. 150.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is further objected, That it is inconsistent with the *goodness*, and even the *justice*, of God, to form creatures with evil propensities, and afterwards to leave them to condemnation and ruin in consequence of them; and it is also said to be inconsistent with his *holiness*, to make a creature corrupt in its first original.

Ans. 1. The difficulty is considerably lessened, if we suppose that things are so constituted upon the whole, as that a man is not *necessarily* impelled to any irregular actions which shall end in his final destruction.

2. What remains of the difficulty, after such a solution, is that which arises from the observation of plain facts, and not peculiar to the Christian scheme; nor is it at all increased, by supposing that man was once in a better state; but, on the contrary, rather much diminished.

Taylor's Supplement § 4.

SCHOLIUM 4.

As to the *manner* in which this hereditary corruption of our nature is *conveyed*, we acknowledge we cannot particularly explain it, but it seems exceedingly probable that it may result from the constitution of the *body*, and the dependence of the mind upon it, *Prop.* 3.

Lime-st. Lect. vol. i. p. 304. *Watts's Ruin and Rec.* p. 145; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 24. *Turret. Inst.* Loc. 18. Q. xii. vol. i. p. 706. *Baluzii Tractat.* p. 286. *Tayl. Serip. Doct.* p. 184.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Those passages of Scripture in which infants are said to be innocent, have been thought by some an objection against the proposition; *v. g.* Deut. i. 39. Jonah iv. 11. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Matt. xviii. 3, 4. but this objection can only lie against that manner of expressing and stating the doctrine, which represents this corruption of nature as, properly speaking, *sin*. Now, as to this part of the controversy, it is evidently to be determined by the manner in which sin is defined; if it signify, as it commonly does, "An action contrary to the divine law," these evil propensities are *not* sins, but rather the *root* whence sin proceeds; if it be defined "A want of conformity to God's law," as well as a transgression of it, they must be allowed sinful; but if sin be taken in a more indeterminate sense, for any thing which God will or might punish with final misery,—the question must be considered in a further extent, and is referred to the *scholia* of the following proposition.

Limb. Theol. lib. iii. c. iv. § 3—11. p. 20. *Tayl. Sup. to Orig. Sin*, § vii. *Lightf. Works*, vol. ii. p. 569. *Hor. Heb. on John* ix. 2. *Watts's Ruin and Rec.* p. 41; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 202.

LECTURE CLXV

PROPOSITION CXXXIV.

To inquire into the account which is given in Scripture of the *Fall* of our first parents.

SOLUTION.

1. It is evident that they were created free from sin and from vicious inclinations, Gen. i. 31. Eccles. vii. 29. there is reason also to believe that the natural capacities of Adam's mind were good, and his genius at least equal to that which is to be found in any of his descendants; as well as that his bodily form was regular and beautiful, and his constitution so framed as to contain no principles of distemper; but perhaps some have carried the matter too high, in the representation they have given of the vast strength of his understanding, and the strong bias there was upon his will towards the choice of virtue and obedience.

Burg. Six. Lect. vol. i. p. 180. *Smith's Serm.* vol. i. p. 124. *Tayl. Syst. Div.* part iii. *Suppl. on Orig. Sin*, c. viii.

2. God forbade to our first parents the eating the fruit of some certain tree, (the kind of which is now

unknown, and perhaps the whole species destroyed,) on the penalty of *death*; which must at least comprehend the loss of that happy state in which they then were, Gen. ii. 16, 17.

Berry-Str. Lect. ib. p. 189.

3. By the seduction of an evil spirit (compare Gen. iii. 4. with Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 3. and Gen. iii. 15. with Col. ii. 15. Rom. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xi. 3.) they were prevailed upon to violate that precept, and thereby exposed themselves to the sentence of death by an act of aggravated guilt. To the texts mentioned above, may be added all that the Scripture says of the character of the devil as *the tempter*, and it being the purpose of Christ to triumph over him. Compare John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 8.

Bates's Harm. of Div. Attr. c. ii. p. 98. *Wits. Econ. Fœd.* l. i. c. viii. § 3—9. *Goodm. Prod.* part i. *Berry-Str. Lect.* vol. i. p. 208.

4. When this sin was thus committed, the sentence of death, though not immediately executed in its fullest extent, evidently began to lay hold upon them, as their minds appeared under the distress and the consternation of guilt, Gen. iii. 10. as they were deprived of the pleasures of Paradise, and made to live a life of toil and sorrow, as they were exposed to the disorders of a vitiated constitution, and so death begun to work in them, till at last they were brought down to the grave, Gen. iii. 16—19, 24; v. 5.

Collier's Sac. Int. vol. i. p. 135, 136. *Cumberland's Orig. Gent.* p. 409. *Tayl. on Orig. Sin*, p. 7—21. *Chandl. Posth. Serm.* vol. iv. No. i. p. 13—20; ib. No. ii. *Burn. at Boyle's Lect.* vol. ii. p. 9—32.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Any transgression of God's natural law would probably have been punished with at least as much severity as the breach of this positive appointment: but the circumstances in which Adam was at his first creation, were such as removed him from all temptations to, and in some instances from all possibility of, committing many of those sins, which now most frequently abound among his posterity; which is one thought of considerable importance to vindicate the divine wisdom in that constitution under which he placed him.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Had Adam continued in a state of innocence, there is a great deal of reason to believe that he would have been happy. It has indeed been pleaded, That God, being the Author of the creature's existence, and of all his capacities both of action and enjoyment, cannot be obliged to continue to him his being and comforts; so that, supposing the creature ever so innocent and ever so virtuous, he should be able of right to claim them. Nevertheless, it was what an innocent creature would naturally expect from a Being, of whose infinite goodness he had such abundant evidence and rich experience: and when there was (as in the case of Adam) an express threatening annexed to disobedience, that seems to imply, that while he continued obedient he should continue happy.

Wits. Econ. Fœd. l. i. c. iv. § 1—3. *Clar. Posth. Serm.* vol. i. p. 409.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is questioned whether Adam, in case of innocence, would have had reason to expect the continuance of a happy life on earth, or a translation to a nobler state of being elsewhere. Had he abode on earth, his felicity must have been continually increasing, by the exercise of his rational faculties in the contemplation of God, and new discoveries made of his works, as well as by the multiplication of his posterity, on supposition of their continued innocence. But it may be added, that on this supposition, in succeeding generations earth would have been too small to receive and sustain the growing numbers of mankind: and it must be acknowledged, that this seems to be an intimation that, some way or another, colonies would in that case have been transplanted from hence to some other abode; and on supposition of Adam's own removal, he would have had some reason to hope it should have been to some more excellent state and abode; at least he could have no reason to infer a change for the worse, while he continued innocent and obedient.

Turret. Instit. vol. i. *Loc.* viii. *Quest.* vi. § 9. *Wits. Econ. Fœd.* l. i. c. iv. § 9.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The revelation which was made to Adam did not (so far as we can learn) contain any intimation of *pardon*, in case of transgression; and had the sentence been executed in its utmost vigour, he would have had no room to accuse the divine justice: and if (which seems not improbable from comparing Gen. iii. 24.) Adam had any sight of and converse with other intelligent beings of a superior order, he might justly conclude, that God would act in such a manner towards him in case of his transgression, as to prevent any [illegible] evil which they might derive from his impunity: and if he had any suspicion of a posterity to be derived from him, (which the sentence on Eve gave him room, notwithstanding his offence, to conclude,) there would be further reason for such an apprehension.

Emlyn's Serm. No. iii. p. 43.

LECTURE CLXVI

SCHOLIUM 5.

The extent of that *death*, which was annexed to the transgression of the divine command given to Adam, might not perhaps be certainly known by him, unless it were more fully expressed to him than it is to us in the Mosaic history. He must certainly apprehend, that it included the loss of that happiness which he then possessed, and perhaps the extinction of being, and entire loss of all happiness, might be the punishment due to the least transgression of the divine law. That argument for the immortality of the soul, which is drawn from the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments, could not be known to Adam; but that which arises from the nature and capacities of the human mind, must appear to him in all its evidence: and therefore, (so far as we can imagine,) he would, from the light of nature, have reason to apprehend some state of future existence, and to fear, that if temporal death was brought upon him by his transgression of the divine law, that future existence would be a state of punishment rather than enjoyment: nor can we say how he should be able to assign any point of time in which the punishment of so aggravated an offence must necessarily terminate.

Berry-Street Lec. vol. i. p. 554. *Locke's Revs. Christ.* vol. i. p. 1; vol. ii. p. 474. *Grove on a Future State*, c. viii. § 6, 7. p. 104.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Hence it follows that, according to the Mosaic history, when God placed Adam in Paradise, he did in effect enter into *a covenant* with him, whereby he encouraged him to expect continued life and happiness, on condition of perfect obedience; but threatened him with death, in case he should in any instance transgress his moral or his positive law; which is the same thing that divines generally mean, by what they call *the Covenant of Works*. And it seems, That so far as the light of nature reaches in discovering our duty, we are *all* so born under such a covenant, as by sin to be exposed to death; which may be considered as including not merely the separation of our souls from our bodies, and the consequent dissolution of the mortal part, —but likewise such degrees of future punishment as it shall seem to the Supreme Judge righteous and fit to inflict. Compare Rom. vi. 23. Rev. xxi. 8. Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10, 13. Ezek. xviii. 20. *Reasons on Justif.* p. 8.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It is evident that the transgression in eating the forbidden fruit was the *first* sin committed by Adam, because the sentence of death followed it, which must (according to the nature of that dispensation he was under) be the consequence of the first offence. Gen. iii. 17, &c.

SCHOLIUM 8.

It is difficult to determine certainly what we are to understand by the *Tree of Life*. Some have thought that it was no more than a *pledge* of life to Adam, in case of obedience, and might in that view have been indifferently chosen from among any kind of trees in the garden: others have conjectured that it had some cordial virtue, of an excellent use for reviving the spirits and preserving the health (compare Rev. xii. 2. with Ezek. xlvii. 12.); and some have carried this so far as to conclude, that the mortality of Adam's nature was the natural consequence of his being excluded from that tree, even though we should suppose no change to be made in his constitution after his sin, Gen. iii. 22. Mr. Kennicott has endeavoured to prove, that the Tree of Life signifies all the trees of the garden, which were intended as food for the preservation of life; and another writer has attempted to prove, that the tree of *knowledge* and of *life* were the *same*. This is not a place in which to discuss their respective opinions; but, on the whole, that opinion which makes it a *single* tree of *cordial virtue* (as above) seems most probable. Compare Prov. iii. 18; xi. 30; xiii. 12.

Kenn. Diss. on the Tree of Life. Wits. Econ. Fœd. l. i. c. vi. § 11, 12. *Turret. Inst. Loc.* viii. *Quæst.* v. § 4, 5.

SCHOLIUM 9.

Many divines have likewise thought that the *tree of knowledge* was a slow poison, which so vitiated the fluids of the human body, as in process of time to occasion the death of Adam, and of all those who should descend from him after the infection was taken: and they have likewise thought it possible, that his blood and spirits might be so altered by the juice of it, as that sensual propensities and other passions might be thereby made much stronger than they were before,—and so that symmetry of the faculties broken, on which philosophical liberty depends. (Vid. *Def.* 26. *Cor.* 2. *Prop.* 17. *Cor.*)—It is objected, That upon this hypothesis the corruption and distemper of human nature must get less and less, as every generation is further removed from Adam, in whom there must surely have been vastly more of this supposed poison than there can be in any of his descendants. But it is replied, That it is the nature of poisons so to assimilate the blood to themselves, as to corrupt the whole mass of it, and to render an infection transmitted through many persons as dangerous as at first hand, as in the case of the bite of a mad dog, the small pox, &c.

Barr. Ess. on var. Dispens. p. 20. Note. *Burn Act.* p. 111. *Mather's Life*, p. 17. *Burn.*

at B. Lect. vo.. ii. p. 55. *Delan. Rev. exam.* vol. i. *Diss.* i. p. 8.

SCHOLIUM 10.

It is generally supposed, that the sin of Adam not only brought a curse on *the ground*, Gen. iii. 18, (which, by the way, Dr. Woodward supposes not to have taken place *till* the Deluge, and Bishop Sherlock to have been then *removed*,) but also, that it brought confusion and disturbance into the *whole frame of nature* in our world, both in the elements, occasioning greater inclemencies of weather than would otherwise have been, and also upon the animal creation, who it is supposed would not otherwise have devoured each other. Compare Isa. xi. 6 - 8; lxv. 25. Rom. viii. 19 - 22. It is indeed exceedingly probable that those animals, which are now dangerous to mankind, had at first such an awe impressed upon them, as effectually to secure him from any danger of their assaults; but we confess it is difficult to conceive how those animals, whose present frame shows them to have been of the carnivorous kind, could, without a miracle, have subsisted upon vegetables. Vid. *Prop.* 119. § 3. No. ii.

Milt. Par. Lost, l. x. ver. 651—719. *Whit. Ham. and Locke on Rom.* viii. 19. &c. *Woodw. Nat. Hist.* p. 73. *Sherl. on Prophe. Disc.* iv. p. 87. *Grove's Posth. Serm.* vol. i. *Serm.* vi. p. 155. *Watts's World to come. Disc. at Begin. Philos. Surv. of Anim. Creat.* part ii. § 1. part iii. § 2.

SCHOLIUM 11.

Some have conjectured that our first parents, in their state of innocence, were clothed with a *visible glory*, or lucid appearance; which, according to these writers, was a part of *the image of God* in which they were created. They suppose that the departure of this glory, as soon as they transgressed, was the *nakedness* which they were conscious of; and on this principle suppose that the like glory will be restored to the righteous at the *resurrection*; and argue, from those passages which favour that doctrine, the probability of man's being possessed of it in his primeval state. Compare Matt. xiii. 43; xvii. 2. Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 43. and with reference to this, some authors explain Rom. iii. 23. 2 Cor. v. 1—5. Rom. viii. 3. and even Phil. ii. 6 though not all with equal reason.

Mede's Diat. ap. Opera. Barring. Ess. p. 11. *Flem. Christol.* vol. ii. p. 246.

LECTURE CLXVII.

DEFINITION LXXX.

The actions or sufferings of *A*, might be said to be IMPUTED to *B*, if *B* should on the account of them in any degree be treated as if he had done or suffered what *A* has done or suffered, when he really has not; and when, without this action or suffering of *A*, *B* would not be so treated.

COROLLARY 1.

The *sin* of *A* may be said to be *imputed*, if *B*, though innocent, be upon that account treated in any degree as a sinner.

COROLLARY 2.

The *righteousness* of *A* may be said to be imputed to *B*, if, upon the account of it, *B*, though a sinner, be treated as if he were righteous.

COROLLARY 3.

There may be *real*, when there is not a *total*, imputation either of the righteousness or sin of another.

SCHOLIUM.

The justice of such imputation, on one hand or the other, can in the *general* be neither affirmed nor denied; but it is to be determined in particular cases, by a view of particular circumstances, and especially by considering the degree of the imputation.

PROPOSITION CXXXV.

The *sin* of Adam is in some degree *imputed* to all those who descended from him in the way of ordinary generation.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 133. 1. We are all born with such constitutions as will produce some evil inclinations, which we probably should not have had in our original state; which evil inclinations are represented in Scripture as derived from our parents, and therefore may be ultimately traced up to the first sinful parent from whom we descended.

2. Infants are plainly liable to diseases and death, though they have not committed any personal transgression,—which, while they are incapable of knowing the law, it seems impossible they should be capable of. Rom. v. 12—14.

2. 3. The seeds of diseases and death are no doubt derived to children from their immediate parents, and from thence may be traced up, through preceding generations, to the first diseased and mortal parent, i. e. Adam.

4. The Scripture teaches us to consider Adam as having brought a sentence of death upon his whole race, and expressly says, "That by his transgression many were *constituted sinners*;" i. e. on account of it are treated as such, 1 Cor. xv. 22; Rom. v. 12—19.

5. The sin of Adam brought upon himself depraved inclinations, an impaired constitution, and at length death. *Prop.* 134.

6. There is no reason to believe that, had man continued in a state of innocence, his offspring would have been thus corrupt and thus calamitous from their birth.

1—6. 7 *Vid et prop. xcix. Dor. ser. 6 — 1*

Locke and What on Rom. v. 12. *Bucan at B Lect.* vol. ii. p. 38. *Taylor on Orig. Sin*, p. 25, *with Jenn. Vin. Chand. Parish Serm.* vol. iv. No. vi. *Edw. on Orig. Sin*, 2. iv. *Wesley on ditto.*

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it appears that the covenant was made with Adam, not only for himself, but in some measure for his *posterity*; so that he was to be considered as the great *head* and representative of all that were to descend from him.

Edw. on Orig. Sin, p. 200. *Watts's Ruin and Recov. Taylor's Supplem.* § 6.

COROLLARY 2.

It may seem probable, in consequence of this damage which Adam's posterity was to become liable to by his transgression, that they would have received some additional advantages from his continued obedience; but what those advantages were, the Scripture does not expressly say, nor is it necessary for us particularly to know: in general, we are sure they must have been such as would secure the honours of divine justice in the establishment of such a constitution;—but more will be said concerning this below.

SCHOLIUM 1.

This imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity, is what divines generally call, with some latitude of expression, *original sin*, distinguishing it from *actual* sin, *i. e.* from personal guilt. Vid. *Prop.* 133. *Schol.* 5.

Watts's Ruin and Recov. p. 3. *Taylor's Supplement*, § 1.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is plain, in fact, that children frequently fare the worse for those faults of their parents which it was not in their power to help, especially as hereditary disorders are often communicated,—which lay a foundation for a miserable life and a more early death. If therefore a righteous God does in fact govern the world, we must allow it consistent with justice that it should be thus; nor will there appear any inconsistence, if we consider that justice determines not the manner in which the creature shall be treated in any given time in the beginning of its existence, but the manner in which it shall *on the whole* be treated;—a thought which might be sufficient to vindicate those passages in which God threatens to punish the iniquity of parents by the calamities of their children, Exod. xx. 5. 1 Kings xiv. 9, 10; xxi. 21, 22. Lam. v. 7. Matt. xxiii. 35.

Turr. Inst. Loc. ix. *Qu.* xix. § 20. *Rutherf. Rel. Qu.* iii. iv. p. 106; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 226. *Grosse's Posth.* II. vol. iv. p. 198. *Saur. Serm.* vol. vii. p. 372.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is debated how far the imputation of Adam's sin reaches; particularly, whether it extends to eternal death, or everlasting misery, supposing that everlasting misery is the consequence of personal guilt. We do here readily allow that God might righteously have put a period to the whole human race, immediately after the transgression of Adam, and consequently that we might have been said to be *lost for ever* by that transgression. We also allow, that God might, for aught we know, consistently with his own perfections, suffer the souls of those who die in their infancy to be utterly extinguished, and to sink into everlasting insensibility; and in that case, the transgression of that ancestor which made them mortal, might in a qualified sense be said to *destroy* their souls. But that one rational creature should be made finally and eternally miserable for the action of another, which it was no way in his power to prevent, does so ill agree with our natural notions of divine justice, and the repeated declarations of Scripture, (*e. g.* Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4, 20. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. Deut. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xiv. 6.) and with what God is pleased to say concerning his compassion for infants, Jonah iv. *ult.* that we must at least wait for the plainest and fullest decision of Scripture before we can admit it as true.

Ridgl. Body of Div. vol. i. p. 340. *Ridg. Orig. Sin.* p. 42. *Watts's Ruin and Recovery*, p. 329.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The most considerable argument to prove the imputation of Adam's sin to the eternal condemnation of his posterity, is taken from those passages of Scripture, as well as those rational evidences which prove eternal death to be the wages of sin, compared with those mentioned above, in which it is said that *all died in Adam:* but it is so evident that *death* does not always include *eternal misery*, and that a person may be said to die for the sins of another who is not made eternally miserable for them, that one cannot but be surprised at the stress that has been laid upon it. *Calv. Instit.* l. ii. c. i. § 8.

LECTURE CLXVIII

SCHOLIUM 5.

To show that a constitution, whereby all mankind should become obnoxious to eternal misery for the transgression of one common head, is consistent with divine justice, many have pleaded, that in consequence of such an appointment, we stood so fair a chance for happiness, that if we had then existed, and the proposal had been made us, we must in reason have been contented to put our

eternal all on that issue: so that God might reasonably impute that to us *as our act*, which he knew *would have been* our act, if we had been consulted on the occasion. But nothing would seem sufficient to vindicate such a proceeding, unless we were to suppose (as an obscure writer has done) that the souls of all the race of Adam were for that moment actually brought into being, and gave personal consent to that covenant, after which they were reduced to a state of insensibility, till the appointed moment came for their animating their respective bodies.

Sale's Kor. c. vii. p. 135. *Howe's Works*, vol. ii. p. 253. *Blackw. Sch. Sac.* p. 165. *Watts's Ruin and Rec.* p. 138. *Edw. Orig. Sin.* p. 410.

SCHOLIUM 6.

As a counterpart of the hardships put upon Adam's race, by such a covenant as has been represented, it has been asserted that all his posterity would after his short trial have been confirmed in a state of immutable happiness; and Dr. Guyse in particular conjectures, it might have been as soon as the fruit of the forbidden tree dropped off: but all this seems to be said without any express warrant from Scripture. Had any of the race of Adam committed any act of moral wickedness, we may conclude that such an offender, and probably his posterity, would have received some detriment; and had Cain for instance, at least when adult, eaten of the forbidden fruit, the *natural* consequences flowing thence to all mankind on Adam's transgression must (so far as we can judge) have descended to the race of Cain alone. Now that the one of these was possible, none can deny, unless they suppose that the whole race would, on the obedience of Adam, have had such extraordinary degrees of divine influence entailed upon them as would in fact have been an everlasting security to them against every degree of temptation: this was indeed *possible*; but we cannot discern such evidence of it from Scripture, as should imbolden us to such an assertion.

Berry-Street Lect. vol. i. p. 189.

SCHOLIUM 7.

On the whole, the most plausible thing which is said to prove the probability of a covenant, in which eternal misery should be brought upon all men by the guilt of the first sin, is this:—That we see in fact that mankind is brought into such a state, that every man does in some instances or other break the law of God himself, when he grows up; and this, in consequence of an original corruption derived from Adam,—as most at least acknowledge, even of those who deny the *total* imputation of his sin. Now it is said that it is as just to punish an innocent person *directly* for the guilt of another, as upon account of that other person's guilt to bring him into such a condition, that he *must necessarily sin*, and then inflict that punishment upon him for his own necessary act, which was objected against as unjust in the former case.—It is hard to say how this argument can be answered, unless we deny that any act of sin whatsoever is *necessarily* committed. On the other side it is urged, That, upon this supposition, it is a *possible* thing that any man, even in this fallen state, may continue perfectly innocent throughout the whole period of his life. The consequence cannot be denied: therefore it must on the whole be considered, whether it may be more rational to believe that every man does *in fact* sin, though he *might possibly* in every instance have avoided it,—or that God should plunge the whole race of mankind into perpetual and necessary ruin for the guilt of one of them.

Burn. on the Art. p. 111. *Burn. de Fide*, p. 141. *Sch. Sacrum*, p. 164. *Baxt. End of Controv.* c. x. *Limb. Theol.* l. iii. c. iii. § 20; c. iv. § 3; c. v. § 3. *Calv. Inst.* l. ii. c. i. § 5.

SCHOLIUM 8.

It may not be improper here to mention the singular opinion of Dr. Watts, in his very ingenious treatise on the *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*; which is, that the sin of Adam has subjected all his posterity not only to natural death, but to the utter *extinction of being*; the consequence of which is, that all those who die in their *infancy* fall into a state of *annihilation*, excepting those who are the seed of God's people, who by virtue of the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham, and the promise to the seed of the righteous, (compare particularly Isa. lxv. 23. Jer. xxxi. 15—17) shall, through the grace and power of Christ, obtain a part in a happy resurrection, in which other infants shall have no share.—It is certain Rev. xx. 12. will not disprove this opinion, because it may refer to persons of *all ranks in life*, as it often does, *vid.* Rev. xi. 18. compare xx. 13. But, on the whole, it seems best to acknowledge that we know nothing certain concerning the state of *infants*, and therefore can assert nothing positively; but that they are in the hands of a merciful God, who, as he cannot, consistently with justice and truth, give them a sense of guilt for an action they never committed, so probably he will not hold their souls in being, merely to make them sensible of pain for the guilt of a remote ancestor.—Their existence in a state of everlasting *insensibility* (which was Dr. Ridgley's scheme) seems hardly intelligible: we must therefore either fall in with the above-mentioned hypothesis, or suppose them *all* to have a part in the resurrection to glory; which seems to put them all on a level, without a due distinction in favour of the seed of believers; or else must suppose they go through some new state of trial,—a thing concerning which the Scripture is wholly silent.

Ruin and Rec. p. 321. *Works*, vol. vi. p. 308. *Edw. on Original Sin*, p. 431.

LECTURE CLXIX

DEFINITION LXXXI.

Whatever that is, which being done or suffered either by an offending creature himself, or by another person for him, shall secure the honours of the divine government in bestowing upon the offender pardon and happiness, may properly be called a SATISFACTION or ATONEMENT made to God for him.

Watts's Redeemer and Sanctifier, p. 28—32: *Works*, vol. iii. p. 741—743.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It is not here our intention to assert, That it is in the power of an offending creature to *satisfy* for his *own* sins,—but only to show what we mean when we speak of his doing it.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Such a sense of the word *satisfaction*, though not in strict propriety of speech amounting to the payment of a debt, is agreeable to the use of the word in the Roman *law*: where it signifies *to content a person aggrieved*, and is put for some valuable consideration, substituted instead of what is a proper payment, and consistent with a remission of that debt or offence for which such supposed satisfaction is made: which is a circumstance to be carefully observed, in order to vindicate the doctrine we are about to establish, and to maintain the consistency between different parts of the Christian scheme. See this sense abundantly confirmed by citations from Grotius, Caius, Ulpian, and Pomponius.

Chapm. Eus. vol. ii. p. 406. *Benson on* 1 Pet. *Appendix.*

PROPOSITION CXXXVI.

Christ has made *satisfaction* for the sins of all those who repent of their sins, and return to God in the way of sincere, though imperfect, obedience.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Although Christ was innocent, nevertheless he endured very grievous sufferings both in body and mind, Isa. liii. 3. Matt. xxvi. 38. and this he did spontaneously, Heb. x. 7, 9.

2. It is expressly asserted in Scripture, that these sufferings were brought upon Christ *for the sake* of sinful men, *in whose stead* he is sometimes also said to have suffered. Isa. liii. 5, 6, 10. Matt. xx. 28. Rom. iii. 25; v. 6—8. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. Eph. v. 2. Heb. vii. 27; ix. 26; x. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18.

Rupbelii Annot. in Rom. v. 8. *Cas. Neandr. apud Op.* vol. ii. p. 257.

3. The offers of pardon and eternal salvation are made in Scripture to those that repent and return to God, for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered, *in whom* they are therefore declared to be accepted by God, and *to whom* they are hereupon taught to ascribe the glory of their salvation. John iii. 14—17. Acts x. 35, 36, 43; xiii. 38; xvi. 18, 19. Rom. iv. 25. Col. i. 20—22. 2 Cor. v. 18—20. Eph. i. 5—7. Heb. i. 3; ix. 14; x. 1—10, 14. Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 9, 10; vii. 13, 14.

Sykes on Redemption, part i. c. 5, 6.

4. It is evident that, according to the Gospel institution, pardon and life were to be offered to *all* to whom the preaching of the Gospel came, without an exception. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts xiii. 38, 39. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Isa. liii. 6. John i. 29.

5. It is plain, from the whole tenor of the *epistolary* part of the New Testament, as well as from some particular passages of it, that there was a remainder of imperfection, generally at least, to be found even in the best Christians; notwithstanding which they are encouraged to rejoice in the hope of salvation by Christ. Phil. iii. 13. Gal. v. 17. James iii. 2. 1 John i. 8—10; ii. 1, 2.

6. Whereas, so far as we can judge, the remission of sin, without any satisfaction at all, might have laid a foundation for men's thinking lightly of the law of God, it is certain that, by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, a very great honour is done to it; and mercy communicated to us as the purchase of his blood, comes in so awful as well as so endearing a manner, as may have the best tendency to engage those who embrace the Gospel to a life of holy obedience.

Whit. on John iii. 16. *Eph.* i. 8. and *Heb.* x. 14. *Barm. on Art.* No. ii. p. 52. *Hoare's Works*, vol. i. p. 204. *Tillot. Works*, vol. i. p. 477. *Turner at B. Lect. Serm.* viii. *Eml. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 235. vol. ii. p. 43. *Tunk. Christ the Mediat.* c. i. p. 6. *Butl. Anal.* part ii. c. v. p. 207, &c. *Clarke's Post. Serm.* vol. v. No. ix. p. 203. *Stillingf. on Christ's Satisf. Preface.*

COROLLARY 1.

It is a very peculiar glory of the Gospel, that it gives so satisfactory an account of the method whereby sin may be pardoned, in a manner consistent with the honours of the divine government; and thereby relieves the mind from that anxiety to which, if left merely to its own reasoning, it might otherwise be exposed on that account.

Leechman. Tend. vol. i. p. 168.

COROLLARY 2.

From comparing what has been said in this proposition with *Def.* 80. *Cor.* 1, 2. it appears that, on the one hand, *our sins* were imputed to *Christ*;—on the other, that we are *justified* by the *imputation* of Christ's *righteousness* to *us*; *i. e.* we, though guilty, on complying with the Gospel, are finally *treated* by God as *righteous persons*, *i. e.* as if we had never offended him at all, or had ourselves

satisfied the demands of his law for such offences,) out of regard to what Christ has done or suffered; whereas we should not otherwise have been so treated. Compare Isa. xlv. 24, 25; liii. 11. Jer. xxiii. 6. Rom. iii. 22; v. 17—19; x. 3; iv. 4—6. 2 Cor. v. 21. Phil. iii. 9. 2 Pet. i. 1.

Turret. Loc. xvi. vol. ii. p. 700. *Le Blanc Thes. de Justif. Chr. Imput.* § 13. *Boyse's Works*, vol. i. p. 443. *Whitb. Com.* vol. ii. p. 217. *Rawlin's Serm. Just.* p. 262.

COROLLARY 3.

It is plain, from *gr.* 3, 4. that there is a sense, in which Christ may be said *to have died for all; i. e.* as he has procured an offer of pardon to all, provided they sincerely embrace the Gospel. Compare John iii. 16; vi. 51. Rom. v. 18; viii. 32. 1 Cor. viii. 11. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 19. 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6. Heb. ii. 9. 1 John ii. 2.

Whit. on John iii. 17. *and* 2 Pet. ii. 1. *Turret. Loc.* iv. *Q.* xvii. § 29, &c. *Lime-st. Lec.* vol. i. p. 454. *Ruin and Rec. Q.* xii. p. 244. *Q.* xiii. p. 265; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 279. *Calv. on Matt.* xxvi. 8. Rom. v. 18. 1 Cor. viii. 11. 1 John ii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 1. *Howe's Works*, vol. ii. p. 50.

COROLLARY 4.

From the Scriptures mentioned above, it appears how wrong it is to represent the death of Christ as merely the *natural* consequence of his undertaking the reformation of so corrupt an age, in the manner in which he did it. Nothing can be plainer than that Christ came into the world *on purpose* to die, (Matt. xx. 28. John vi. 50, 51; x. 17, 18; xii. 27, 28. Acts ii. 23. Gal. i. 4. Heb. ii. 14; x. 4, &c. 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. 1 John iv. 10.) which is much illustrated by the apparent power which Christ had, and in many circumstances of his life and sufferings showed, of delivering himself by miracle whenever he pleased.

Fost. ag. Tind. p. 316. *Postsc.* p. 348. *Tomk. Christ. the Mediat.* p. 45. *Hallet on Script.* vol. ii. p. 283.

LECTURE CLXX.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Though Christ were perfectly innocent, he might be afflicted in the manner in which Scripture represents, by reason of the imputation of our sins to him, seeing it appears that he *voluntarily* consented to it, and that ample recompence is made him, Heb. x. 7. Phil. ii. 9. Psal. cx. 7. to which may perhaps be added Heb. xii. 2.

Christ. the Med. p. 119. *Tind. on Chris.* p. 376. *Bates's Harm. of Div. Attr.* p. 244; *Works*, p. 174. *Butl. Anal.* p. 210. part ii. c. v. § 7.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It appears from Luke xxiii. 43. John xix. 30. that the soul of Christ, after his death, did not go into a state of punishment, but that his sufferings ended when he expired. As for the argument brought from 1 Pet. iii. 19. it is well known there are many other interpretations of that text; of which the most probable seems to be this, That Christ, by his Spirit in Noah, preached to those who, continuing disobedient, were destroyed by the flood, and whose separate spirits are now confined, and reserved to future punishment.

Barring. on. Disp. App. No. iii. *Burn. on Art.* iii. p. 55. *More's Theol. Works*, p. 17. *Har. Diss.* p. 73.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is greatly debated, Whether we are justified by Christ's *death* alone, or by the imputation of his *active* and *passive obedience?* but this seems to be a controversy of much less importance than it has generally been represented. All that Christ did or suffered to repair the violated honours of the divine law, and to secure the rights of God's government in the pardon of sin, must be taken into the view of his satisfaction, according to the definition given of it above; nevertheless, forasmuch as his *death* was a most glorious instance of his concern for the honour of God and the happiness of man, and that whereby the divine honour was most eminently secured, the Scripture does in many places ascribe our acceptance to this. See the texts quoted before, especially those under *gr.* 3.

Williams's Works, vol. iv. p. 19. *Turretine loc. q.* 3. vol. ii. p. 705.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Hardly any controversy on this head has been more insisted upon, than that which arises from this question, *viz.* Whether such a satisfaction as the Gospel represents were absolutely *necessary?* or whether God might have pardoned sin without it, by a mere sovereign act? For the necessity of a satisfaction, the chief Scripture argument is taken from Heb. ii. 10. but it is said, on the other hand, that this text only proves the way actually taken to have been a way *worthy of God*,—not that it was the *only* way that could have been so. It is likewise

* [illegible] See his Paraphrase and Notes, vol. ii. p. 412—420. second edit.

urged. That it is never to be imagined that God would have subjected so glorious a person to such sufferings, if any other way could have been discovered equally eligible. On the whole, we must acknowledge that we can conceive of no other method so happily contrived to illustrate the divine glory, and secure the gratitude, obedience, and happiness of the creature. Compare Rom. iii. 26.

Dr. Goodw. Restor. of Man, lib. i. c. iv. p. 13; *Works*, vol. iii. part ii. p. 13. *Eml. Tracts*, vol. i. p. 242. vol. ii. p. 50. *Locke on Rom.* iii. 24. *Witsii Econ. Fœd.* lib. ii. c. viii. *Owen de Just. Div. pass. Christ the Med.* p. 90. *Hallet on Scrip.* vol. ii. p. 299.

SCHOLIUM 5.

The prevalency of *sacrifices* in the world, although from the light of nature there appears to have been no rational foundation for them, seems, on the one hand, to intimate an apprehension in the mind of man, that some satisfaction for sin was requisite; and on the other, may perhaps intimate that there had been some *tradition* concerning an expiatory sacrifice appointed by God, which the sacrifices of animals were intended to represent.—See the references under *Prop.* 122. § 3.

Tillot. Works, vol. i. p. 478. *Outram de Sacr.* lib. i. c. xxi. xxii. *Sykes on Sacr. Taylor on Deism*, p. 249. *Tayl. Doct. of Atonement.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

To show with what propriety the *death of Christ* may be called *a sacrifice*, it may be proper, more particularly, to reflect on the nature and efficacy of those Jewish sacrifices which were called *sin-offerings*, to which there is so plain a reference in the epistle to the Hebrews, and other passages. Concerning such sacrifices then it may be observed,

1. That in all the instances in which they were allowed, they were the *terms* or conditions on which men were *pardoned*, i. e. on which the penalties denounced against such offences by the Mosaic law were remitted, without which they could not have been so remitted on any pretence of repentance, or any satisfaction made to their injured neighbour; and for this reason, where crimes were declared *capital*, no sacrifices might be admitted at all (Psal. li. 16.); and, on the other hand, the *value* of the sin-offering was sunk so low in some instances, that the poorest of the people might be able to bring it. Lev. v. 11. 12.

2. They were standing evidences of the evil and desert of sin; and,

3. Of God's being ready to forgive those who in appointed circumstances presented them; but,

4. They could not possibly *take away* sin, i. e. remove the moral guilt even of the least offence, so as to procure in any instance a remission of any thing more than the particular sentence pronounced against the offender, by God, as the King of the Jews.

From this survey, it appears, by the preceding proposition, that the death of Christ was a proper sacrifice, and much more excellent than any other, in that it takes away the final sentence of condemnation; whereas the Mosaic sacrifices left the Jews still subject to death, and future punishment too, without such a sincere repentance, as made no part of the condition of procuring a *legal* remission. Compare Heb. x. 1. 11. and also Acts xiii. 39.

Hallet on Scrip. vol. ii. *Disc.* iii. p. 269. *Tayl Doct. of Atonem.* c. 2. *Sykes on Redemp.* p. 324. *Law's Theory*, p. 274.*

SCHOLIUM 7.

Dr. Thomas Burnet puts the doctrine of the satisfaction in something of a peculiar view. He says that the death of Christ has not itself satisfied divine justice, but only put us into the capacity of doing it, by confessing our sins, and applying to God for pardon, with a humble dependence upon Christ's death; which he thinks so necessary a condition of salvation, that no man can obtain it without submitting to it: he thinks this to be the language of an attendance upon the Lord's Supper; which he lays a very great stress upon, to such a degree as to think that no man has a covenant claim to the mercy of God in Christ, if he does not by engaging in this ordinance declare his trust in Christ's sacrifice, and so atone the divine displeasure.

Burnet on Redemption.

* The question concerning the nature and design of sacrifices, seems to have been of considerable importance. See particularly Mr. Peters's Dr. Mayhew's Letter, and Dr. Chauncy's answer to the latter; Dr. Taylor on Atonement, and Dr. Jortin's Discourses. I have not met with the second, however, I have endeavoured to do Dr. Taylor justice. As Dr. Owen says, Our Saviour, Dying and Rising, and Sprinkling the Mercy-seat with the Blood of Sprinkling, is Answered, or Satisfied, and Accepted, as to the Legal Sacrifices, Burning, and Consuming, and Expiating the Sin-offering, and Trespass-offering, &c. Dr. Taylor's Scheme of Atonement explained, as proposed by the Jewish Sacrifices, p. 2. The Sacrifices of and Death of Christ. This question is likewise largely considered by the author of that well known pamphlet, Dr. Rutherforth's Essay on the Nature, Connexion, and Extent of the Christian Scheme. The question Dr. Owen proposes, whether the principal Sacrifices Expiatory in the Church, the Typification of different Mosaic Observations by the Death, Sacrifice, and Resurrection of Christ, Reference to the Day of Atonement, Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ, Sacrifice of the Passover, Lambs, Goats, Bullocks, Offering of the Incense, Sprinkling the Mercy-seat, Offering Bread, Wine, &c. and many other things, are to be understood as Sacrifices properly so called, or only as Types, Figures, Representations, Memorials, Commemorations, Declarations, Confessions, Professions, Prayers, Praises, Thanksgivings, Obedience, Worship, Ordinances, Duties, and other Services of God, is a question, whether it be more curious than useful, I shall not determine. Whether any, Dr. Owen, or the most general Body of the Divines and Doctors of the Church, have understood, or, by Scripture, can sufficiently prove, that Christ, and Atonement by Dr. Taylor, &c. An Essay towards the Improvement of the Jewish Worship, and Law of Christ's Death and Sacrifice, by M. Mayhew, &c. Indeed to many the Essay on the Sacrifices of Abel, by Mr. Lindsey, Essay on the Doctrine of Atonement by Dr. Delaune, and An Essay on the Mosaical Atonement, by M. Peirce, &c. In this case I shall not enter. Dr. Peirce's Answer to the Sermon and several Discourses on the occasion, &c. Nor do I mean to the attonement to be by the death of Christ.

LECTURE CLXXI.

DEFINITION LXXXII.

Faith in Christ is, in general, committing our souls to him for salvation in his appointed way; or more largely, such a persuasion that he is the Messiah, and such a desire and expectation of the blessings which he has in his Gospel promised to his people, as engages the soul to fix its dependence upon him, and subject itself to him in all the ways of holy obedience.

Grove on Faith, p. 5, &c.; *Works*, vol. iii. *Rymer on Rev.* p. 211. *Tillotson's Works*, vol. iii. p. 481.

COROLLARY 1.

Faith in Christ is a very extensive principle, and includes in its nature and inseparable effects the whole of moral virtue,—since the precepts of Christ evidently require that we should love God with all our heart, that we should be perfect as he is perfect, and pursue whatever things are pure, lovely, virtuous, and honourable.—Matt. xii. 37; v. *ult.* Phil. iv. 8. *Grove on Saving Faith*, p. 35.

COROLLARY 2.

Those who assert that, under the Gospel, a man is *justified* by *faith*, cannot justly be accused of subverting our injuring practical religion, if faith be taken in the sense here defined.

Saurin's Sermons, vol. ix. p. 245. *Grove, ubi supra*, p. 61.

SCHOLIUM 1.

If the account of faith here given, should appear to be agreeable to the Scripture notion of that faith to which the promises of Gospel salvation are annexed, then it will follow that Dr. Whitby is much mistaken, when he represents faith as consisting merely in *an assent to the Gospel as true*; and says, That upon declaring that assent, a man was justified from all past sins, without good works; but that good works were necessary, in order to *continue* in a justified state: unless by this he means, that a person sincerely and fully resolved for good works would have been in a state of salvation, though he had died before he had any opportunity of putting these pious purposes into execution. If this be his sense, he has not expressed it clearly, and it would be very unsafe in the general to define faith according to his notion of it.

Locke's Reas. of Christ. vol. i. p. 16. *Whitby's Pref. to Gal.* p. 292.

Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, seems to have entertained a notion much resembling this of Dr. Whitby's, but with this difference, that his idea of justifying faith seems to be a faith, upon professing which, a person was justly entitled to enter into the society of those who were called *the justified ones*, or the *sanctified* people of God, *i. e.* into the visible church of Christ, who receive the visible signs of pardon and favour from him, and are set apart as his peculiar people, as the Jewish nation in general once was. This is what he calls the *first* justification, and on that principle attempts to explain St. Paul's discourse of justifying faith in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians; thereby, as it seems, sinking the passages in question, and others, in which the apostle speaks of the privileges of believers, far below their original sense. It seems much more reasonable to say the apostle addressed the several churches as consisting of *sincere* Christians, as most of their members were, without taking particular notice of those few who might be otherwise.

*Taylor on Romans. Doddridge on Regeneration, Postscript.**

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some divines have chosen to call this purpose of holy obedience, essential to true faith, by the name of *internal good works*, and the fruit actually produced in life, *external*; and in this sense of the words it must be acknowledged that, according to our definition of faith, compared with the following proposition, we maintain the universal necessity of good works as much as any can do; but it may be questioned whether this is the most natural sense of the word. Comp. John vi. 29.

Waterland's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 54.

SCHOLIUM 3.

We allow that the word *faith* has various significations in Scripture besides this; *viz.* It is sometimes put for what is called a *miraculous* faith, *i. e.* a persuasion in a person who was endowed with miraculous gifts, that God would perform some miracle, correspondent to some present impression made on his mind, Matt. xvii. 20. Mark xi. 22, 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Sometimes it signifies only an assent to the truth of the Gospel, though perhaps ineffectual; in which sense it is taken in many passages of the Epistle of James. *Vid.* Jam. ii. 14—26. Acts viii. 13. Sometimes an assent to the truth of any proposition, whether the evidence of it were that of testimony, reason, or sense. John xx. 8, 25, 29. Heb. xi. 3.

Tillots. vol. iii. Serm. 165. p. 428.†

PROPOSITION LXXXVI.

The Gospel absolutely requires such a faith as is here defined, of all those who would partake of the

* The system of Dr. Taylor is fully examined in his Key to the Apostolic Writings, published by his executors; to which the reader may refer for a more particular account of the nature and tendency of that Romance. The arguments in the Doddridge controversy [illegible] in the Translation of Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 58.

† In a work, [illegible] Lord Lyttelton on Conversion and Apostasy, [illegible] the meaning of the [illegible] of Scripture, [illegible] Mr. James Hervey [illegible] against the sentiment. [illegible] Dr. [illegible] Mr. Robinson's Essay on Faith, [illegible] to you with good Wishes, and Mr. Dixon's Lectures on Faith.

benefits of it; and also makes a promise of salvation to all those in whom such a faith is found.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Everlasting life is in the Gospel promised to believers, and appropriated to them, whatever the import of that faith shall afterwards appear to be. John iii. 16—18, 36. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts xvi. 31.

2. That this faith implies a persuasion that Christ is the Messiah, or a person sent into the world, under the character of the Saviour of fallen man, appears from John xvi. 17. Acts viii. 37. Rom. iii. 22, 26, 27; iv. 24, 25; x. 9. 1 John iv. 15; v. 1.

3. It is evidently asserted in Scripture, that all true believers *receive Christ*, and *rejoice in him*; that he is *precious to them, &c.* John i. 12. Phil. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 7. and for this reason, believing in Christ is expressed *by coming to him*, John vi. 35. and considering the etymology of the word πιστις from πειθω, and especially the import of πειθειν επι τινι, this seems to be the primary idea of *faith*, though necessarily connected with the view given of it in the last step, and in that which follows, in order to distinguish a true faith from such a presumption, as would affront Christ rather than honour him. Compare 2 Tim. i. 12.

Watts's Divine Dispens. p. 64; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 565, &c.

4. That no degree of persuasion, desire, expectation, or dependence, will be accepted of God, without a firm and prevailing resolution of sincere obedience, appears, not only from James ii. 14—26. but also from all those passages which declare holiness to be necessary in order to salvation, and which pronounce a sentence of final condemnation on all those who are disobedient to the truth; as Rom. ii. 8, 9. Heb. xii. 14. 2 Thess. i. 7—9. Matt. vii. 21—23; all which would be utterly inconsistent with those promises made to faith, *gr.* 1. if faith did not imply such a prevailing resolution of holy obedience. Compare John iii. 36. (Greek.)

1—4. *Def.* st. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Limb. Theol. lib. v. c. viii. § 5. *Barr. Works*, vol. ii. p. 46.

COROLLARY 1.

They who represent faith as merely a firm persuasion that we ourselves are justified, or that Christ particularly died *for us*, do greatly misrepresent it, and lead their followers into a dangerous error; not to insist upon the contradiction in such a definition of faith, which seems to imply that we must have our interest in Christ revealed to us before we can believe, and yet must believe before it can be revealed to us; unless that revelation were supposed to have no foundation, or a person were allowed to be justified while actually an unbeliever,—which is directly contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures mentioned above, and to many more which declare the displeasure of God against the workers of iniquity, which all unbelievers are.

Will. Gosp. Tr. c. ix. p. 72; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 80. *Calv. Inst.* lib. iii. c. ii. § 15, 16, 19. *Barr. Works*, vol. ii. p. 50. *Baxt. End of Controv.* c. xx. § 31. *Truman's Mor. Impot.* p. 162. *Grove on Sacr. Faith*, p. 18.

COROLLARY 2.

Those who are received into the divine favour in the method before described, can have no cause to *glory* before God, it being matter of pure favour that such a constitution should be established for the salvation of sinful creatures. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. iii. 27; iv. 2—5; xi. 6.

Doddr. on Salv. by Grace, p. 19

LECTURE CLXXII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It has been greatly debated, Whether faith be the *condition* of our salvation? If, by *condition*, be intended something which is a valuable equivalent for a benefit received, or something which is to be performed entirely in our own strength, it is certain that nothing done by us can merit that title, considering, on the one hand, the great and glorious rewards of eternal happiness proposed in the Gospel; and, on the other, the weakness of our created and the degeneracy of our corrupted, nature; but if *condition* only signifies, as it generally does, something insisted upon, if we would receive a benefit, and upon the performance of which we shall, in fact, be entitled to that benefit, it is the very thing asserted and proved in the proposition, that *faith* is in this sense the condition of our salvation. Nevertheless, since so strong a prejudice is by many weakly and foolishly imbibed against that phrase, it may generally be matter of prudence to decline it, since it can express no more than is expressed by saying, That they who do believe, shall, and they who do not, shall not, be saved; which is so Scriptural a manner of speaking that it offends none.

Wits. Econ. Fœd. lib. iii. c. i. § 8, 9, &c. *Will. Gosp. Tr.* c. viii.; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 59. *Morris's Serm.* vol. i. *Grove, ubi sup.* p. 28.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Much of the same kind with the former is that question, Whether the Gospel consists merely of *promises*, or whether it can in any sense be called a *law*? The answer plainly depends upon adjusting the meaning of the words *gospel* and *law*. If the *gospel* be taken for the declaration God has made to men by Christ concerning the manner in which he will treat them, and the conduct he expects from

them, it is plain that this includes *commands*, and even *threatenings*, as well as *promises*; but to define the Gospel so, as only to express the favourable part of that declaration, is indeed taking the question for granted, and confining the word to a sense much less extensive than it often has in Scripture. Compare Rom. ii. 16. 2 Thess. i. 8. 1 Tim. i. 10, 11. and it is certain, that if the *Gospel* be put for all the parts of the dispensation taken in connexion one with another, it may well be called on the whole, a *good message*, εὐαγγέλιον. In like manner, the question, Whether the Gospel be a *law* or not? is to be determined by the definition of a law and of the Gospel as above; if *law* signifies, as it generally does, the discovery of the will of a superior, teaching what he requires of those under his government, with the intimation of his intention of dispensing rewards and punishments, as this rule of their conduct is observed or neglected,—in this latitude of expression, it is plain from the proposition, that the Gospel, taken for the declaration made to men by Christ, is *a law*, as in Scripture it is sometimes called (James i. 25. Rom. iv. 15; v. 13; viii. 2.); but if *law* be taken in the greatest rigour of the expression, for such a discovery of the will of God and our duty, as contains in it no intimation of our obtaining the divine favour, otherwise than by a perfect and universal conformity to it,—in that sense the Gospel is not a law, as appears likewise from the proposition.

Wits. ubi sup. Williams' Gosp. Truth, p. 133; *Works*, vol. iii. p. 343.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It has been denied that any who are already Christians can be rationally exhorted to believe in Christ; and Dr. Whitby expressly says, There are no instances of it in the New Testament; but it is to be considered, that faith is not any one act of the mind to be performed once for all; but it expresses the temper which a man is to carry along with him throughout his whole life. Compare Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. v. 7. and 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 7. and the more lively the impressions and acts of it are, the more firmly may we be said to believe; or, in other words, there may be different *degrees* of this faith; and consequently it is not an absurd or unprofitable thing to address to those who have already believed, for the *establishment* and *increase* of their faith; as it appears the apostles did, John xx. 31. 1 John v. 13. Comp. John xi. 15; xiii. 19; xiv. 1. 29. Eph. iii. 17.

Whitby on New Test. vol. ii. p. 296. *Grove, ubi sup.* p. 146. *ad fin.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is further questioned, How far *faith* can be said, as Rom. iv. 5. to be *imputed for righteousness*, if it be by the *righteousness of Christ* imputed to us, that we are justified, as was asserted before. *Prop.* 136. *Cor.* 2. To this some have answered, That faith is there put for the *object* of faith, as hope is for the object of hope, Jer. xiv. 8. Heb. vi. 18. 1 Tim. i. 1. and fear for the object of fear, Gen. xxxi. 53. and this solution is maintained by

Raucl. on Just. p. 209. *Grove on Law.*

We answer, That any thing may be said to be imputed to us for righteousness, or in order to our justification, which, being as it were set down to our account, serves in any degree as the means of our justification, as faith evidently does, though not by virtue of its own merit and excellency, but with regard to the righteousness of Christ, on the account of which God is pleased thus graciously to regard it; or, as Witsius states it, "Faith is set down to our account in the book of God, as an evidence that we are in the number of those who, by the righteousness of Christ, according to the tenor of the Gospel, are to be justified."

Wits. Econ. Fœd. lib. iii. c. viii. § 56. *Williams's Gospel Tr.* c. xii. p. 102. *Doel on Salv. by Gr.* p. 13. *Brine's Effic. of Christ's Death. Grove, ubi sup.* p. 140.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It has been questioned, How far the precepts requiring faith in the Gospel, on the penalty of damnation, can be supposed to extend? As to the Heathens, we shall briefly consider their case in the eighth *scholium*. It seems this declaration must at least extend to those who have an opportunity of inquiring into the truth of Christianity, and who may, by an honest inquiry, attain to satisfaction in the truth of it. If there be any adult person in a Christian country, who, not by his own fault, but by the circumstances in which Providence has placed him, lies under difficulties absolutely invincible, it is as rational to suppose God will allow for such, as for the ignorance of infants; but where persons have genius and opportunity to inquire, it is hard to imagine how their difficulties should be invincible, unless we suppose that God has left the Christian religion in such circumstances, that those who inquire most fully into its evidence, with the greatest sincerity and impartiality, may not see sufficient reason to embrace it, which is utterly incredible (compare John vii. 17.); so that the case of most infidels in Christian countries must be exceeding dangerous; and consequently the denunciation (Mark xvi. 16.) must not be limited to those who heard the apostles preach, and saw their miracles, as some suppose.

Watts on Infid. § 3. Q. vii. p. 83. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 592. *Wesl. Ser. of Prov.* p. 151. *Berket's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 147. *Gerard on Saving Faith*, p. 87.

SCHOLIUM 6.

The damnatory sentence which Christianity pro-

nounces on those who reject it has been urged as in itself a most unreasonable thing, since faith depends not upon ourselves, but on the degree of evidence in the things to be believed.

But to this it may be answered,

1. That it evidently appears from *Def.* 82. that faith is not merely the assent of the *understanding* to a speculative truth, but implies our reposing such a confidence in Christ, and holding our souls in such a subjection to him, as depends upon the human *will* as much as any disposition and action of the mind, both as to the impartiality of inquiring, and the manner of acting, when evidence is proposed and apprehended. Comp. Isa. xxix. 13, 14. Dan. xii. 10. Matt. vi. 23; xi. 25; xiii. 11, 12. John iii. 19; v. 44. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 13. *Whist. Princ. of Rel. Pref.*

2. That there is in general no absurdity in supposing, that a divine revelation may be attended with a sentence of condemnation against those who reject it, since it is certain, God may contrive an evidence which he knows to be reasonably sufficient for the conviction of every one to whom it is addressed, and on that supposition may condemn those who will not submit to it; which, if he has determined to do, it is wise and gracious in him to add such a threatening; and indeed, on the whole, it is most probable that this will be the case with regard to every revelation whatever.

3. That these general reasonings have peculiar weight when applied to Christianity, considering the representation which Scripture makes of the degree of its evidence; the nature and circumstances of the scheme itself, bringing the guilty creature such important blessings in so extraordinary a way; the manner in which it was introduced, and the difficulties it was to struggle with, which required such strong sanctions.

Dodd. Ans. to Chris. not foun. on Arg. p. 28. *Watts. on Infid.* p. 42. *Tayl. on Rom.* iii. 10. p. 265. *Butl. Anal.* c. vi. p. 228. *Grove, ubi sup.* p. 130. *Morris's Serm.* vol. i. No. iii. *Bulk. Econ. of the Gospel*, lib. 5.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It is a question of the utmost difficulty, How much of the Gospel must be believed in order to salvation, or, in other words, what articles of faith are *fundamental?* To this some have answered, by saying, It is only fundamental to believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, and that all things contained therein are true; but this answer is liable to a double objection; as, on the one hand, it supposes it absolutely necessary that every man should believe both the plenary inspiration, and the extent of it to all the books of Scripture, which can never be proved to be a thing absolutely required; on the other hand, such an implicit belief of this might be consistent with the ignorance of, and mistakes about, many of the most important doctrines of Christianity; and therefore this will determine nothing in regard to the main question; though it may be indeed admitted, that where a person is possessed of such a belief, and appears not to contradict it by gross errors, it may be expedient, to avoid endless disputes, for Christian societies to acquiesce in such a declaration, rather than to insist upon others more critical. Mr. Locke, and many others with him, maintain that the only fundamental of Christianity is, that Christ is the Messiah; but here a question arises concerning the extent of these words; perhaps it may be sufficient to answer it by saying, That wherever there appeared to be such a persuasion of the dignity of Christ's person, and the extent of his power, as should encourage men to commit their souls to his care, and to subject them to his government, those who professed such a persuasion were admitted to baptism by the apostles, and ought to be owned as Christians; and it seems necessary in the general to acquiesce in some such determination; for the demand of drawing up a list of fundamentals, *i. e.* of doctrines without the belief of which none can be saved, seems to be founded on a mistaken supposition, that the same things are fundamental to *all*; whereas according to persons' different capacities and opportunities of inquiry, that may be fundamental to *one* (*i. e.* necessary to be believed by him, in order to approve the general sincerity of his heart before God) which is not so to *another*.

Turret. on Fundam. Locke's Reas. of Christ. vol. ii. p. 74. *Bennet's Irenic.* p. 54. *Baxt. Saints' R.* c. iii. *Chilling. Safe Way*, c. ii. iii. *Rym. on Rev.* lib. i. c. x. p. 253. *More on Fundamentals, passim.*

SCHOLIUM 8.

It has been much disputed, Whether it be possible that the Heathens should be saved? Some have absolutely denied it, upon the authority of the texts mentioned in the proposition, which universally require *faith in Christ*; but to this it is answered, That they can only regard such to whom the Gospel comes, and are capable of understanding the contents of it. The truth seems to be this, That none of the Heathens will be condemned for not believing the Gospel; but they are liable to condemnation for the breach of God's natural law; nevertheless, if there be any of them in whom there is a prevailing love to the Divine Being, and care in the practice of virtue, there seems reason to believe that, for the sake of Christ, though to them unknown, they may be accepted by God: and so much the rather, as the ancient Jews, and even the apostles of Christ, during the time of our Saviour's abode upon earth, seem to have had but little notion of these doctrines, which those who deny the salvability of the Heathens are most apt to imagine

fundamental. Compare Rom. ii. 10, &c. 26. Acts x. 34, 35. Matt. viii. 11, 12. to which may be added 1 John ii. 2. which Mr. Rymer supposes intentionally decisive on this question, as to the application of Christ's merits to all virtuous men, who may not have opportunities of hearing of his name. Some also add John i. 29.

Rym. Rep. of Rev. Rel. c. v. p. 88. *Scott's Chr. Life*, vol. ii. p. 265. *Owen on Sp.* p. 535. *Tayl. Key to Rom.* p. 104. *Turr. Loc.* vol. i. Q. iv. *Baxt. Saints' Rest*, p. 1. c. viii. § 2. *Mede's Works*, p. 166. *Baxt. Works*, vol. iii. p. 846. *Barc. Apol.* p. 181. *Str. and Weakn. of Hum. Reas.* p. 264. *Watts's Works*, vol. ii. p. 303. *John Goodw. Pagans' Debt and Dowry. Brekell's Sermons*, p. 12.

LECTURE CLXXIII.

PROPOSITION CXXXVIII.

To take a brief survey of what seems most important in the late controversy, especially between Dr. Foster and Dr. Stebbing, concerning heresy.*

SOLUTION.

1. It seems to be agreed on both sides, That Christians are to be concerned that they maintain the purity of the faith as delivered in the Scriptures; and that in proportion to the degree in which any particular error is apprehended to be pernicious, it is to be discouraged, and by all rational and Christian methods opposed, by private persons and religious societies, Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 16—18. Jude ver. 3. 2 John ver. 10, 11.

2. Nevertheless, the frequent exhortations that every where occur in Scripture to maintain mutual candour and love towards each other, should teach us to use the greatest tenderness on this head, and will oblige us to put the kindest construction on the different expressions, and even the mistakes, of our fellow-Christians, that we rationally can. See the texts quoted at the end of *Turretine on Fundamentals.*

Doddridge's Sermon on Christian Candour.

3. When these two points are allowed, if the question be, what those peculiar errors are which are to be discountenanced, so as to refuse acts of religious communion with those that hold them? the question is much the same with that of *the fundamentals* of Christianity treated of before: if it be, Whether persons censured and avoided as erroneous are to be called *heretics*, or are so called in Scripture? it is only then a debate concerning the particular use of a word, which indeed is the chief thing that seems in question between the two accurate and ingenious writers mentioned above; and with regard to that, it may be remarked,

(1.) That the word αιρεσις, from αιρεω, *eligo*, seems to answer most exactly to the English word *sect*, and consequently though it may sometimes admit of an *indifferent* signification, is generally taken in an *ill* sense: so it certainly is in Gal. v. 20. (compare 2 Pet. ii. 1.) and though some have disputed it, yet it seems on the whole most probably to bear such a sense in 1 Cor. xi. 19. Acts xxiv. 5, 14; xxviii. 22. but the last instance seems the most doubtful.

(2.) It seems dubious whether heresy does, in the New Testament, signify any thing different from a high degree of *schism*, or breaking the peace of the church by uncharitable divisions and separations. The chief place where any pretend to find a difference is 1 Cor. xi. 19. compared with ver. 18. but if the word και, in the 19th verse, be supposed only an *expletive*, the argument which is drawn from thence is certainly inconclusive; or the two words may only express different *degrees* of the same thing.

(3.) Nevertheless, we acknowledge that, in the early ages of the church, the word *Heretic* signified those who erred in fundamentals, or doctrines reckoned of the greatest importance; and *Schismatics* were those who separated from others with a regard to discipline only.

Suic. Thes. vol. i. *Col.* 120 and 124, *on the words.*

4. It is further questioned, Whether a *heretic*, in St. Paul's sense, (Tit. iii. 10, 11.) is one who, *contrary to his conviction*, maintains any doctrine in debate; or whether it may take in the case of one who is *mistaken in his judgment*. Dr. Foster, following Dr. Whitby, is of the first of these opinions; and would infer from it, that as none can ordinarily tell who is *self-condemned* without the gift of discerning spirits, the use of this rule was peculiar to the apostles' time. His chief argument is, not so much that such a person is said *to sin*, but that he is said to be αυτοκατακριτος; which he supposes must signify *condemned by his own conscience*. But Dr. Stebbing thinks the meaning is, that such a person does not, like many other offenders, study to conceal his crime, and thereby oblige others to prove it, but that openly declaring and maintaining his sentiments, he is accused and condemned out of his own mouth. Compare Heb. xi. 7. Matt. xii. 41, 42. Acts xiii. 46. where persons are said to be condemned by those who furnish out matter for their condemnation. Compare also Job xv. 6. Luke xix. 22. It is a strong objection against Dr. Foster's scheme, that the *truth* or *falsehood* of the doctrine professed, has, upon his principles, nothing

* Dean Tucker, in his Two Letters to Dr Kippis, has taken the same ground with Dr. Stebbing.

to do with the question of a person's being a *heretic*; but the most orthodox professor might be condemned under this view, if by a secret revelation, or otherwise, it should be manifested that he was a Deist, whereas in this case, all the world would own he was condemned for *infidelity*, or for *knavery*, rather than *heresy*.

5. Some have urged, that if this text refers to the case of those who actually separated themselves from the church upon the account of Jewish *ceremonies*, which the context favours, they might be said to condemn or pass sentence on themselves, as by their separation they justified the conduct of the church in excluding them from their communion; but there seems no necessity for having recourse to this interpretation.

Fost. and Steb. on Heresy. Baxt. on Tit. iii. 10. *Whit. and Ham. in Loc. Locke's 1st Let. on Tolerat. Grove's Post. Works*, vol. iv. *On Terms of Commun. Bens. on the Epist.* vol. i. p. 140.

LECTURE CLXXIV

SCHOLIUM 1.

Mr. Hallet's notion of *heresy* is, that there is only a *gradual* difference between *schism* and *heresy*, and that schisms grow up into heresies when *separations* are occasioned; all *heretics* are therefore *sectaries*; and no *doctrine* alone can constitute a person a *heretic*. *Sects* in the Christian church are evils, and wherever there is a needless and contentious separation, there is somewhere a guilt. The only rule, he says, to determine which is heresy in all places and all ages, is the declaration which God has made in Scripture of the terms of acceptance with him; and when any thing more than this is insisted upon, in order to continue communion, there is the guilt of heresy on that side which insists on those unnecessary and unscriptural things. On this foundation, he concludes that the Pope is the chief *heretic* in the world, and others in proportion to the usurpation of an authority not given by Christ; and adds, that wicked men can from him have no authority in the church at all.

Hallet's Disc. vol. iii. p. 338. *Manne's Critical Notes on Gal.* i. 8, 9. p. 81.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some have also objected, as a defect in Christianity, that there is no *infallible rule* whereby exactly to judge what heresy is, though it be so expressly condemned, supposing it to signify such an error as exposes a man to the regular censure of his Christian brethren. It is answered, That a scheme of doctrine is laid down in Scripture, to which all are obliged to assent, so far as they can understand it. Men may indeed mistake in the sense of these rules, and how far these mistakes are important, particular persons and particular societies are to judge for themselves: and though it is a necessary consequence of this, that some will disapprove the determination of societies, as well as the opinion of private persons, yet this is an imperfection of human nature for which there could be no imaginable remedy, unless it were to make every man infallible; for whatever decisions were given, and whatever living judge were to interpret these decisions, there would still be room for putting various senses even upon these interpretations themselves. And if men do not proceed to hate and persecute those whom they think erroneous, the consequences of men's thus condemning each other for mere mental errors will not be very important: and probably leaving the matter in this latitude will, on the whole, be attended with fewer inconveniences than any other scheme whatsoever; and it may deserve serious consideration, whether the way of arguing in the objection may not also affect Christ's rule, (Matt. xviii. 15--18.) and indeed all other rules and laws, human or divine, in the interpretation or application of which it is certain fallible men may err.

Lett. to Stebb. in Lond. Mag. for 1735. p. 512.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have thought the only remedy for the above-mentioned defects would be, to introduce some *human form* as a *standard of orthodoxy*, wherein certain disputed doctrines shall be expressed in such determinate phrases, as may be directly levelled against such errors as shall prevail from time to time, requiring those especially who are to be public teachers in the church to subscribe, or virtually to declare their assent to such formularies. On this head we may observe,

1. Had this been requisite, it is probable the Scriptures would have given us some such formularies as these, or some directions as to the manner in which they should be drawn up, proposed, and received.

2. It is impossible that weak and passionate men, who have perhaps been heated in the very controversy thus decided, should express themselves with greater propriety than the apostles did.

3. It is plain, in fact, that this practice has been the cause of great contention in the Christian church; and such formularies have been the grand engine of dividing it, in proportion to the degree in which they have been multiplied and urged.

4. This is laying a great temptation in the way of such as desire to undertake the office of teachers in the church, and will be most likely to deter and afflict those who have the greatest tenderness of conscience, and therefore *(cæt. par.)* best deserve encouragement.

5. It is not likely to answer the end proposed, *viz.* the preserving a uniformity of opinion, since persons of little integrity may perhaps satisfy their consciences in subscribing what they do not at all believe, as *articles of peace*, or in putting the most unnatural sense on the words. And whereas, in answer to all these inconveniences it is pleaded, that such forms are necessary to keep the church from heresy; and it is better there should be some hypocrites under such forms of orthodoxy, than that a freedom of debate and opinion should be allowed to all teachers, the answer is plain; that when any one begins to preach doctrines, which appear to those who attend upon him dangerous and subversive of Christianity, it will be time enough to proceed to such an animadversion as the nature of his error, in their apprehension, will require, and his relation to them will admit.

Dund. Pref. to Scot. Confes. vol. i. p. 52. *Evans's Script. Standard. Hales's Tracts*, p. 28. *Conyb. 6 Serm. Chand. on Subsc. Burn. Hist. of his Times*, p. 634. *Powel on Subsc.*"

SCHOLIUM 4.

Nevertheless, it is very consistent with what we have said under the preceding scholium, that voluntary societies should demand such satisfaction as they shall, on serious inquiry, think fit, of the orthodoxy of one who is to minister among them: nor can this be said to intrench at all upon Christian liberty, and the right of private judgment, since every private Christian has the same right of judging who is fit to teach him, as every teacher has of judging for himself what is the true Christian doctrine. And the like may be said with respect to *ministers*, when desired to concur in any solemn act, by which they are to declare their approbation of the admission of any particular person to that office. *Confessional*, c. ii. p. 30.

LECTURE CLXXV.

PROPOSITION LXXXIII.

Any degree of divine influence on the mind, inclining it to believe in Christ and to practise virtue, is called GRACE.

SCHOLIUM.

There are in Scripture many other senses of the word *grace*, which does in the general signify any favour of God freely bestowed upon his creatures: compare 1 Cor. x. 30. 2 Cor. viii. 4, 5. Eph. iv. 7. but forasmuch as those which relate to the improvement of their temper, and their fitness for final happiness, are favours of the greatest importance, this name is, by way of eminence, applied to them, as we shall show in what follows.

Clarke's Posth. Serm. vol. ii. p. 265.

DEFINITION LXXXIV.

The communication of grace given to any soul in such a degree, as actually to bring that soul to faith in Christ, and consequently into a state of salvation, may properly be called SPECIAL GRACE.

COROLLARY.

Special grace is the work of the Spirit of God, Tit. iii. 5, 6. Gal. iv. 6; v. 18, 22. Rom. v. 5; viii. 9, 13, 14. 2 Cor. iii. 3; v. 5. to which may be added 2 Thess. ii. 13. and many other texts, several of which will be mentioned under the following proposition.

DEFINITION LXXXV.

Those divine influences, which leave the mind short of faith and sincere obedience, may be called COMMON GRACE; but those which *introduce* special, though they do not yet amount to it, may, with respect to that introduction, be called PREPARATORY.

PROPOSITION LXXXVI.

All those who do indeed believe in Christ, and in the main practise virtue, are to ascribe it not merely or chiefly to their own wisdom and goodness, but to the special operation of divine grace upon their souls, as the original cause of it.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. None can deny that God has such an access to the minds of men, that he can work upon them in what manner he pleases: and there is great reason to believe, that his secret influence on the mind gives a turn to many of the most important events relating to particular persons and societies. Prov. xxi. 1. as it is evident many of the public revolutions mentioned in the Old Testament are ascribed to this cause. Ezra i. 1.

Rel. of Nat. delin. p. 105.

2. Though the mind of man be not invincibly determined by motives, yet in matters of great importance it is not determined without them: and it is reasonable to believe, that where a person goes through those difficulties which attend faith and obedience, he must have a very lively view of the great engagements to them, and probably upon the whole a more lively view than another, who in the same circumstances in all other respects acts in a different manner.

Prop. 32. 3. Whatever instruments are made use of as the means of making such powerful im-

* The writers in opposition to and in favour of subscription to articles of religion, as referred to under the first scholium to the fifty-sixth proposition of this Work. See p. 49. note. Not to mention incidental publications, the matter has been largely discussed in the four controversies occasioned by the Confessional, the Country Application to Parliament, the Dissenting Ministers Address to the Parliament, and the Attempts to obtain the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. To vindicate subscription is one design of the Bampton Lecture, and the subject has not been forgotten by the preachers.

pressions on the mind, the efficacy of them is to be ascribed to the continual agency of the first cause.

1—3. 4. The prevalence of virtue and piety in the church is to be ascribed to God, as the great original Author, even upon the principles of *natural religion*.

5. Good men in Scripture, who appear best to have understood the nature of God and his conduct towards men, and who wrote under the influence and inspiration of his Spirit, frequently offer up such petitions to God, as show that they believed the reality and importance of his gracious agency upon the heart to promote piety and virtue. Psal. li. 10—12; xxxix. 4; xc. 12; cxix. 12, 18, 27, 33—37, 73, 80, 133. 1 Chron. xxix. 18, 19. Eph. i. 16, &c. Col. i. 9—11, *et sim.*

6. God promises to produce such a change in the hearts of those to whom the other valuable blessings of his word are promised, as plainly implies, that the alteration made in their temper and character is to be looked upon as his work. Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33; xxxii. 39, 40. Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 26, 27. Compare Heb. viii. 8—13.

7. The Scripture expressly declares, in many places, that the work of *faith* in the soul is to be ascribed to God, and describes the *change* made in a man's heart when he becomes truly religious in such language, as must lead the mind to some strength superior to our own, by which it is effected: John i. 13; iii. 3, 5, 6. Acts xi. 18; xvi. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Eph. i. 19, 20; ii. 1, 10; iv. 24. Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11, 12; ii. 12, 13. *Vid.* James i. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. To this catalogue we scruple not to add Eph. ii. 8. though some have objected that τουτο cannot refer to πιστεως; since the like change of genders is often to be found in the New Testament. Compare Acts xxiv. 16; xxvi. 17. Phil. i. 28. 1 John ii. 8. Gal. iii. 16; iv. 19. Matt. vi. *ult.*; xxviii. 18. Rom. ii. 14.

Elsner's Obs. vol. i. p. 128. *Raphel. Obs. ex Herod. in Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Glassii Op.* l. iii. *Tract.* ii. *de pr. Can.* xvi. p. 524.

8. The *increase* of Christians in faith and piety is spoken of as the work of God; which must more strongly imply that the first *beginnings* of it are to be ascribed to him. Psal. cxix. 32. Phil. i. 6; ii. 13. 1 Cor. vii. 25; iii. 7; iv. 7; xv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 5. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. 1 Pet. v. 10. Jude 24, 25.

9. The Scripture does expressly assert the absolute necessity of such divine influences on the mind, in order to faith and holiness, and speaks of God's giving them to one while he withholds them from another, as the great reason of the difference to be found in the characters of different men in this important respect. Deut. xxix. 4. Matt. xi. 25, 26. John vi. 44—46; xii. 39, 40. Rom. ix. 18—23.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. 10. It appears probable from the light of nature, and certain from the word of God, that faith and repentance are ultimately to be ascribed to the work of special grace upon the hearts of men. *Q. E. D.*

Lime-st. Lec. vol. ii. p. 242. *Tillot. W.* vol. ii. p. 80. *Limb. Theol.* l. iv. c. xiv. *Brandt's Hist. of the Ref.* vol. ii. p. 75. *Jort. 6 Diss.* No. 1. *Warb. Doc. of Grace. Fost. Serm.* vol. ii. p. 104.*

LECTURE CLXXVI.

COROLLARY 1.

We may learn with what dependence Gospel ministers should undertake their work, and to what they should ascribe the success of it. 1 Cor. iii. 4; and xv. 10. *Somers's Fun. Serm. for Mr. Saund.*

COROLLARY 2.

Those who are finally brought to faith, repentance, and salvation, have great reason to acknowledge the divine goodness to them, and no room to boast of themselves. 1 Cor. i. 29, 30.

COROLLARY 3.

It is a gross mistake to assert, as some have done, that *grace* never signifies the operation of God upon men's minds, but only intimates his *gracious acceptance* of their repentance, brought about by the motives and assistance of the Gospel, *i. e.* as it must here mean, by the discovery of the Christian scheme. Compare Acts xiv. 26; xv. 40; xviii. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 10; 2 Cor. i. 12. Heb. iv. 16. Gal. vi. 18. in all which places, and many more, *grace* makes very good sense, if taken for *a divine operation* on the heart, which on the interpretation opposed it would by no means do: and it may further be observed, that when grace is used to express *moral virtues* and good dispositions in our hearts, they are so called, not merely, or chiefly, as recommending us to the divine favour, but as produced by divine influence, though still working in a manner suited to the freedom of our nature. Compare Eph. iv. 29. 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 6, 7.

Clarke at Boyle's Lec. p. 328. *Balguy's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 361. *Lardn. Serm.* p. 297.

COROLLARY 4.

They are greatly mistaken who assert, That the assistances of God's Spirit were peculiar to the primitive ages: and who interpret such texts as those quoted above, merely of a miraculous agency on the *apostles* and *primitive* Christians. See the

* In 1792 Dr. Thomas Edwards, of Coventry, published a work, entitled The Doctrine of Irresistible Grace proved to have no foundation in the Writings of the New Testament.—In Leeds, upon this subject, the author pursues the plan which had been adopted by Clarke on the Trinity, Hoadley on the Sacrament, and Sykes on Redemption, of arranging every text of Scripture that was supposed to relate to the point in question. See also Mr. Lancaster's Four Essays on Justification, and the Influences of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptures under *Def.* 84. *Cor.* and Benson on the texts quoted above.

Whitby on New Test. vol. ii. p. 283. *Bulkley's Econ. of the Gosp.* iii. 3, 4.*

COROLLARY 5.

Forasmuch as *gratitude* is so powerful a principle in human nature; and the obligations arising from the divine goodness in imparting special grace to believers are so high and important, it must be the duty of those who preach the Gospel, to lead their people diligently to reflect upon it, and to appear themselves under an affectionate sense of its value and excellency.

COROLLARY 6.

On the principles of the proposition it will appear proper, that the distinction between the *regenerate* and *unregenerate* should be kept up in preaching; and though there be some, on whom divine grace has wrought so early, that perhaps it is difficult to find a time, from the first dawning of reason, when they did not appear in the main under the influences of it, yet such instances are comparatively few; and as those early good dispositions must appear to be in a peculiar manner the work of God's Spirit, considering the strength of appetite and passion in children, and the weakness of reason, it would be extremely wrong to exempt such out of the class of the regenerate, and to confine the phrase to those who have been reclaimed from a vicious and immoral course.

Sharp's Serm. vol. iii. p. 290.

SCHOLIUM 1.

As it appears that, by the corruption of our nature, the whole symmetry of it is broken, it has generally been maintained by those who assert the doctrine in the proposition, That divine grace may work, not only by enlightening the understanding and awakening the affections,—but also by some immediate influences upon the *will*, in order to restore that harmony of all the faculties in which the perfection of our nature consists; and many have thought that the *body*, as well as the mind, may be the subject of such divine operations. Compare 1 Thess. v. 23. and *Def.* 26. *Cor.* 2. *Prop.* 17. *Cor.* but it is extremely difficult to conceive of the distinction in all its branches; and it does not seem of so much importance as some have thought.

Foster's Serm. vol. ii. p. 96.

SCHOLIUM 2.

As to the *manner* in which divine grace operates upon the mind, considering how little it is we know of the nature and constitution of our own souls, and of the frame of nature around us, it is no wonder that it should be unaccountable to us (John iii. 8.); perhaps, it may often be, by impelling the animal spirits or nerves, in such a manner as is proper to excite certain ideas in the mind with a degree of vivacity, which they would not otherwise have had. By this means various passions are excited; but the great motives addressed to *gratitude* and *love* seem generally, if not always, to operate upon the will more powerfully than any other, which many divines have therefore chosen to express by the phrase of *delectatio victrix*. Compare Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cxix. 16, 20, 32, 47, 48, 97, 103. Psal. xix. 10, 11. Rom. vii. 22. 1 John iv. 18, 19. Rom. v. 5.

Le Blanc's Thes. p. 527. *Burn's Life of Roch.* p. 43. *Barc. Apol.* p. 148. *Scougal's Works.* p. 6. *Seed's Serm.* vol. i. p. 291. *King's Origin of Evil*, p. 71.

* The opinion, however, that the assistances of God's Spirit were peculiar to the apostolic times, and refer to the extraordinary works and gifts of those times, has been maintained by some Scripture critics. See Dr. Priestley's Sermon on the Doctrine of the Divine Influence on the Human Mind, in his Discourses on various Subjects: and an article concerning the Apostolical Benediction, published in the first volume of Commentaries and Essays, p. 111.

LECTURE CLXXVII.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It enters into the definition of *special grace*, That it is never on the whole finally *rejected*, so as to fail of working faith in those who are the happy objects of it; but there is a great controversy, Whether these operations be in their own nature *irresistible* or not?—or, in other words, Whether it was possible that those who in consequence of it do believe, should, in these circumstances, have continued in their infidelity, and finally have rejected the Gospel? To prove that special grace is irresistible, the following arguments have chiefly been insisted upon:—

1. That the Scripture represents men as by nature in a condition entirely helpless. Compare Eph. ii. 1. Luke iv. 18. Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. viii. 7.

2. That the action of God in the conversion of a sinner is described in such terms, as plainly to show it is *invincible*; *v. g.* by *raising from the dead*, by *giving a new heart*, by *writing the law of God in the soul*, &c. Compare *Prop.* 139. *gr.* 5, 6. But to both these arguments it is answered, That they are figurative expressions, which are not to be interpreted in the utmost rigour: that they do indeed intimate a strong disinclination in men to faith and repentance, and a powerful, but not therefore irresistible, operation of God upon the mind. Compare Rom. vi. 2. 1 John iii. 9. and other texts of the like import.

3. It is said, That if special grace were not irresistible, then it would be uncertain whether any would believe or no, and consequently possible that all which Christ had done and suffered in the work of redemption might have been done and suffered in vain. To this it is answered, That the event may be certain where it is not necessary, or otherwise there

can be no foundation for a certain foreknowledge of future contingencies, which those who maintain this doctrine of irresistible grace do generally grant. This likewise will answer the arguments brought from those Scriptures in which conversion to God is made the subject of a divine *promise*. Those who are on the other side of the question allow, that in *some* instances divine operations on the mind may be irresistible, as in the case of St. Paul's conversion; but they say, That to maintain that it is thus in *every* instance, is to destroy the liberty of the mind in all these cases, and consequently to leave no room for the exercise of justice in conferring rewards and inflicting punishments; not to say that the grace of God itself cannot be said to *assist* us, if there be no cooperation of our own with it. Compare Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Turr. Loc. xv. *Q.* vi. *Limb. Theol.* l. iv. c. xiv. *Lime-st. Lec.* vol. ii. p. 251. *Tillot. Works*, vol. ii. p. 371. *Saur. Serm.* vol. vii. p. 471. *Sharp's Serm.* vol. iii. p. 287. *Whitby's Com.* vol. ii. *App. Prop.* 3. *Foster's Ser.* v. ii. No. 5.

LECTURE CLXXVIII.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is also questioned whether *common* grace be *sufficient*; and here it is to be observed, that the question has some ambiguity. If that grace alone is to be called *sufficient*, which is such, as to put it into a man's power immediately to believe, without any further or higher influence on his mind, it seems that the sufficiency of common grace cannot be proved; but if that is sufficient, by which a man is enabled to take some steps, on his taking which further grace will be communicated, till at length, by a longer or shorter train of convictions, *special* grace is given, it is difficult to reconcile the denial of such a sufficiency of common grace with the divine justice, in condemning men for their infidelity, and the frequent declarations which God makes in Scripture, that he does not desire the death of a sinner. Prov. i. 21—25. Ezek. xviii. 23; xxxiii. 11. Isa. v. 1, &c. Ezek. xii. 2. Matt. xi. 21—24; xxiii. 37, 38; xxv. 26, 27. The most considerable argument for the negative is, That grace, which is always in fact ineffectual, (as common grace is, by the very definition of it,) cannot properly be said to have been always sufficient; but not to insist upon its being taken for granted in this objection, that there is a *specific* difference between common and special grace, the objection seems only to be saying, in other words, that the mind of man is so formed, that it *could not* be determined by considerations by which it *is not in fact* determined, which is only an obscure way of denying the liberty of choice; for if that be allowed, it must be owned, that in every crime which has been committed, from the first original of mankind, there have been sufficient reasons against it, which yet have never in fact prevailed in any one of those instances.

Limb. Theol. l. iv. c. xiii. *pass. Tillots. W.* vol. ii. p. 380. *Turret. ubi sup.* § 22. *Baxt. End of Contr.* c. xiii. *Guyse on Matt.* xxv. 26.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

This may teach us in what sense God may be said to *will* the salvation of those that *perish*, *i. e.* he wills it *conditionally*, and determines to do what may be sufficient to effect it, if it be not their own fault; but he does not will it to such a degree as to do the utmost which his almighty power could effect for that purpose, nor to do any thing more for their salvation than he knows in fact will, by their own perverseness, be overborne. Fact proves that this is the highest sense in which he can be said to will their salvation; and it seems that any thing short of this would not be a foundation for using the phrase at all, especially with such great solemnity as is observable in some of the passages quoted above. *Schol.* 4.

Howe's Redeem. Tears, vol. ii. p. 13. *Howe on Presc.* vol. ii. p. 506. *Watts's Ruin and Rec.* p. 292; *Works*, vol. vi. p. 297.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Whether the mind be entirely *passive* in the first moment of its conversion, or whether there be any cooperation of *our own* together with the influences of divine grace upon our heart, is a question which has also been very much disputed. It chiefly depends on what is meant by *conversion*. If a man is then only said to be converted when his heart is in a prevailing degree really determined for the service of God through Christ, he is plainly *active* in such a determination, though there may have been some preceding scenes in which he has been passive; *i. e.* while God has made those impressions on his mind which have led to this determination; and as, according to the natural constitution of our mind, some motives must precede the volition leading towards this final determination, it is proper to own God as the first Mover in this blessed work, and to acknowledge that, in this sense as well as others, we love him because he has first loved us. Compare 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Psal. xcv. 7, 8. Eph. iv. 30. Rev. iii. 20. Phil. ii. 13. Ezek. xi. 19. with Ezek. xviii. 31. Deut. xxx. 6. with Jer. iv. 4. Acts ii. 40. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

* Some observations concerning Mr. Baxter's Theological System, with respect to the doctrines of grace and its influences, which will be found in a discourse of that good Christian, called *Baxterianism*, will be found in the Biographia Britannica, vol. i. p. 22, second edition.

Saur. Serm. vol. i. p. 78. *Tillot.* vol. ii. p. 374. *Turret. Locus* xv. *Q.* 5. vol. ii. p. 591. *Sharp's Serm.* vol. iii. p. 281.

SCHOLIUM 7.

The question, Whether the work of regeneration and conversion be accomplished *in an instant*, is nearly akin to the former. It must be acknowledged, there is some one moment in which there is the first preponderancy of religious impressions and resolution in the soul; but if all that the Spirit does to bring a man to real religion, is called (as with some latitude of expression it may) the work of his converting or regenerating grace, it is evidently a gradual thing; and it would certainly have an ill influence upon practical religion, to encourage men to expect an instantaneous miraculous change in the neglect of proper means.

Wits. Econ. Fœd. l. iii. c. vi. § 8. *Tillot.* vol. ii. p. 383. Serm. 55.

SCHOLIUM 8.

We most readily allow, that the rules by which God proceeds in dispensing his special grace are to us unaccountable; for it plainly appears that it is not always given in proportion to the use that has been made of common grace, since many who have been the most abandoned sinners are in a very sudden and surprising manner brought to repentance and faith, while others of a fairer character go on in impenitence and unbelief. Compare 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. 1 Tim. i. 14—16. Nevertheless, it would be very unjust to accuse God of partiality on that account; because, in his final judgment, he will distribute rewards and punishments according to the characters of men, (Rom. ii. 6.) and dealing justly by all, so far as to inflict no undeserved punishments, he may certainly be allowed to dispense his favour as he pleases, (Matt. xx. 13—15.) and if we will not allow this, we shall find invincible difficulties in the dispensations of *nature* as well as of grace, considering the vast difference which God is pleased to make in the circumstances of various creatures, even where there has been no correspondent difference in their previous character and behaviour.

Le Blanc's Thes. p. 753, &c. *Howe's Works*, vol. ii. p. 27. *Clarke's Posth. Serm.* vol. i. p. 235. *Evans's Serm.* vol. i. No. i.

SCHOLIUM 9.

Some of the Heathens seem to have had a notion of divine influences on the mind as necessary to make them wise and good, and have ascribed their *virtues* as well as their intellectual endowments to it; though others have spoken in a very haughty manner upon this head.

Senec. Epist. No. 73. *Wits. Misc.* vol. ii. *Maxim. Tyr. Diss.* 23. *ap. Barr. Works*, vol. iii. p. 331. *Xenoph. Cyrop.* l. viii. c. vii. § 1. *Plato de Repub.* l. vi. *Arrian in Epic.* l. iii. p. 306. *Tull. de Nat. Deor.* l. ii. *Minut. Philos.* vol. ii. p. 47.

DEFINITION LXXXVI.

That it is said to be A STATE OF SALVATION, in which if a person die, he would partake of the future salvation and happiness promised in the Gospel.

DEFINITION LXXXVII.

The doctrine of the PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS, is that doctrine which asserts, That all who have ever believed in Christ, according to *Def.* 82. or who have ever been in a state of salvation, are never suffered finally to perish; but do either continue in that state to the end of their lives, or, if they fall from it, are again recovered to it.

COROLLARY 1.

A person may be said to believe the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in this sense, who believes their apostasy to be in the nature of things *possible*, provided he believes it in fact certain that they will not actually apostatize.

COROLLARY 2.

A person may be said to believe the doctrine of perseverance in this sense, who admits of a total apostasy *for a time*, from which the person so fallen away is afterwards recovered; but whether this belief be consistent with Scripture or not, will be afterwards inquired.

Markii Medulla, c. xxvii. § 2. *Turr.* vol. ii. *Loc.* xv. *Q.* 16. § 7, 8.

LECTURE CLXXIX.

PROPOSITION CXI.

To inquire, Whether the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, as stated above, be or be not the Scripture doctrine?

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. For the *negative*, that it is not a Scripture doctrine, the following arguments are produced:—

Arg. I. There are various threatenings denounced against those who do apostatize, both under the Old Testament and under the New, which the patrons of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints allow to have contained the same covenant of grace, *e. g.* Ezek. iii. 20; xviii. 24. Heb. vi. 4—8. 29. Psalm cxxv. 3—5. To this it has been answered, That some of these texts do not so much as *suppose* the falling away of a truly good man; and to all of them it is said, they only show what would be the consequence, *if* such should fall away, or at most prove it in the nature of things *possible*, but cannot prove that it ever in fact happens. Com-

pare James ii. 10. Matt. xviii. 8, 9. 22. Luke xvii. 4; xvi. 26. 31.

Limb. Theol. l. v. c. lxxxi. § 1—6, &c. *Tillots. Works*, vol. ii. p. 490.

Arg. II. It is foretold as a future event, that some *true* Christians shall fall away. Matt. xxiv. 12. 13. John xv. 6. Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

To the first of these passages it is answered, That their *love* might be said *to wax cold*, without totally ceasing; or there might have been an outward zeal where there never was a true faith. To the second, That persons may be said *to be in Christ*, only by an external profession: see John xv. 2. comp. Rom. viii. 1. Gal. iii. 27. As to Matt. xiii. 20, 21. it is replied, That this may refer to the joy with which some may entertain the offers of pardon, who never attentively considered them, nor cordially acquiesced in the method in which that and the other blessings of the Gospel covenant were proposed.

Limb. Theol. ib. § 5—9.

Arg. III. It is urged, That many have in fact fallen away, as David and Solomon, and those mentioned 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. iv. 10. Compare Phil. iv. 3. Col. iv. 14. Philem. ver. 24. 2 Pet. ii. 18.

To those instances it is answered,

1. By some, that with regard to David and Solomon there might be some habits of grace remaining in their hearts, even when they were overborne by the remainders of corruption.

2. By others, that David and Solomon were recovered, and that Demas might possibly be so; and as to others, that there is no proof of their ever having been sincere Christians and truly good men; which is particularly applicable to Alexander and Hymeneus. As for 1 Tim. v. 12. which some add to the above-mentioned instances, it is answered, That their *first faith* might be a mere ineffectual assent; or that it may mean only their promise given to the church that they would continue widows, in order to attend to its service.

Roberts. Clav. Bibl. p. 86. *Ham. on* 1 *Tim.* v. 12.

Arg. IV. It is urged, That the doctrine of perseverance supersedes the use of means, and renders those exhortations and motives insignificant, which are so often to be found in Scripture, *v. g.* Luke xii. 5. Rom. xi. 20. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Heb. iii. 12; iv. 1. Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 12. To this it is replied, That these admonitions and exhortations have their use, being the means by which God continues his saints in their holy course, it being still true that continued holiness is absolutely necessary in order to their salvation, with which the *certainty* of their salvation in that way is not by any means inconsistent. Comp. Acts xxvii. 22—24. 31.

Limb. Theol. lib. v. c. 83. *Saur. Ser.* vol. ix. No. 1.

Arg. V. It is urged, That the doctrine of perseverance gives great encouragement to carnal security, and presumptuous sin.

Ans. 1. We allow that it may be abused; but that will not prove it to be false, though it is a reason against admitting it to be true without clear evidence; but the free pardon of the greatest sins upon repentance and faith, though so certain a truth, is also liable to as fatal and obvious abuse.

2. None can assure themselves of their own perseverance (allowing the doctrine in general to be true) any further than as they have an evidence that they are already true believers. To all therefore who are in any doubt with regard to the sincerity of grace in their hearts, the argument taken from the fear of eternal condemnation and misery must have its full weight.

3. As for those who are true believers, and know themselves to be such, allowing the doctrine of perseverance, they may nevertheless receive great damage by sin. There is on this very principle so much the more reason to believe that God will visit it (as he remarkably did in the instance of David) with *temporal* afflictions; and the diminution of future glory in proportion to the degree in which sin prevails, will still remain as a consideration of great moment with the most excellent saints.

4. If the motive taken from the fear of everlasting misery be weakened, that from love and gratitude, which is the most powerful and acceptable principle of obedience, is greatly strengthened; so that, upon the whole, this doctrine is not likely to prove a snare to a man, except when he is in so ill a situation of mind, that nothing but the fear of immediate damnation will restrain him from the commission of sin; and the probability of dying *immediately* upon the commission of sin, before there is room for renewed acts of faith and repentance, is so small, that few persons who do not believe perseverance, will be restrained from guilt merely by that fear:—and to conclude, before a man can with any plausible appearance draw an argument from this doctrine to encourage himself to sin, he must be sure he is a believer: but how can he know it? If by a pretended *revelation*, strong proof must be demanded; for it will seem in theory very improbable that such a favour should be granted to a wretch disposed so vilely to abuse it: if by *rational evidence*, what past impressions which he may have felt, can give a stronger evidence of true piety than arise to the contrary from so detestable a disposition as is now supposed to prevail? So that, though on the whole it is possible this doctrine may be abused, the probability of such an abuse is less, and the absurdity of it much greater, than persons on the other side the question have seemed generally to apprehend.

Limb. ib. § 11. *Lime-Str. Lec.* vol. ii. p. 343.

LECTURE CLXXX.

SECT. II. To enumerate the principal arguments in favour of the doctrine:—and,

Arg. I. It is argued from the promises of preserving grace, Jer. xxxii. 38—40. John iv. 14; vi. 39; x. 28; xi. 26. To the first of these it is answered, That the clause on which the argument turns, may be translated, "That they *may not* depart from me;" but it is replied, That the apostle quotes this text, Heb. viii. 10. in a manner not liable to this ambiguity. As to the other passages, some understand them merely as a *conditional* promise, expressing the safety of believers while they adhere to Christ; but the relation of *a shepherd*, professed in some of them, intimates a care to prevent a seduction of the flock, as well as to defend them from violence. To these texts some add all those passages, in which Christ owns such a relation to his church, and expresses such a care of it, as must in fact be a security to every true member, as when he calls himself its Head, Husband, Saviour, &c.

Limb. ib. l. v. c. 84. *Lime-st. Lec.* vol. ii. p. 331.

Arg. II. The doctrine is argued from the cheerful hope and persuasion which the apostles often express of their own persevering, and that of their fellow-saints, as will appear from consulting the following texts.

Rom. viii. 35—39. 2 Tim. iv. 8. *Ans.* The apostle only expresses his confidence that none of those evils should hurt them while they continued stedfast unto Christ; but this is sinking the sense very low; it could never have been imagined or suspected that *calamities* alone should alienate the love of God from good men, especially when a regard to the cause of God brought on those calamities; but it was very important to assure them that God would so strengthen them under their trials, that they should be enabled to bear them without final apostasy. *Limborch*, ib. § 10, 11.

Phil. i. 6. *Ans.* It expresses what appeared *probable* rather than certain. It is replied, That admitting the answer, it must be granted that the perseverance of good men is at least *probable*, and the reason insinuated, which is God's having begun a good work in them, is applicable to all believers; as the following words intimate, that it is through the divine inspection and care to finish his work that they are secured.

1 Pet. i. 4, 5. *Ans.* The apostle speaks of their having been kept *hitherto*, but does not assert that they shall *still* be kept; but this does not seem to amount to their being *kept to salvation*.

1 Cor. i. 8, 9. *Object.* This refers to the confirming of the saints in a state of perpetual holiness at the last day. *Ans.* It would not be so proper to say they were then confirmed *unto the end*; and there may be (as our version supposes) an ellipsis in the expression, *q. d.* "He shall confirm you even to the end, *that ye may be* blameless," &c.

Whitby in Loc. Beza in Loc. Doddridge in Loc. and Bos and Albertus.

1 Thess. v. 23, 24. The turn of phrase here is so much the same with the last text, that the same objection and the same answer may easily be applied; as there is indeed a remarkable resemblance between the two texts.

Arg. III. Those passages are pleaded, in which this doctrine is said to be expressly asserted, *v. g.*

Rom. viii. 28—30. Dr. Whitby understands the phrase, *Who are called according to his purpose*,—of their being called to a profession of Christianity; and by being *glorified*, their receiving the Spirit of God, whereby a very considerable glory was conferred upon them (compare 1 Pet. iv. 4.); but it is certain this is a very uncommon sense of the word; to which we may add, that *the called* are spoken of as *lovers of God*; not to insist upon that part of the argument which is taken from the mention of God's *purpose* and *predestination* concerning them.

Matt. xxiv. 24. *Ans.* EI DONATON only implies the *exceeding difficulty*, not impossibility, of the case. *Limb. Theol.* lib. v. c. 84. § 8.

1 John iii. 9. *Objection.* It is only, *q. d.* an allowed course of sin is inconsistent with true Christianity.

Ans. Such an explication will by no means suit the phrase of *the seed abiding* in such, (comp. 1 Pet. i. 23.) even though it should be granted that *abiding* signifies no more than *is in them*.

Limb. ib. § 12, 13.

Matt. vii. 25.—It is answered, That by *storms* and *tempests* are to be understood persecution, or the final trial all are to expect from God; and in either sense, the meaning will only be, that he who does the will of Christ shall have a secure foundation of hope and confidence under this trial. Compare Prov. iv. 18. Job xvii. 9. Psal. xcii. 12—15. Isa. xl. 31. to which texts nothing can be answered, but that they express either the happiness of good men, or what is generally their character.

Arg. IV. There are many passages in which it is asserted, that those who have fallen away from their profession were never sincere in it; which plainly implies that those who are sincere do never fall away. They are such as these,

1 John ii. 19. compare Deut. xiii. 13.—*Object.* The apostle speaks of what would *probably*, though not certainly, have been the case; or, considering the peculiar evidence which attended Christianity, he might have peculiar reason to say that no sincere professor would be ashamed of the Gospel; but even this must only be on supposition that there is a certain degree of wickedness, into which no one who

had once been good could fall; which few grant who deny perseverance. Matt. vii. 23.—*Object.* Christ might say this concerning *many*, though not *all*; and if it might be said of the greater part, it would justify such a general representation; as it may be only of the *greater* part of sinners he speaks, when he describes all at the left hand as condemned for uncharitableness, Matt. xxv. 42, 43. Luke viii. 4—15. where *only* those who brought forth fruit to perfection are said to have received the word *in an honest heart*. *Object.* It is only a circumstance of a parable, therefore not to be strained too far. *Ans.* It is a very material circumstance, and not merely incidental. It is further urged, by way of objection to this argument, that they may be called *good ground*, who receive it with an honest heart, and bring forth fruit, even though their fruit should wither and they themselves perish; but it is replied, That this is the very case of the *stony ground* hearers; nor can those be said to bring forth fruit *to perfection* who never attain to more than an imperfect state, and at last fall from that, and incur aggravated guilt and ruin.

Lime-st. Lec. vol. ii. p. 284. *Baxter's End of Con.* c. xxvi. *Wits. Econ. Fœd.* l. iii. c. xiii.

COROLLARY.

There is, on the whole, reason to believe that the doctrine of *perseverance*, as stated and limited above, is indeed the Scripture doctrine.

LECTURE CLXXXI.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Most of those who believe that the saints shall not *finally* fall away, so as actually to *perish*, do likewise believe that they never *totally* apostatize, even for a *time*; and consequently allow that David, under his greatest guilt, was still in a state of favour and acceptance with God, as having a secret principle of spiritual life, though at that time overborne by the prevalency of sin. The chief stress of the argument lies on Heb. vi. 4, &c.; and it is urged, that if this text be allowed to speak of those who fall short of real piety, as the patterns of perseverance generally suppose, yet in pronouncing *their* recovery impossible, it must much more strongly conclude against the recovery of a *true* saint, if he should fall away; but we answer, If it be allowed (as perhaps there may be reason to allow it) that the *falling away*, here spoken of, is such a total apostasy from Christianity, as implies the sin against the Holy Ghost, then it will follow, that whatever argument there is to prove final perseverance, will prove that true believers shall not be suffered to fall into that sin; and if it be supposed only to express *inferior* degrees of apostasy, then it must be granted that ἀδύνατον only signifies *extremely difficult*; and so, on either supposition, no certain conclusion can be drawn from this passage. Compare Heb. x. 26—29.

Wits. Econ. Fœd. lib. iii. c. xiii. § 10, 11, 26. *Lime-st. Lect.* vol. ii. p. 297.

To this it has been added by some, that if several of the texts urged above have any weight to prove perseverance at all, it must be a *total* as well as a *final* perseverance. Compare particularly 1 John ii. 19; iii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

Limb. Theol. lib. v. c. 85. § 4, 5. *Hale's Gold. Rem.* p. 129.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Perseverance is owing to the continued influence of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of true believers (vid. *Prop.* 139. *gr.* 7, 8.); and this seems to be the foundation of that metaphor by which the Spirit is said to *dwell in them*, and they are described as *his temple*, Rom. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19. Eph. ii. 22. John vii. 37—39.

Howe's Liv. Tem. ap. Op. vol. i. p. 215. vol. ii. c. 10. p. 369. *Lime-str. Lec.* vol. ii. p. 336.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The preceding scholium may serve to explain the foundation of that metaphor by which Christ is represented as the *head of the church*; which, together with him, makes up one *mystical body*; for his created nature being thus inhabited by the Holy Ghost, and the influences of that Spirit being communicated from him to believers, to animate them to the same great end of cultivating holiness and glorifying God, it is evident that such an allegory as we have mentioned above is just and beautiful; since the several parts of the human body are actuated by the same mind, and have sensation and motion communicated to them by virtue of their union with the head. Compare John i. 16; xvii. 21; xv. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 17; xii. 12, 13. Eph. iv. 15, 16. Col. ii. 19. *Lime-st. Lec.* vol. ii. p. 331.

SCHOLIUM 4.

From those texts in which God engages to cause all things to operate for the good of his people, such as Rom. viii. 28; v. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. many have inferred that God will order all events in such a manner, that the good of every particular believer shall, in fact, be advanced and promoted thereby; and some have carried this so far as to say that even *sin* itself shall be for the believer's advantage; though some have contradicted themselves again, by adding, that to have *resisted* the temptation would have been much more so: but it seems that the design of those texts will be sufficiently answered, if we allow that God's dispensations are so adjusted, that good men, if they are not wanting to themselves, may receive some good from all, and probably in general do so.

Turr. vol. ii. *Loc.* xv. Q. xvi. § 14, 18.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It seems from some of the texts enumerated, *Prop.* 133. *gr.* 2. that none have made such a progress in piety as to be entirely free from the remainders of indwelling sin; and Rom. vii. 14. &c. is often urged as a confirmation of this doctrine. It is answered, That the 7th chap. to the Romans describes the state of an *unregenerate man*. The arguments on both sides may be seen in the commentators; but, on the whole, it seems most probable that the context there describes the state of a *good man* under the imperfection of the Mosaic dispensation, and therefore is not so much to the purpose of the present question as some suppose. It is certain St. Paul sometimes speaks in the first person, when he means to represent the circumstances and sentiments of another, (Rom. iii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. iv. 4—6.) and perhaps, upon the whole, the true key to this much-controverted passage may be this:—St. Paul first represents a man as ignorant of the law, and then insensible of sin, but afterwards becoming acquainted with it, and then thrown into a kind of despair, by the sentence of death which it denounces, on account of sins he is now conscious of having committed; he then further shows, that even where there is so good a disposition, as even *to delight in the law*, yet the motives are too weak to maintain that uniform tenor of obedience which a good man greatly desires, and which the Gospel by its superior motives and grace does in fact produce.

Taylor on Rom. Par. p. 186. *Doddr. Exp. on Rom.* vii. 14. vol. iv.

1 John iii. 9. if it prove the perfection of *any* man, would prove, contrary to the most evident experience, the perfection of *all* believers: and whereas it is said the precepts of the Gospel require us to aim at perfection, it is replied, They may answer their end by exciting us to press after it, though in the present state it be not actually attained: and as for those who are said in Scripture to have been *perfect*, such as Noah and Job, it appears from the infirmities which attended their character, that the most which can be meant by it is, that they were not only sincere in religion, but had made eminent progress in it. On the whole, none can pretend to say that it is absolutely impossible for us to do our best, or that God now requires of us to do better than we possibly can in present circumstances; nor can we certainly say that no one has ever exerted the utmost of the capacities God has given him in any particular act of duty: but we find, in fact, those who seem the best of men generally most ready to acknowledge their own remaining imperfections; and the perfection that some have talked of, seems only to be a freedom from known, wilful, deliberate sin, which it is to be hoped many have attained for some considerable time, who yet lament numberless imperfections attending the best of their services. *Christians* would in general be better employed in seeking greater degrees of perfection, than in disputing in a subtle and abstruse manner the nicety of such questions as have sometimes been started upon this head. And we may add, that where the progress towards perfection is greatest, the remembrance of past sins, only pardoned by the free grace of God in Christ, and of our continued dependence upon the aids of God's Spirit for every step we take in our holy course, may be sufficient to keep us humble; and it is certain, that pride in our religious attainments, is one of the greatest of the imperfections to be found in good men. Compare Job ix. 20.

Barcl. Apol. Prop. viii. *Besse's Def. of Quak.* p. 193. *Luc. Inq.* vol. ii. p. 11. *Clarke's Serm.* vol. ix. No. v. *Law of Perfection*, p. 1.

LECTURE CLXXXII.

SCHOLIUM 6.

The Spirit of God produces in the hearts of good men the hope of eternal life, which in various persons and circumstances prevails in various degrees. Some who are fully persuaded of the doctrine of perseverance, and have a clear evidence that they are true believers, grounded on extraordinary attainments in piety, or approved fidelity in some great and remarkable trials, may have an undoubted certainty of their own salvation: and it appears in fact that this is the case with many, if we may credit the living and dying testimony of some, on their own experience, who seem to have been among the best persons of their age. It is probable that, in times of difficulty and persecution, this persuasion may be more common than in persons of equal attainments in religion, in more peaceful circumstances; which may be one reason why it is sometimes spoken of by the apostles as so common a case in their days: *vid.* 1 John ii. 5; iii. 14, 19—21; v. 13. Heb. vi. 11; x. 34, 35. 2 Pet. i. 10. 1 Thess. i. 4. Rom. viii. 16, 17; and something like this may be traced in the writings of our first reformers. Where there is not such a full *assurance*, there may, nevertheless, be a cheerful and prevailing *hope*; and this even in those who do not apprehend the doctrine of perseverance to be universally true, since they may see that there is at least a degree of probability, that every particular saint, whose case may be under consideration, will in fact finally persevere, though the conclusion may be attended with some degree of uncertainty. How far full assurance is to be ascribed to the immediate testimony of the Spirit,

is a question difficult to decide: it is allowed that God can, by an immediate impression, reveal such truths to the soul beyond all possibility of doubt, and cause us to apprehend it as his own voice speaking to us; but this is a thing, the idea and evidence of which can be communicated to none: it seems therefore improper to lay a stress upon it, as absolutely necessary to a well-grounded comfort and hope; though it is, on the other hand, great rashness, universally to deride all pretences of this kind, especially when coming from persons of wisdom and piety. That the generality of Christians are exercised with so many doubts about their own state, is generally to be ascribed to the imperfection of their attainments in religion, to their entertaining wrong notions of it, especially their laying too great a stress upon present frames, and regarding the lively exercise of the passions more than the steady determination of the will,—which is the only sure standard by which to judge.

Howe's W. vol. i. p. 342. *Mason's Serm.* vol. iv.

SCHOLIUM 7.

There are a great variety of different methods in which the work of religion is carried on in the hearts of believers, in order to their final perseverance, and their improvement in piety. Sometimes certain texts of Scripture occur with such power and efficacy to the mind, as at other times they have never had; and these Scriptures are not always applied in a sense most agreeable to the context, but frequently according to the most obvious sense of the words, considered as alone, and compared with some present occasion on which they are given; sometimes a strong persuasion arises in the mind of a Christian, as to the answer of some particular request, which takes off a heavy and almost overwhelming burthen which before lay upon his heart: and in a variety of other instances, consolation is sometimes so strongly poured in upon their minds, from principles before known, considered and believed, yet not attended with any such sensible effects, that all who believe the fact must acknowledge it an extraordinary phenomenon; and considering the great usefulness of such experiences for establishing Christians in the way of piety, it seems reasonable to suppose that these impressions may (frequently at least) be the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit on their minds. It is observable, that these peculiar experiences are most frequent where persons' natural faculties are weak; or that if they are imparted to persons of higher genius and stronger reason, it is generally when under the pressure of some uncommon calamity, or when called out to any service which requires an extraordinary share of courage and resolution.

From considering these things, it appears that all, especially Christian *ministers*, should be cautious how they deride and expose such impressions as mere enthusiasm. If it be asked, How they can be distinguished from those which are indeed so, (as many warm impressions no doubt are,) it may be answered, That, in order to prevent any dangerous mistake here, the *tendency* of them is by all means to be regarded: it would be very dangerous to venture on any thing which in other circumstances would be evil, from the apprehension which some have entertained, that the common rules of morality are to be dispensed with, in consequence of such a supernatural impulse; for no impulse in such cases is to be believed, without stronger evidence than can commonly be given: but where they lead only to a more cheerful acquiescence in the Divine care, and a more zealous discharge of certain duties, they may safely be regarded as coming, whether in a more or less natural way, from God, unless any medium of argument be thus suggested, which is evidently absurd and ridiculous.

Howe's Life, p. 229. *Goodw. Works*, vol. iv. p. 95. *Baxt. Cure of Church Div. Direc.* 27, 28. *Watts on Prayer*, c. iv. § 3. *Bennet's Chris. Orat.* vol. i. p. 388. *Flem. on fulfil. Script.* p. 197. *Watts' Evang. Disc.* No. xii. p. 251.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Besides these *particular* revelations, which seem intended only or chiefly for the use of the persons to whom they are made, some have thought that there may still continue in the church something of what was before called an *inspiration of elevation*, (*Def.* 75.) chiefly imparted to those who are to lead the devotions of public assemblies: but how far in any given instance uncommon enlargements are supernatural, it is impossible for us to discover, who know so little of the constitution of our own minds, and of the degree in which they may sometimes be influenced by something peculiar in the state of the brain and animal spirits; but as for those gifts and powers which attended the *apostolic* ages, *Prop.* 117. they seem to be so generally ceased, that none pretending to them ought to be believed, without the most clear and convincing proof.

Dodd. Ans. to Chris. not founded, &c. p. 24. *Barcl. Apol.* p. 82.

LECTURE CLXXXIII.

PROPOSITION CXLI.

To inquire into the Scripture doctrine of *the unpardonable sin.*

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. The Scripture declares, that there was, at least in the *first* ages of Christianity, a sin that *should*

not be forgiven, Matt. xii. 31. Mark iii. 28, 29. compare 1 John v. 16. which has been interpreted by some as referring to the cure of diseases by prayer; but there seems to have been no note given by which a sin could be known to be *to death* in that sense: it seems therefore more rational to refer it to those cases upon which God had so expressly decided; and the refusing upon any occasion ever to pray for one who had committed it, might be a proper expedient to keep up a due horror of it, and care to stand at the greatest distance from it.

Harberry on Future Punish. p. 130.

2. This plainly appears to have been some sin of *the tongue*, by which a particular affront and injury was offered to the Holy Spirit, and therefore it is called, by way of eminence, *the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. *Waterl. Serm.* vol. ii. p. 167.

3. It is plain that the occasion on which our Lord uttered the words referred to above, was the Pharisees ascribing those miracles to the *Devil*, which he wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; and, undoubtedly, any who, under the ministry of the apostles, after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, had ascribed the miraculous operations of the Spirit in them to Satan, would have incurred an equal degree of guilt; but we cannot certainly say that this *last* was the *only* case in which it could be committed; and that what our Lord said, *gr.* 1. was only a *caution* addressed to the Pharisees, lest they should in time come to be guilty of it, though Dr. Whitby has advanced some considerable arguments to support this hypothesis, which deserve to be attentively weighed.

4. If any in these latter days manifest an obstinate enmity to the truth, so far as to contradict a degree of evidence, on the whole equal to that which those persons had, who, in the primitive ages, were said to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is reason to believe that, the guilt being equal, it would be equally fatal and unpardonable; but how, in present circumstances, this can be, it is not easy to conceive.

Whit. 4th App. to Matt. c. xii. *Howe's Works*, vol. ii. p. 46. *Tillot. Ser.* vol. i. No. xvii. *pass.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Many have defined this sin to be *a malicious opposition to known truth*, or, as others have expressed it, to truth *as truth*; but it may be doubted whether the human mind be capable of the *latter*, nor does the *former* enter into the account of this sin as given in Scripture; nor can we imagine that every wilful opposition to truth is absolutely unpardonable, since every known and deliberate sin seems to carry in it this guilt. 1 John i. 6. John iii. 20.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The reason why this sin is declared *unpardonable*, seems to be, that persons who commit it cut themselves off from the very possibility of being convinced by other arguments for the truth of Christianity, and can never be brought to conviction, without such a miraculous influence of God upon the soul, as in righteous judgment he sees fit universally to deny to all such.

Those celebrated texts, Heb. vi. 4—6; x. 29. refer to an apostasy from Christianity, and such an impious contempt of Christ and his Gospel, as one can hardly imagine any one in the primitive ages could be guilty of, who did not ascribe the miracles wrought in confirmation of it to some evil spirit; and this indeed seems intimated in the phrase of *crucifying Christ afresh*, and *judging his blood an unholy thing*, which they must surely do, who esteem him a *magician*, and consequently by the Jewish law worthy of death; and therefore these texts may perhaps be considered as referring to the same purpose with those in the proposition. *Maur. in Loc.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is said, That, according to the account of the unpardonable sin given above, Paul must have committed it, who could not, with any consistency, have opposed the Christian cause, unless he believed the miracles wrought in confirmation of it to have been of an *infernal* original. To this it is answered,

1. That possibly, not being an eye-witness to any of them, (which we are not sure that he was,) he might make a shift, with a great deal of artifice and prejudice, to disbelieve the facts; or,

2. That if he believed they were miraculous, he might think (as Bishop Fleetwood plainly did) that miracles wrought in the cause of falsehood, might be wrought by God, and not the Devil, and might expect that, as in the case of the Egyptian magicians, God would at length visibly interpose to overbear them, and turn the balance on the contrary side; and that text (Deut. xiii. 3.) might be so interpreted by him as to favour this hypothesis; or possibly he might have recourse to some foolish hypothesis of the influence of the stars and power of imagination, a secret charm in the name of God, or the like, which we know some Jews have acquiesced in, when they could not dispute the facts of Christ's miracles. Vid. *Prop.* 99. *gr.* 8. This is something illustrated by the account which Josephus gives of Solomon's skill in dispossessing demons, and the traditional art which he left behind him;—of which we see below.

Fleetw. on Mir. p. 42; *Works*, p. 132. *Jos. Antiq.* book viii. c. ii. § 5.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Though perhaps this sin cannot be committed

now, at least by any who continue to retain an external profession, yet it is of great importance that the strictest care be taken to keep at the remotest distance from all the appearances of it; and perhaps it was expressed the more obscurely in Scripture, on purpose to promote such a caution: but in dealing with those dejected souls who fear they have committed it, it is generally the safest way to assure them, that such a tender concern, lest they should have been guilty of it, implies such a reverence for Christ and the Gospel, and such remaining operations of the Spirit on their hearts, as plainly proves they have not.

Baxt. W. vol. ii. p. 30. *Reas. of Relig.* part i. c. 10.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Dr. Waterland seems to intimate a doubt, whether the sin in question be absolutely unpardonable, pleading that ἁβεύατον signifies only *exceedingly difficult*; and this, if granted, might afford another solution for the difficulty started in the fourth scholium; but it seems the texts in the first step are too determinate to admit of these softenings.

Waterl. Serm. vol. ii. No. ix. p. 177.

LECTURE CLXXXIV.

DEFINITION LXXXVIII.

Those are said to be PREDESTINATED TO LIFE, whom God did, from all eternity, intend actually to make partakers of the Gospel salvation in a future state; and those are said to be PREDESTINATED TO DEATH, whom God did from all eternity purpose finally to condemn.

COROLLARY.

It follows from this definition, that if (as many grant) an event may be allowed *contingent*, though it will *certainly* in fact happen, divine *predestination*, as stated above, does not imply the *necessary* salvation or condemnation of any.

SCHOLIUM.

It may perhaps be questioned, Whether this be the Scriptural sense of the word?—but considering that the ruin of sinners is in Scripture charged not upon the necessitating act of God, but the abuse of their own liberty, (vid. *Prop.* 149. *Schol.* 4.) it is necessary, in order to make Scripture consistent with itself, as we shall afterwards see, to suppose that this is the precise sense in which the word is to be taken.

PROPOSITION CXLII.

All those who do finally partake of eternal life by the Gospel, were from *all eternity predestinated* unto it.

DEMONSTRATION

Prop. 35. 1. God from all eternity did foreknow all events, and consequently the salvation of every particular person who is, or shall be, finally saved.

1. 2. God from all eternity willed the salvation of those who are finally saved, in the circumstances in which he saw they would then be; for it is by his act they must be made finally happy; and whatever determines him to will their happiness in the moment when it is accomplished, must, on the same principles, have determined his volitions, upon a full view of the case, even from all eternity.

1, 2. 3. The *light of nature* assures us, That all those who are finally happy were predestinated by God to eternal life.

4. The *Scripture* frequently asserts the doctrine laid down in the proposition. *Vid.* Matt. xxv. 34. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 3—6, 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. John vi. 37; xvii. 2, 9, 10, 24. Rev. xiii. 8. compared with xvii. 8.

3, 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Burn. on Art. xvii. *What. in Loc. Cit. Saur. Ser.* vol. i. p. 202. *King on Predest.* § 33.

COROLLARY 1.

It evidently appears from hence, that they who represent the election and predestination spoken of in Scripture, as relative only to *nations*, and not to particular persons, are greatly mistaken: several of these Scriptures lie directly against such a notion, particularly those in the Epistle to Timothy and the Revelations; and whatever arguments could be brought to prove that God had a respect to nations as such, or indeed that he, before the foundation of the world, foresaw any thing concerning the idolatrous Gentiles under that character, would certainly prove, on the like principles, a regard to particular persons, since we cannot suppose the views of God to be merely general and indeterminate.*

COROLLARY 2.

If the reasoning of *Prop.* 139 and 140. relating to the special influences of divine grace, and to the perseverance of the saints, be admitted, it will follow, on the same principles with those in the proposition, that all those who are predestinated to life,

* In support of the different side of the question, reference may be made to Locke, Taylor, Hutchinson, Le Clerc, and divers other commentators. One of the most elaborate performances on the Calvinistical doctrine of Predestination, both upon principles of reason and Christian principles, is Mr. Jonathan Edwards's Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will, and his History of the Work of Redemption. Mr. Topladdy, in his Doctrines of absolute Predestination, stated and asserted, in his Letter to John Wesley, in his More Work for Mr. John Wesley, and in his Scheme of Calvinism and Philosophical Necessity, maintains the same sentiments which are contained in the late Mr. Edwards. Sir Roger Hill, in his Review of Mr. Wesley's Doctrines, in the Lord's Watchman, and in his Strictures on Mr. Fletcher, is another Defender of Calvinism. Mr. Wesley, in his Predestination calmly considered, and in other pieces, has written with considerable Acuteness in favour of Arminian tenets. Dean Tucker is the same with his great friend and advocate Mr. Fletcher, in his Checkers Act I. and in his several other Tracts and pieces. Those published by Dr. Taylor, written with a view and purpose, which does not affect A Review of the principal Doctrines of Calvinism, compared, Farther Remarks on the several Points and Controversies, Doctrine, and some Observations on the Use of Reason in Religion, on Human Nature, and on Free Agency. See also Dr. Taylor's Six Dissertations, No. i. ii.

are also predestinated to receive special grace, and to persevere in a holy course; and, on the other hand, that all those who are predestinated to holiness, are also predestinated to perseverance and life.

COROLLARY.

Hence it will further appear, that the reason of God's predestinating some to everlasting life, was not fetched from a foresight of their faith and obedience, considered as independent upon any communication of grace from him; but that it is to be referred into his sovereign mercy and free grace; which is also the language of many other Scriptures. Tit. iii. 4, 5. Eph. ii. 8, 9.

COROLLARY 4.

It further appears, that if any represent divine predestination as a determination to save such and such persons, let their temper, character, and behaviour be what it will,—and, on the other hand, assert a corresponding purpose of making such and such finally miserable, without any regard at all to their temper and behaviour, they greatly misrepresent the Scripture doctrine on this head; but this is by no means the Calvinistical scheme, which always teaches that the *means* are decreed as well as the *end*, and that God purposes to save none but such as by his grace he shall prepare for salvation by sanctification; and it is very remarkable, that though this doctrine of predestination is expressly asserted and often referred to in Scripture, (which shows that the apostles esteemed it of considerable importance,) yet the process of the final judgment is described as turning, not upon the secret decrees of God, but upon the actions and characters of men.

SCHOLIUM 1.

On the same principles, those who finally *perish*, may be said to have been *predestinated to death*. Compare Prov. xvi. 4. John x. 26. Rom. ix. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 8. Jude 4. On the whole, comparing one part of Scripture with the other, there seems to be this remarkable difference between the predestination to *life* and to *death:* that, in the former case, God determines by the influence of his grace to work such a change in the hearts of his elect, as that their salvation should, on the whole, be ascribed to him, and not unto themselves; whereas he determines to bring others into such circumstances, that, though their ruin should in fact happen, yet they themselves should be the authors of it, and the blame lie as entirely upon themselves as if it had not been so much as foreknown. *Vid.* Rom. ix. 22, 23. Matt. xxv. 34, 41.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The Remonstrants generally believed that God's electing some to everlasting life, was only a purpose of making believers finally happy, and of giving all to whom the Gospel became sufficient means of faith; and that predestination to death was only a purpose of making unbelievers finally miserable; that God did not purpose the happiness of one more than another, and that neither of these predestinations could properly be said to be *personal*, wherein their notion evidently differed from that stated above. It is indeed answered, That this predestination of all believers in general, implies a predestination of every particular believer, on condition of his faith; and on the principles of the proposition and scholium, it may be allowed, that none are chosen but on this condition, provided we further add, that every particular person who does believe was chosen freely by divine grace to receive those assistances which God saw would in fact prevail to bring him to faith, and so by consequence to salvation.

Limb. Theol. lib. iv. c. i. § 3.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The chief objection against this doctrine is, That it tends to make those who believe themselves predestinated to live careless, and to make others desperate. It is replied, That as those only are in Scripture said to be predestinated to life who are also chosen to be saints, there can be no reason for any who do not find a prevailing principle of holiness in their hearts, to conclude they are in that number: and, on the whole, this objection nearly coincides with that against perseverance more largely considered, *Prop.* 140. § 1. *gr.* 5. and if persons will venture to argue themselves into negligence in matters of everlasting importance, from principles, on which (though they are equally applicable to them) they will not neglect their lives or their secular business, it is perverseness, for which they are justly responsible before God. As to the second part of the objection, If it be granted that *sufficient* assistances are given to *all*, none will have reason to despair, nor will any have an excuse to plead before God, in consequence of his secret purposes, which will not be made a rule of his final judgment. If it be said, that nevertheless those who are not predestinated to life are left under a necessity of perishing, and an impossibility of salvation,—it must be owned, that it is difficult to say how the doctrine, as explained by some, can be freed from this objection; but this consequence does not necessarily follow from it, as we have stated it above.

Berry-st Lec. vol. i. p. 241. *Watts's Ruin and Recov.* p. 278.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The *Supralapsarian* and *Sublapsarian* schemes agree in asserting the doctrine of predestination, but with this difference, that the *former* supposes that God intended to glorify his justice in the condemnation of some, as well as his mercy in the salvation of others; and for that purpose decreed that Adam should necessarily fall, and by that fall

bring himself and all his offspring into a state of everlasting condemnation. The *latter* scheme supposes, that the decree of predestination regards man as fallen, by an abuse of that freedom which Adam had, into a state, in which all were to be left to necessary and unavoidable ruin, who were not exempted from it by predestination. The chief difficulties which may be urged against the former, do likewise attend the latter; but the scheme stated in the proposition does properly agree with neither. *Le Blanc's Theses*, p. 132.

LECTURE CLXXXV.

DEFINITION LXXXIX.

The *mutual stipulation* between Christ and the Father, relating to the *redemption* of sinners by him, previously to any act upon Christ's part, under the character of *Mediator*, has generally been called by divines the COVENANT OF REDEMPTION.*

SCHOLIUM.

That there was such a covenant, either tacit or express, we may assuredly conclude, considering the importance of the work undertaken by Christ, and the expensive rate at which it was to be accomplished: and the Scriptures afterwards to be produced, relating to the *particulars* of this covenant, will consequently prove the *existence* of it in the general: as indeed all those *prophecies* which relate to what was to be done by the Messiah, on the one hand, and what benefits and rewards were to be conferred upon him and his people, on the other, may properly be considered as intimations of such a covenant, supposing (what has been already proved) the existence of Christ as a *distinct person* from the Father, in the *philosophical* sense of the word, and his interposition in the suggestion and promulgation of those prophecies. 1 Pet. i. 11. Compare John xvii. 1—5, 14; vi. 37. Tit. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9. Rev. xiii. 8. Psal. LXXXIX. 19, &c.

PROPOSITION CXLIII.

To inquire into the tenor of the *Covenant of Redemption*.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. By this covenant, Christ undertook to become incarnate, to dwell a certain time upon earth, subject not only to the law of human nature, but likewise to that of the Jewish dispensation; directing the whole of his conduct, while he should continue here, in such a manner as most effectually to promote the honour of his Father and the salvation of his people: that at length he would voluntarily deliver himself to sufferings and death, and remain for a time in the grave; and also, that after his resurrection and ascension into Heaven, he would employ his renewed life and extensive authority in the mediatorial kingdom to the same great purposes, which engaged him to become incarnate. See Psal. xl. 6—9. Heb. x. 5—10. Isa. lxi. 1—3. Luke iv. 18, &c. Isa. l. 7, 6. *Pearce on Heb.* x. 5.

2. God the Father, on the other hand, stipulated that he would, by his miraculous power, produce Christ's human body in the womb of the virgin; that he would strengthen him by the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit for the extraordinary work before him; that he would raise him from the dead, and set him at his right hand, giving him a universal command over the whole created world, as the judge of which he should at length appear; in the mean time, that he would send forth the influences of his Spirit to confirm his doctrine, so that hereby it should be established even among the Gentile nations; and that, besides all the advantages which others might receive, they who were predestinated to life, and were in a peculiar manner given to him, should in fact be regenerated by divine grace, and strengthened even to the end, and after death should be made completely happy in their whole persons in his heavenly kingdom for ever. See (besides the Scriptures quoted, *Def.* 89. *Schol.*) Isa. vii. 14; xi. 2, &c.; lii. 13—15; liii. 10—12; lv. 4, 5; xlix. 1—12. compared with Luke ii. 32. 2 Cor. vi. 2. and Rev. vii. 16, 17. Psal. ii. 7—9; cx. 1. Mich. v. 4. Luke xxii. 29. John v. 22—29. Heb. xii. 2. *Berry-st. Lec.* vol. i. p. 232.

COROLLARY.

As we before observed, *Def.* 89. *Schol.* that the reality of this covenant would follow from the distinct personal existence of Christ, and his interposition in the prophecies, so, on the other hand, from those Scriptures here enumerated, which more directly prove that covenant, we may draw another argument for the pre-existence of Christ, as a distinct philosophical person from the Father, distinct from and independent upon those arguments urged *Prop.* 126. *Burn. on Redemp* p. 25.

SCHOLIUM 1.

This may seem a proper place to inquire into the *extent* of redemption, or that celebrated question, *For whom Christ died*; but all that is important on that head has been said under the preceding propositions, *Prop.* 139. 140. 142. If those relating to predestination and special grace be allowed, as also those concerning the divine prescience and decrees in general, then it evidently follows, there was a sense, in which Christ might be said to die for *all*, as all men partake of some benefit by his death, and such provision is made for their salvation as lays the blame of their ruin, if they miscarry, en-

* The Hutchinsonian divines must needs mention the covenant of redemption, as entered into by the three persons of the Trinity. See these divines in general, and particularly Duncan Forbes's Thoughts concerning Religion, the Abstract of Hutchinson's Works, and Calasio's Concordance, by Romaine.

tirely upon themselves; but it was in a very peculiar and much nobler sense that he died for *the elect*, intending evidently to secure for them, and only for them, the everlasting blessings of his Gospel; and it seems that the Scripture uses such a latitude and variety in the sense of the phrase, otherwise it will be very difficult to make one part of it agree with another. Comp. on the one hand, the texts quoted *Prop.* 136. *Cor.* 3. and on the other, John x. 15, 16, 26; xvii. 2, 9, 16.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is objected, That if Christ did in any sense die for *all*, then forasmuch as all are not saved, the purposes of Christ's death are in many, and probably in most, instances frustrated.

Ans. Were we to say that the *only* end of Christ's death was, that all men might actually obtain eternal life, the objection might be just; but it may be said, the purposes of Christ's death are *various*, and the *ultimate end* of it was to glorify God in the actual salvation of all believers, and the giving others such advantages as should silence them, and justify God in their condemnation and punishment, for wilfully rejecting his mercy. It plainly appears, in fact, that this matter can be carried no further; for the hypothesis of the actual salvation of all at last, is so contrary to Scripture, as to be entirely insupportable, as we shall show in the progress of this Work (vid. *Prop.* 163. *Schol.* 3.); and, indeed, the granting this great absurdity would not thoroughly relieve us from the difficulty here mentioned; for the coming of Christ into our world is represented as in prosecution of a design, to prevent the condemnation of men, not to rescue and to recover them from the final sentence of the judgment-day. 1 Thess. i. 10. John iii. 16—18; v. 24.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is urged, That instead of magnifying, it rather asperses, the Divine goodness, to say, that he appointed Christ to bring those into a salvable state whom he certainly knew would never be saved; since this, instead of being any favour to them, lays a foundation for tormenting reflections at last. It is answered, That on these principles it is unkindness in God to bestow any advantages of genius or circumstances, which he knew men would, through their own wilful folly, abuse to their detriment; but God is to be considered as dealing with rational creatures in a way suitable to their rational nature; and if they will turn the gifts of his providence or grace to their own disadvantage, they only are responsible for it; nor will they find either their refuge or comfort in an ungrateful denial of the reality or importance of the mercies they abuse.

Baxter's End of Controv. c. xi. xii. § 5.

SCHOLIUM 4.

There is perhaps a reference to this covenant of redemption in Heb. vii. 22. and Christ is commonly said to have been the *surety* of the elect, as he undertook for them that they should, through the influences of divine grace, be in fact brought to faith and salvation (compare 2 Cor. i. 20.); hence some have inferred that they were actually *justified from eternity*, and consequently are in a justified state, even while they are going on in a course of unrepented sin; but this seems most directly contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; and it is certain that, on the same principles on which they may be said to be justified, they may also be said to be *glorified* from eternity. If the expression be intended to signify no more, than that God purposed to justify them, it is not denied; but it is a most improper way of speaking, and the arguments drawn from thence in favour of any kind of licentiousness are utterly inconclusive.

Will. Gosp. Tr. c. i; *Works*, vol. iii.*

SCHOLIUM 5.

Some have thought that the whole human race would have been destroyed by the death of Adam, immediately on his first transgression, if God had not purposed, by Christ, to bring them into such a state as should make necessary provision for their deliverance from those evils to which they were subjected by his sin. Rom. v. 12—21.

LECTURE CLXXXVI.

PROPOSITION CXLIV.

To lay down the Scripture doctrine relating to the *intercession* of Christ.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Christ is expressly said in many places of Scripture to *intercede; i. e.* to plead with God in favour of his people. Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.

2. The appearance of the high priest among the Jews, in the presence of God, on the day of atonement, when he presented before him the blood of the sin-offering, is at large referred to by St. Paul, as illustrating the intercession of Christ. Heb. ix. 11—14, 22—26; x. 19—21.

3. The appearance of Christ in his Father's presence, in that body wherein he suffered on the cross, though with such alterations as are suited to the heavenly state, may be considered as a *virtual* intercession, as the appearance of the high priest on the day of atonement, referred to above, seems to have been; for we find no form of words prescribed on this occasion, as there are upon some others, where they might seem less necessary, considering

* Recent divines, who have gone to the height of supralapsarian Calvinism, as Mr. Brine and Dr. Gill

the manner in which the mind would be overawed in circumstances of such unparalleled solemnity. *Vid.* Lev. xvi. *pass.*

4. Nevertheless, it does not seem proper to take upon us positively to assert, That our Lord does never *verbally* intercede for his people; that being a point which Scripture does not appear to have absolutely determined either way.

5. However it be that our Lord expresses his fixed and determined desire and demand in favour of his people, we may assure ourselves, that, on the one hand, it is in a manner consistent with that dignity and authority to which he is now advanced; and, on the other, that it is always successful for the vindication and preservation of his people, and the acceptance of their services, (compare Zech. iii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 33, 34. Rev. viii. 3, 4.) with reference to which, he is described as an advocate or patron of his own people, continually residing in the court of Heaven.

Bp. Hopk. Ser. p. 523. *Christ the Med.* p. 73. *Scott's Chris. Life*, vol. iii. p. 757.

COROLLARY 1.

It must be the duty of Christians to maintain frequent regards to the intercession of Christ in their addresses to God, and to comfort themselves with the thoughts of such a guardian and advocate, in the midst of those dangers to which they are here exposed. *Lard. Serm.* vol. ii. p. 287.

COROLLARY 2.

The consideration of Christ's intercession is an engagement to serious humility, faith, and fervour in prayer, peculiar to the Christian dispensation.

Law of Chris. Perfect. p. 257.

SCHOLIUM 1.

If there be any thing *verbal* in the intercession of Christ, there is no reason to believe that he is actually speaking to God at all times without intermission, which would be inconsistent with other things which the Scripture tells us, relating to that state of majesty and authority in which he appears. There is a sufficient foundation for saying, as the apostle does, that *he makes continual intercession for us*, if, perhaps, at some stated seasons of peculiar solemnity, some express declaration be made, of his habitual desire, that his people may receive the benefits purchased by his death, and of his readiness to appear under the character of their mediator and advocate, in any particular instances, as occasion may require; or even if his appearance in the body in which he suffered be intended as such a virtual declaration, though *words* should never be used. Compare Luke ii. 37. 1 Thess. i. 2, 3; ii. 13. v. 17. Exod. xxix. 40, 42. 2 Sam. ix. 7. Job i. 5.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It may be questioned, what *end* the intercession of Christ can answer. It cannot be intended to remind the Divine Being of any thing which he would otherwise forget, nor to persuade him to any thing which he is not disposed to do; but it may serve to illustrate the majesty and holiness of the Father, and the wisdom and grace of the Son; not to say that it may have other unknown uses with respect to the inhabitants of the invisible world: it is certainly a great comfort and encouragement to believers under their many infirmities; and indeed it is impossible to enter into the beauty of the Gospel scheme in general, without observing how it is accommodated to the nature and circumstances of fallen imperfect creatures.

Berry-st. Lect. vol. i. p. 391.

LECTURE CLXXXVII.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It has been urged as an objection against the Christian scheme in general, that it appoints our worshipping God through *a mediator*; which (say some) derogates from the divine goodness, leads us into a neglect of God, is a sort of indecency, when we consider that we are always in his presence, and may lay a foundation for many superstitions, as it is said in fact to have done in the Roman church.

To this it is replied,

1. That the goodness of God is most eminently displayed in that constitution by which his guilty creatures may be most effectually imboldened in their addresses to him, and yet at the same time reminded in every approach of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, and of the displeasure of God which is consequent upon it; which ends seem to be excellently answered by appointing his Son to be the Mediator of our approaches.

2. The Christian scheme directs us not to *terminate* our regards in the Mediator; but to address our petitions to God *through* him; and every where represents it as his office to bring us to God.

3. It is so far from being an indecency to approach a sovereign by the person he appoints to introduce us to him, that if such an appointment be made, (for which in some cases there may be an apparent reason,) it would be a great indecency to come directly and immediately to him.

4. The propensity of mankind to make use of mediators of their own choosing and inventing, which appeared among the Heathens, and still appears in the church of Rome, plainly shows how well the notion of a mediator is suited to the common apprehension of mankind; and it seems that no wiser provision could be made, to prevent their multiplying such mediators, than appointing one such illustrious person as the Scripture exhibits

under this character, who consequently would be wronged by such a supposed multiplication.

Tind. Chris. p. 73. *Butl. Anal.* c. v. p. 284.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is to be remembered, in all the Christian doctrine relating both to the atonement and intercession of Christ, that we are to consider him as a person graciously *appointed by God* to this purpose; which, if it be duly attended to, will prevent the apprehension, as if God were the less gracious, or our obligations to the Father at all diminished, by those we are under to the Son. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 18. Eph. i. 3—6, 9, 11, 12. 1 Pet. i. 2—5. Heb. v. 4, 5.

Bourn's Ser. vol. ii. p. 175.

SCHOLIUM 5.

The *priestly* office of Christ has generally been explained as executed in his offering himself as a sacrifice to God for us, and interceding with God upon this sacrifice; but Mr. Peirce, and most of the Socinians, suppose it only to consist in the *latter*; and Mr. Peirce argues from Heb. viii. 4. That the execution of it *began* upon Christ's entering into Heaven; but the text in question only proves that Christ, being of the tribe of Judah, could not, according to the Mosaic law, be a priest to minister in the Jewish temple, which none can reasonably maintain that he was. Compare Heb. vii. 14. Nevertheless, as the apostle often assures us that he is a priest of a higher order, all that he has done and suffered to make atonement for the sins of men, may, according to the most common acceptation of the word, be called a series of sacerdotal actions; as it is certain there were many acts of atonement performed by Mosaic priests, besides that which passed on the great days of atonement; and sacrifices were sometimes offered with acceptance by those who were not regularly priests. Compare Judges vi. 25, 26; xiii. 16. 1 Kings xviii. 33, 38.

Emlyn's Serm. p. 326.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Some have thought the comparative smallness and meanness of this earth of ours, as it appears upon the justest principles of astronomy, to be something inconsistent with the system of doctrines laid down in several preceding propositions, in which so great a person is represented as dying and suffering so much to promote our happiness. But it may be answered,

1. That we know not what influence the history of our redemption by the death of the Son of God, and salvation by his continued care, may have throughout all eternity upon the rest of God's rational creation, to whom it may be made known. Compare Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12. The monuments of God's displeasure against sin and compassion to sinners, will no doubt for ever remain; and perhaps the happiness of all the redeemed from among *men* may bear a very small proportion to the whole sum of happiness arising to *other* beings, from the knowledge and remembrance of it. Compare Rev. v. 11—14.

2. That if we consider, as we shall afterwards endeavour to show, that the appearance of God's own Son in the flesh is a glorious victory which he has obtained over the Prince of Darkness, the meanness of those creatures, who are made finally triumphant through Christ, as the great Captain of salvation, may render the power and grace of God in him more illustrious than it could have been, had the creatures so redeemed and delivered been originally of a nobler order, and fixed in a more considerable state and abode.

3. That if (as may hereafter be shown) the *angelic* order of beings are by this means confirmed in a state of indefectible happiness, and incorporated with the glorified saints in one holy and triumphant society, (Eph. i. 10; iii. 15. Heb. xii. 22—24.) it is an important circumstance added to both the former to obviate the objection, and seems to have proceeded on the same principles which determined God to choose that the Redeemer should appear in the form of a poor and destitute infant, and that of a mean man, rather than of some mighty prince, while here upon earth.

Baker's Refl. on Learn. p. 97. *Whist Theory, Intr.* p. 58. *Taylor Key to Rom.* § 131, &c. p. 52.

PART IX.

SURVEY OF THE DUTIES THE GOSPEL REQUIRES, AND ITS POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS; WHEREIN THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH, SACRAMENTS, AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH, ARE CONSIDERED.

LECTURE CLXXXVIII.

DEFINITION XC.

THE covenant which is made between God and those who believe the Gospel, whereby they declare their subjection to him, and he declares his acceptance of them and favour to them, is commonly called by divines the COVENANT OF GRACE.

DEFINITION XCI.

Any covenant, whereby God requires *perfect obedience* from his creatures, in such a manner as to make no express provision for the pardon of offences to be committed against the precepts of it, on the repentance of such supposed offenders, but pronounces a sentence of death upon them, may be called A COVENANT OF WORKS, whatever the particular duties required by it may be.

COROLLARY 1.

The covenant made with Adam, as described above, *Prop.* 134. *Cor.* was a covenant of *works.*

COROLLARY 2.

What was peculiar to the covenant made with Israel at mount Sinai, seems to have been at least in a great measure a covenant of *works*; for though it made some provision for purification from *ceremonial* pollutions, and for the pardon of the offender; *i. e.* for his restoration to the privileges of the Jewish republic, upon his offering the appointed sacrifices for sins of *ignorance* and *inadvertency*,—yet it pronounced sentence of death on all that *presumptuously* offended, appointing no sacrifice at all for such, but declaring the curse of God to be upon all that continued not in all things which were written in the book of the law to do them. Numb. xv. 30, 31. Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10—12. Rom. x. 5.

Berry-street Lect. vol. i. p. 274. *Wits. Econ. Fœd.* lib. iv. c. iv.

PROPOSITION CXLV.

To inquire into the constitution of the *covenant of grace*, or the mutual stipulations of it.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. God promises to believers the full pardon of all their past sins, how great and aggravated soever they may have been; the influences of his Spirit, whereby they may be enabled to resist temptations, to discharge the duties of life, and to persevere in their Christian course to the end of it. He also engages to dispose all the affairs of life for them in the most gracious manner, and at death to receive their departed spirits to a state of happiness, till at last their bodies be raised, and their whole persons made completely and eternally blessed. Heb. viii. 10—12. Jer. xxxii. 38—40. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Rom. viii. 28. Psal. lxxiii. 24. Rev. xiv. 13. Tit. i. 2. John vi. 40.

2. They, on the other hand, engage that, by the assistance of his grace, they will make it their care and endeavour to render sincere and universal obedience to all the discoveries and intimations of the will of God, with regard to their duty to God, to the Redeemer, to their fellow-creatures, or to themselves, not making a reserve in favour of any sin whatsoever; and they engage to make this their main care, even to the end of their lives; and that they will openly maintain their Christian profession, whatever circumstances of danger or difficulty may arise, and how expensive soever such a series of faithful services may prove; on the whole, depending for their acceptance with God, not upon the merit of their own complete obedience, but on the riches of his free grace manifested in and by Christ. Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1. Heb. xii. 9. Tit. ii. 11—14. Matt. x. 32, 39; xvi. 24—26. Luke xvii. 9, 10. Gal. v. 4, 5. The demonstration of most of these particulars may be found in the preceding propositions, or will be more particularly exhibited in those that follow; and the whole tenor of Scripture does so plainly run this way, as to render it less necessary to attempt a full enumeration of all the passages, which may be brought to illustrate what has been asserted.

COROLLARY.

They misrepresent the nature of this covenant who consider it merely under the notion of an *absolute promise* on God's part, which indeed can, properly speaking, be no *covenant* at all, (compare *Dut.* 15.) and who represent all that we have to do as consisting in casting ourselves upon that promise, and passively leaving ourselves to God, to do what he pleases with us, in subserviency to his own gracious purpose concerning us. Compare

Bostock on Cov. Rams. Princ. vol. i. p. 307.

Doddr. Rise and Prog. c. xvii. p. 161.

SCHOLIUM 1.

There have been various dispensations of this covenant to the people of God in different ages of the church. Obscure intimations were given to the patriarchs, and to Israel by Moses and the prophets, as was shown above; and it seems to have been gradually opened, till at length it was fully revealed to the apostles after the effusion of the Spirit upon them, and was probably the *word of wisdom* in their mouths. Vid. *Prop.* 117. § 1. *gr.* 1. Perhaps the gradual openings of it are nowhere better represented than in

Watts's Harm. of Div. Disp. Watson's Theol. Tracts, vol. i. p. 8.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It has been debated, whether the covenant made with Abraham, of which *circumcision* was the appointed token, were that covenant of grace, or merely a *temporal* covenant, relating to the land of Canaan, and other secular blessings to be conferred upon his seed. It seems most reasonable to conclude that it comprehended *spiritual* blessings,

1. Because otherwise there would not have been a proper foundation for God's calling himself *their God*, which must import being their friend with regard to their highest and most important interests. Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 16.

2. The apostle seems expressly to have decided this question, both when he calls circumcision a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11. (*i. e.* the token of Abraham's being accepted with God as righteous, upon his believing;) and also, when he declares that believers are *the children of Abraham*, as heirs of the blessings promised to him. Rom. iv. 11—17. Gal. iii. 6—9, 14—17, 29. Compare Gen. xvii. 4—12. which contains the greatest and most excellent promises any where made to Abraham and his seed, and consequently must include spiritual blessings, if such blessings are any where included, as we have shown they are.*

Wits. Econ. Fœd. l. iv. c. iii. § 10—23.

SCHOLIUM 3.

We readily allow that there were temporal promises made to Abraham, of the multiplication of his seed, of an inheritance in the land of Canaan, and the deliverance of his descendants from the Egyptian bondage; and some of those promises were undoubtedly sealed to them by circumcision, on condition that they submitted to the particular statute law given by God to the Jewish nation: but it seems reasonable to suppose that circumcision, considering the view in which it was originally instituted, did likewise import that the infants circumcised should be considered, not as under a covenant of works, but that, on their believing, as their father Abraham did, they should also be entitled to those spiritual blessings which he by faith received; as the seeming rigour of the *Sinai* covenant might be intended to awaken their minds to search for those intimations of Gospel grace which were given; (though with such degrees of obscurity as suited the gradual openings of the grand scheme;) and to endear to them any such discoveries, when they were convinced of the necessity of seeking justification and life in that way of humble faith in which Abraham their father found it; and in this view they are likewise a lesson to all Christians. Rom. iv. and Gal. iii. 24, 25. Rom. v. 20, 21. And the awful solemnity with which the Mosaic law was promulgated from Mount Sinai, might not a little subserve this great purpose. Heb. xii. 18—29.

Watts's Harm. of Div. Disp. p. 40.

* In Dr. Taylor's Tract, entitled The Covenant of Grace, and Baptism the Token of it, explained upon Scripture Principles, the Nature and Extent of the Abrahamic Covenant are particularly considered. See also his Notes upon St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, p. 272—277.

LECTURE CLXXXIX.

PROPOSITION CXLVI.

To inquire into the principal heads of *Christian duty*, as they are laid down in Scripture.

LEMMA

We do not intend a large enumeration of Scriptures on each head, by which it might easily be shown that all the most considerable particulars mentioned above in our *ethical lectures*, as branches of the *law of nature*, are recommended in the *Old and New Testament*: we shall here content ourselves with a general survey; only hinting that it might not be an unprofitable employment to add such texts of Scripture in their proper places to this lecture; to which purpose the collection in Dr. Gastrel and Dr. Wright may be very serviceable.

Wright on Virtue, &c.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. With regard to *God*, we are evidently required to love him above all, to consecrate ourselves entirely to his service, to submit in all things to his will, and to imitate his universal holiness; which must necessarily imply all those branches of divine virtue, mentioned *Prop.* 1. Matt. xxii. 37. Rom. vi. 11; xii. 1. Heb. xii. 9—11. Matt. v. 48. Eph. v. 1.

2. With regard to the *Lord Jesus Christ*, we are required not only to receive him by such a faith as has been before described, but to maintain such habitual regards to him, (as our instructor, atonement, intercessor, governor, guardian, strength, example, and forerunner,) as are correspondent to those relations in which he is represented as standing to us in the Scriptures, urged under preceding propositions; to which may be added, John x. 27

Phil. iii. 3. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 8. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Eph. vi. *ult.*

3. As to the *Holy Spirit*, we are required to pray for it; to endeavour at all times to behave ourselves in such a manner as that we may not offend it, and forfeit his influences; but, on the contrary, may engage a fuller communication of them. Luke xi. 13. 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. iv. 30; v. 18. Gal. v. 25.

4. Towards *each other*, we are required not only carefully to maintain a harmless and inoffensive conduct, but to take all opportunities of doing good to the bodies and souls of our fellow-creatures; and as a foundation of all friendly offices towards them, to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do to others as we would they should do to us, and this universally to all our fellow-creatures, not excepting even the worst of our enemies. Phil. ii. 4. Gal. vi. 2, 10. Matt. xxii. 39; vii. 12; v. 43—48. Rom. xiii. 8—10. Col. iii. 12—14. Eph. v. 2. Rom. xii. *ult.*

5. With regard to *ourselves*, we are required to mortify our corporeal appetites, and so to regulate our passions, that we may not be transported into any degree of intemperance, unchastity, rash anger, excessive grief, or any other disorder of mind; but may keep ourselves in such a posture as to be always fit for the service of God in the duties of our respective stations and callings, in which we are to employ ourselves therefore with diligence and vigour, always maintaining a humble opinion of our own abilities and improvements, arrogating nothing to ourselves of merit before God, nor seeking among men our own applause and honour, dominions, or possessions, but willingly giving place to others, and in honour esteeming them better than ourselves: and as such great prospects are opened upon us in another life, we are cautioned against being excessively attached to the things of the present world, and urged to set our affections on those of a better. Eph. v. 8. Col. iii. 5, 6. Rom. xiii. 11—14. Matt. v. 27—30. Luke xii. 35. Rom xii. 11. Matt. xviii. 3, 4. Phil. ii. 3, &c. John xiii. 14. Luke xvii. 10. Matt. vi. 19, 20. Col. iii. 1, 2.

Wright's Com. and Treatises. Gastrel's Christ. Institutes, c. vi.

COROLLARY.

Such an evident agreement between the moral part of Christianity and the law of nature, as deduced in the preceding parts of this work, is a great confirmation of the divine original of the Gospel, especially when compared with its external evidence: and makes it apparent that neither such men nor angels would have published such a system of morality, in connexion with a fraud, most contrary to many of its fundamental branches.

Doddridge's 10 *Sermons*, p. 215, &c.

SCHOLIUM 1.

As *image worship* was expressly forbidden to the Jews, in numberless passages of their law and prophets, so it was charged as an immorality upon the Gentiles, Jer. x. 2, 3, &c. Acts xvii. 29. Rom. i. 21—25. 1 John v. 21.

Meade's Posth. Works, vol. ii. p. 181

SCHOLIUM 2.

Many have inferred from Matt. v. 33, 34. and James v. 12. that *oaths* are in all cases forbidden to Christians; but it is evident this prohibition can only refer to swearing in *common conversation*.

1. Because otherwise Christ must have charged all swearing as an *immorality* in its own nature; for he says, *Whatsoever is more than this, comes of evil*: now as swearing was in some cases expressly required by the Mosaic law, (*vid.* Lev. v. 1. Numb. xxx. 2. Exod. xxii. 11.) we cannot imagine that Christ would have condemned it universally in such terms as these.

2. Because Christ answered when interrogated upon oath. Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. Mark xiv. 61.

3. Because St. Paul, who must no doubt be instructed in the will of Christ, does in several of his writings make use of expressions equivalent to an oath, at least much more than *yea* and *nay*. Rom. i. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 31. 2 Cor. i. 18, 23. Gal. i. 20. Phil. i. 8. 1 Thess. ii. 5.

4. Because the lawfulness of oaths on great and important occasions seems to be granted. Heb. vi. 13—17. Compare Rev. x. 5, 6. Deut. xxxii. 40.

5. There are other passages in Christ's sermon on the mountain, which, in order to make a rational and consistent sense, must be interpreted in as great a latitude as we here suppose in that passage on which the argument against swearing is built. Matt. v. 39—42. Compare 1 Tim. v. 8.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xiii. *Tillot. Serm.* vol. i. p. 212. *Besse's Def. of Quak.* p. 202.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is debated whether those sorts of falsehoods, which are called *officious lies*, *i. e.* such as seem in their immediate consequence to tend to the advantage rather than the detriment of mankind, be forbidden in Scripture. To prove them unlawful, the following places are urged: Col. iii. 9. Eph. iv. 25. Rev. xxi. 8. Rom. iii. 7, 8. On the other hand, it is urged that some instances of such falsehood are mentioned in Scripture with approbation rather than blame. Exod. i. 19, 20. Josh. ii. 5. compared with Heb. xi. 31. Judges iv. 18, &c. compared with v. 24—26. 2 Kings vi. 19. But it may be answered, That where there does evidently appear to have

* [illegible] Mr. Hutcheson's Essay on Truths of Importance to the Happiness of Mankind, more especially the Doctrines of Oaths as relative to religious and civil Government, is [illegible] commended.

been a falsehood in the preceding cases, (which perhaps in the last there was not,) it is by no means plain that the falsehood was approved by God, though the *faith* with which it was mixed, and which was the leading principle in the main series of action referred to, be applauded. That in some instances, persons are allowed not to have been bound by their oaths, is readily confessed; *i. e.* where the things which they swear to do were in themselves unlawful, or when the oath was taken by those who were not regularly in this respect *sui juris*, or where the oath was made on a false supposition, occasioned by the fraud of those who expected to receive advantage from it. 1 Sam. xxv. 22, 23. Numb. xxx. 4, 5. Josh. ix. 7, 14, 15.

Grot. de Jure, l. ii. c. xiii. § 4. *Turret.* vol. ii. *Shuckf. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 242.

LECTURE CXC.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Divorce, except in cases of adultery, appears to be so expressly forbidden by Christ, Matt. v. 32. xix. 3—9. (compare 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.) that it is strange it should ever have been disputed among Christians. To say, as some have done, that πορνεια does in the general signify *any great crime*, is very arbitrary; for though it is frequently put for *idolatry* in Scripture, it is then plainly used in a *metaphorical* sense, in which it is represented as a breach of something analogous to a *marriage covenant* between God and Israel. Compare Ezek. xvi. 8, 15. &c. Nevertheless, many divines of great note have maintained, that in case of *obstinate desertion* in one of the parties, the other is thereby set at liberty, since the very primary end of the marriage covenant is defeated; and have thought the case to be expressly determined by St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 10—15. But it is to be remembered, that this determination can only be applied when it is not in the power of the party injured to procure the return of the other by any *legal process*. It may be alleged, It is so difficult to reconcile this interpretation with the decision of our Lord, and with what Paul says, ver. 11. that perhaps it may be more advisable to understand the *liberty* spoken of, as relating to a liberty of continuing to live apart, without eagerly soliciting a return to the party, by whom the *Christian* had been on a religious account thus injuriously dismissed. But it may be replied, That ver. 11. above, determines on the case of the believing wife having *voluntarily* withdrawn, and not on that of her being *divorced* by her husband. If the party that had *committed* the injury married another, as that was adultery on Christ's decision, there could be no doubt, but in that case the *injured* party was at liberty to marry again.

Milt. on Divorce, l. ii. p. 43. *Puff. de Jure* l. vi. c. i. *Limb. Theol.* l. v. c. ix.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It has been debated, how far *polygamy* was allowed in the Old Testament, or whether it were not rather condemned. Mal. ii. 14—16. has been urged in that view; and some have apprehended this to be the sense of Lev. xviii. 18. But it may be answered, That the precept of marrying the brother's widow, which was not limited to the case of the succeeding brother's being a single man, might require polygamy in some cases, and that the providing for it so expressly in others, (Deut. xxi. 15. Exod. xxi. 10.) plainly shows the law is not to be interpreted in this sense: and indeed one can hardly imagine, that had polygamy been regarded as adultery in the sight of God, he would have favoured the patriarchs who lived in it with such intimate converse and friendship; not to insist on the argument from 2 Sam. xii. 8. seeing ver. 11. may seem a difficult reply. The decision of Christ, Matt. xix. 4—6. and that of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 2. does indeed plainly show that it was not to be practised by Christians; and Matt. xix. 9. especially intimates it to be a kind of *adultery*; *i. e.* some breach of the *seventh* commandment. Compare Matt. v. 28. Nevertheless, it is nowhere expressly declared that, if a person, who before married several wives, were converted to Christianity, he must be obliged to put away all but the first: it seems that the Holy Spirit judged it sufficient to discountenance polygamy by such intimations as these above mentioned, and also by declaring those who practise it incapable of the ministerial office, which was certainly a proper brand of infamy set upon it. 1 Tim. iii. 2.

Owen's Theol. l. v. c. x. *Bower's Hist. of Popes. Reflect. on Polygy.* p. 7. &c.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

That *incest* was condemned under the old law as an immorality of the heathens, Lev. xviii. 24—27. and is also in one instance spoken of by the apostle with great abhorrence, (1 Cor. v. 1, 13.) is evident; but there is a great deal of room to debate how far those degrees of *affinity* and *consanguinity*, within which it was unlawful for the Jews to contract marriage, are to be a rule for *us*. The chief question is about the lawfulness of marrying a *brother's wife*, which the express precept for doing it in *some* cases proves not to be a natural immorality, though it were forbidden in others; yet, from Lev. xviii. 18. it may well be questioned whether the marrying two sisters successively, were by the Mosaic law for-

* The late Mr Merrick Moses's Work on the Pentateuch, and the publications occasioned by it, are entitled to [illegible]

bidden; though where the civil law of a country forbids such marriages, it is certainly much better to avoid contracting them.

Blount's Oracles of Reason, p. 135

SCHOLIUM 7.

It is most evident that Scripture requires obedience to governors, (Rom. xiii. 1—6. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 17.) but it has been the subject of great dispute how far these precepts extend. All grant that they cannot oblige us to do any thing in obedience to the magistrate which is contrary to the divine law; compare Acts iv. 19. but many have maintained *unlimited passive obedience*, and the unlawfulness of *resistance* in subjects upon any consideration whatsoever. The controversy is too large to be fully examined here; but the following general remarks may be of use, when inquiring into it.

1. That it is in itself very unlikely that so benevolent a scheme as that of the Gospel should be so calculated, as necessarily to destroy the civil rights of mankind, and to enslave free nations, depriving the subject of those privileges which express contract had given them, in those countries, where either a monarchy or aristocracy was limited by law; so that it may reasonably be expected, that very strong proofs be brought of this, before a thing so improbable can be admitted.

2. That there are many general prohibitions in Scripture, which common sense requires us to explain with some limitations. Vid. *Schol.* 2.

3. The apostles did no doubt intend to teach Christians that they ought to be very cautious how they disturb a government; and if any circumstances arise, in which it appears probable that resistance will occasion more evil than good to the public, then the texts quoted above enforce the obligation which Christians are under, by the general laws of the Gospel, as well as those of nature, cautiously to forbear it.

4. The chief argument on which the apostle insists, (Rom. xiii.) will not infer unlimited passive obedience.

5. Christianity was in the apostle's time in so weak a state, that Christians, as such, might be under some obligation to further submission than in all cases can now be required; and it would have been a hazardous matter, and perhaps liable to great abuses and scandal, if the apostles had entered nicely into various circumstances, and stated the case when resistance is, and when it is not, lawful; which, under so unrighteous and tyrannical a government as the Roman, might easily have been interpreted as sedition: it was therefore prudent to rest in such general advices and cautions to obedience, as to be sure do commonly though not universally oblige.

6. Nevertheless, if it should on the whole be acknowledged that subjects are in all cases bound to submit to the *supreme* power, (which is not by any means proved from the texts above quoted,) yet it would not follow from thence, that where the supreme legislative power is, as among us, divided among *many* persons, all the other branches of it, and all the people subject to it, must therefore universally submit to him, in whom the supreme *executive* power is lodged; i. e. that the *king* is to be obeyed, without and against the consent of his *parliaments*.

Blackw. Serm. Sachev. Trial. Trial of the Seven Bishops.

LECTURE CXCI.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Few Christians have questioned the lawfulness of *war*; but the Quakers deny it, and urge Matt. v. 38—41. Rom. xii. 17—21. and Matt. xxvi. 52. For an answer to the *first* of these texts, see *Schol.* 2. As to the *second*, it is granted that *revenge* is there forbidden; but if any circumstances shall arise, in which we are persuaded, that by resisting evil and endeavouring to punish the aggressor, the public good will be promoted, resistance may be made, and punishment executed, without any degree of *malice* against the offenders. And as to Matt. xxvi. 52. our Lord cannot be understood, *q. d.* "they that have recourse to the sword, shall perish by the *righteous judgment of God*," since war had been so often undertaken, and prosecuted in its greatest rigour, by an express divine command in the Old Testament: it must therefore be considered only as a determination on this particular case, to which our Lord seems to have applied a proverbial expression among the Jews, that those who are readiest to meddle with weapons of war, are often the first that fall by them, and prove the occasion of their own destruction. On the other hand, the following Scriptures are often referred to as *countenancing*, if not vindicating, arms, Luke iii. 14. Matt. viii. 10. Acts x. 1, &c. But it is an argument of much greater importance, that the doctrine we have here been opposing would make every desperate villain irresistible, and consequently would give up all the property and lives in a city or province to one such person; and this, even though the person denying resistance or war should allow of *magistracy*; for the decree of the magistrate against such a one could not regularly take place till he has been brought to a trial, which on this hypothesis he could not be, or till he proceeded for want of such appearance to an *outlawry*, and then it could not be executed, without such a forcible attack upon that

person as this principle opposes. The common law therefore of benevolence to society requires an assault on such a person, which does not imply any such malevolence to him as is inconsistent with the Christian temper in its greatest heights.

Grot. de Jure, l. i. c. ii. *Def. of Quak.* p. 212.

It must indeed be allowed, that many of the *primitive* Christians scrupled the lawfulness of war; but they were not uniform in their opinions about it, and if they had, no certain argument could have been drawn from thence. See what Moyle and King have written upon this subject, in the curious controversy about the *Thundering Legion*.

Moyle's Posth. Works, vol. ii. p. 81, &c.

SCHOLIUM 9.

The office of *magistracy* appears so absolutely necessary, in order to preserve the peace of society, (vid. *Prop.* 64, 69.) that it may justly be wondered, especially considering the passages quoted, *Schol.* 7. that any should have imagined it unlawful for a Christian to bear such an office. The chief texts urged in defence of so absurd a notion are, Matt. xx. 25. Mark x. 42. Luke xxii. 25. but it is plain our Lord there only intends to discourage the ambitious temper prevailing among the apostles, which inclined them to contend about that secular power which was not designed for any of them. Were the interpretation here opposed to be admitted, it would follow, either that there must be no magistrate at all in Christian countries, which would be their utter dissolution and ruin, or else that magistrates who are *not Christians* must be established among them, which is in itself very absurd, and directly contrary to the whole of the apostle's reasoning, 1 Cor. vi. 1, &c. Comp. Isa. xlix. 23.

Atterb. Serm. vol. ii. p. 89.

SCHOLIUM 10.

It is plain that the genius of the Gospel leads so strongly to the exercise of love and benevolence, that we can never believe that persecution for conscience sake, which seems in the nature of things so irrational and so mischievous, (*Prop.* 77.) should make a part of that scheme, unless it were very expressly asserted; but this is so far from being the case, that hardly so much as the shadow of an argument for persecution can be produced from the whole New Testament; and many passages of it are most directly contrary to it, Luke ix. 55, 56. 2 Tim. ii. 24—26. 2 Cor. x. 4. Isa. xlii. 3. See also Matt. xiii. 30. and it is no contemptible argument, which is drawn from the silence of the New Testament, as to any use which might be made of the secular power to enforce the truths of Christianity; for though it may be objected, That in the apostles' time few Christians were possessed of such power, yet it might have been convenient that some provision should be made against the time when that power might come into their hands, since there would otherwise be apparent danger of abusing it. To which we may add, not only that Sergius Paulus was a magistrate when converted,—but that the power of masters over their slaves was so absolute, that they might, on what penalties they pleased, have obliged them to profess their own religion; yet there is not the least intimation that Christian masters were to take any such advantages. On the other side, the arguments drawn from Luke xiv. 23. (compare Luke xxiv. 29.) and John xxi. 15. not to mention Acts x. 13. are so ridiculous, as hardly to deserve a particular examination. The chief argument from the New Testament is that drawn from the corporal severities which were sometimes exercised by the apostles. See 1 Cor. v. 5. Acts v. 5; xiii. 11. 1 Tim. i. 20. But it is evident that punishments *miraculously* inflicted on those that opposed the Gospel, had in their own nature such a tendency to convince men's understandings, as those inflicted by the *magistrate* in an ordinary way cannot possibly have. From the Old Testament, besides the argument taken from the penal laws of Moses, (which was considered above, *Prop.* 120. § 6.) some have urged Isa. xlix. 23. but this can only intimate that Christian princes should by all regular methods endeavour to promote the Gospel, and can never prove persecution to be one of those methods. As to the argument from Job xxxi. 28. it may be granted that Job intimates by this, that there was in his time in Arabia a law which punished idolatry, and that he approved it; at least, that he should have approved it, if such a law had been enacted; but it will not by any means follow from hence, that if there were such a law, it was of divine authority, or that if he approved of it, it was therefore right; for it is plain that, in some instances, Job had expressed himself in a very improper manner; and is not to be considered as under a plenary inspiration. As to Zech. xiii. 3. which indeed is one of the strongest texts of its kind, it may be replied, Either that the peculiar law against idolatry in the land of Israel shall still continue, after the restoration of the Jews, God being still their temporal King; or else (which I should rather think) that some converted Jews, warmed with a zeal for the Gospel, but not thoroughly instructed in the gentleness of its nature, shall be ready with their own hands to put to death their own children, if they should oppose it, upon a mistaken notion that Deut. xiii. 1, &c. would be a warrant to them in so doing; but that these converted Jews should be under an infallible guidance in all their judgments and actions, is nowhere intimated in Scripture by any argument, which would not as well prove the infallibility of the whole Christian church.

Limb. Theol. Emi. Life and Tr. v. i. p. 381

* To the further writers who have considered this subject [illegible] has already been made, p. 467.

LECTURE CXCII.

PROPOSITION CXLVII.

The obligation of the precepts contained in the New Testament continues so long as the reasons on which they are founded continue, and ceases when the observation of any particular precept is inconsistent with another of a more general nature, or of greater importance for promoting the essential branches of virtue.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Many precepts are delivered in such a manner, that they must necessarily admit of some exception, in order to reconcile them with each other, and with the natural law of God, founded on the mutual and immutable relation of things. Vid. *Prop.* 146. *Schol.* 2 and 8.

2. The law of Moses, which is delivered in as general and universal a style as the precepts of Christ, was in some instances violated, without any crime, by those who were still in general under the obligations of that law. 2 Chron. xxx. 17—19. (which seems not so proper an instance as some have thought, see ver. 20.) 2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10, 14. compared with Deut. xxi. 23. Matt. xii. 1—6. John v. 8, 9. Luke xiii. 15. Hos. vi. 6.

Stilling. Orig. Sac. lib. ii. c. vii. § 3.

3. When two precepts become inconsistent, one of them must necessarily lose its force; and it is plainly fit that the more particular precept should give way to the more general, and that which is of less to that which is of greater moment. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Matt. xii. 17.

1—3. 4. *Valet propositio.*

Witsii Egypt. lib. ii. c. xvi. § 5.

COROLLARY.

Precepts which depend upon reasons peculiar to one age or people, do certainly lose their force in other ages, and where other people only are concerned.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this head we may properly refer the eating of *blood*, which was forbidden to Noah and to his descendants, Gen. ix. 4. (to which some have added ver. 5. without reason: compare Exod. xxi. 28. and Ezek. iii. 18.) and by Moses to the Israelites, Lev. xvii. 14. which prohibition, in both instances, seems to have had a view to the use of sacrifices in divine worship, and to have been intended as a mark of respect to the altar, at which the blood of every victim was presented before God as a solemn acknowledgment that he was the Lord of life; *ibid.* ver. 10—12. The eating of *fat* was also forbidden in several of the same words, and on the same principles: compare Lev. iii. 17. vii. 22—27. Blood was also forbidden to Christians in the apostles' days. Acts xv. 29. not merely as Lord Barrington, and after him Dr. Benson, have supposed, to those who before their conversion had been *proselytes of the gate*, a distinction, by the way, on which these authors lay a very disproportionate stress,) but to all Christians whatsoever; because the Jews had so strong an aversion to it, that they could not have been persuaded to hold civil or religious communion with those who used it, (Acts xv. 20, 21.) so that it seems even in those days (at least by any thing we can learn from any apostolic decree) had there been any Christian nation, among whom there were no Jews, since the institution of sacrifices ceased, the use of blood would have been an indifferent thing. Comp. Rom. xiv. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Matt. xv. 10, 11. And should a considerable number of Jews be now kept out of the Christian church by that alone, it would still be the duty of those Christians among whom they dwelt, to forbear the use of it, on the principles stated by the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. *per tot.* Rom. xiv. 15—22. Many have indeed thought that there was a *moral evil* in eating blood, supposing that it tends to make men savage, and pleading from its being joined with *fornication*, which is certainly an immorality; but, not to say that πορνεια is by many supposed to signify marrying within those degrees of consanguinity, or affinity, which were prohibited by the Mosaic law,—it is plain there are some things in their own nature indifferent, from which Christians in the Jerusalem decree were required to abstain. As for things *strangled*, they seem to stand much on the same footing with things that *died of themselves*, from which the blood could not be taken, while it could properly be called *the life*; yet the Mosaic law expressly allowed strangers to eat of these, (Deut. xiv. 21.) which surely it would not have done, if there had been any natural immorality in it; but it is yet more important to observe, that this very decree in question joins things *sacrificed to idols*, in the list of what it prohibits, together with fornication, though the apostle expressly allows these, when they might be used without giving offence. (1 Cor. viii. 1—9.) The argument, from the tendency which blood has to make men savage, may be allowed as concluding against eating raw flesh; but that does not seem to be referred to in the apostle's precept under consideration, though some think it is in the precept to Noah. To say that this abstinence from blood is a little instance of mortification, which God enjoins to all Christians, in order to show his supreme power over all their enjoyments, as he forbade one tree to Adam in Paradise, is merely an arbitrary assertion, since there is not the least hint in Scripture of its being forbidden for any such reason; but other reasons are assigned, which are of much less general concern and obligation.

Spencer says blood was forbidden, in reference to

some Heathen superstitions, in which, as he largely proves, it was often not only offered, but tasted, by idolaters; and that the prohibition ceases now, there being no further danger of them: but it seems the apostles themselves did not think of this reason, or lay so much stress upon it, as on the probability of offending the Jews. Acts xv. 19—21.

Hooker's Eccl. Polity, p. 188. *Barr. Misc. Sac.* vol. ii. *Jenn. Jew. Ant.* vol. i. p. 143.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The *anointing the sick*, commanded in James v. 14, 15. was, in the apostles' days, a symbol of *miraculous* healing (Mark vi. 13.); and therefore the reason of the precept ceasing,—its obligation must also cease with it.

Burnet on Art. xxv. p. 265. *Whiston's Life*, vol. ii. p. 473, &c.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The *imposition of hands* in ordination, seems also to depend upon the same foundation. It is certain that it was in the apostles' time the means of conveying some extraordinary gift (Acts viii. 18. 1 Tim. iv. 14.); but as those gifts are now ceased, the chief reason for observing this rite ceases with them. Nevertheless, as it has been an ancient rite of blessing, where no extraordinary gifts were conferred, (Matt. xix. 15. Gen. xlviii. 14.) and seems a natural way of *designing* or pointing out the person prayed for, it may innocently be retained as a thing *indifferent*; but it is by no means to be *imposed*, or represented as of so important and essential a nature, that the validity and usefulness of man's future ministry should be supposed to depend upon it in any degree.

Morrice's Dial. on Sac. Rel. p. 163. *Kippis at Wilton's Ordination.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

Some who have apprehended the precept, Rom. xiii. 1—4. did require unlimited passive obedience to magistrates, have thought it was not intended for a rule to Christians in all ages, but was peculiar to the primitive times, when the Christians were few and weak, and idolatrous princes would gladly snatch at any opportunity or excuse for inflicting punishments on the whole body of them, and would have been ready to strain any passage in the apostolic writings, to make them speak the language of sedition and treason. It must be allowed, that at least many of the primitive Christians did understand the texts as forbidding all resistance; but that will not prove that the apostles did really mean it so, it being very easy to find instances of their mistaking the original sense of Scripture, and putting some far more unnatural constructions upon it than this in question.

Tert. Apol. c. 35, &c. *Baxter's Life*, vol. i. p. 368. *Sav. Ser. at the King's Acces.* p. 13.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Dr. Clarke thinks the cautions which our Lord gave against *carefulness*, in his Sermon on the Mount, Matt. vi. 25, &c. belonged only to the apostles; and were intended to incline them to cast themselves entirely upon an extraordinary Providence, without any care of their own; but there is no sufficient reason to admit this interpretation, since,

1. It is probable this sermon was first preached before the apostles were chosen. Vid. *Dodd. Fam. Expos.* vol. i. § 53. *note (a)* p. 325.

2. The same caution is elsewhere given to *all* Christians. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7.

3. It is connected with things of universal concern.

4. It is enforced by arguments common to all; and,

5. It is inferred from the impossibility of serving God and Mammon.

6. The apostles themselves were not to neglect proper means of providing for themselves, where Providence gave them an opportunity for it. Compare Luke xxii. 35, 36. Acts xx. 34.

Clarke's Posth. Serm. vol. iii. p. 116. *Blair on Christ's Serm. on the Mount*, vol. i.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Though there can be no good works of *supererogation*, i. e. which no law requires, because we are always required to do our best in religion, (Matt. v. 48; xxii. 37. 2 Cor. vii. 1.) yet there are some rules given in Scripture which admit of so many exceptions, that it was not convenient to deliver them in the general form of precepts; so that they are rather to be considered as *counsels*, particularly such as relate to a *single life*, (Matt. xix. 12. 1 Cor. vii. 26, 36, 38.) yet to those whose circumstances such passages suit, they are as obligatory as any of the most express and universal commands (compare Matt. xix. 21, 22.); to others they are not obligatory at all (Acts v. 4.); every one must therefore judge for himself in the sight of God, as to his own particular concern in such precepts; and on this principle 1 Cor. ix. 16—19. may well be explained.

LECTURE CXCIII.

PROPOSITION CXLVIII.

To enumerate the most considerable *means* of virtue recommended in the Scripture, or deducible from principles which are laid down there.

LEMMA.

Several of the particulars mentioned are not to be regarded merely as the *means* of virtue, but also

as in themselves *essential branches* of our duty: but they are here introduced in the view of that influence they have upon other things, which is very great.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. A familiar acquaintance not only with the doctrines and precepts, but likewise with the historical part, of Scripture, will be very subservient to our improvement in virtue. Acts xx. 32. Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 11. Jam. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. Col. iii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

2. We are cautiously to avoid, not only those things which are in themselves evidently sinful, but those which have the appearance of evil, and may be the probable means of insnaring us or others. 1 Thess. v. 22. Prov. xxiii. 31. Matt. vi. 13.

3. Fervent and constant application to God in secret and social prayer. Matt. vi. 6; vii. 7. Eph. vi. 18. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Heb. iv. 16; xiii. 15. *Grove on Secret Prayer.*

4. Christians are to assemble together for the public worship of God, that thereby a solemn profession of religion may be made, that their affection to each other may be testified and cultivated, and that such instructions may be given as may tend to improve their minds in knowledge and holiness, Heb. x. 25. to which may be added the Scriptures quoted under the following steps.

Holland's Sermon on Heb. x. 25. vol. i.[a]

5. It will evidently tend to render such assemblies more useful than they could otherwise be, that there should be those appointed statedly to preside over them; and who for that purpose should apply themselves with greater diligence than others to the study of divine things, and take pains to cultivate a habit of speaking concerning them in public in the most instructive and edifying manner, as well as to investigate and state the evidence of Christianity, the sense of Scripture, and particular difficulties which may occur, and occasion scruples in men's minds, either of a speculative or practical nature: not to insist upon the great advantage societies may receive by the inspection of such offices, and their fraternal admonitions, as particular occasions may require.

Leechman on the Character of a Minister.[b]

6. It is proper that such persons should in a solemn manner be set apart to this work, and recommended to the divine assistance and blessing, in their entrance upon any place in which they intend to labour, not only by the private Christians of that society, but by neighbouring ministers, as there may be opportunity, and especially by some more advanced in life and experienced in the work; which is warranted by various passages in the apostolic writings, whereby the preceding heads are also confirmed. See Rom. x. 13—17. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5—9. 1 Tim. iii. 1—13. Acts xiv. 23; xx. 28. Matt. xxviii. 19. Col. iv. 17.

Savage's Intr. Disc.

7. It will conduce to the advancement of virtue that, on the one hand, great care should be taken to inquire into the character and abilities of those who are chosen to such offices, and to exclude or remove those who behave in a vicious and scandalous manner; and, on the other, when any are chosen to them, and while they behave well in them, they should be treated with all due respect, and a decent provision made for them and their families; partly as an equivalent for their labours, and for their resigning those secular advantages which learned and able men might promise themselves in other callings; and also as an encouragement to them to pursue their sacred work with cheerfulness, being freed from those distracting cares, to which they would otherwise be exposed, and animated by that token of respect and affection in those committed to their care: Phil. iv. 10, 11, 17. nor are ministers to be blamed or despised who accept such maintenance; especially since ordinarily, if left destitute of it, they would be unable to contribute to the relief of the necessitous, which they of all men *(cæt. par.)* ought to be most ready to do. Acts xx. 34, 35. 1 Cor. ix. 4—18. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

Barclay's Apol. p. 329. *Mandev. Free Thoughts*, p. 276.

8. As the maintenance of ministers, and the relief of the poor, who belong to every society, and therefore are to be peculiarly regarded by them, will necessarily require some care and attendance, it is plainly fit that there should be some in Christian assemblies, whose peculiar business this should be: and with regard to these officers, as well as those in a superior station, care should be taken that they may be persons of blameless characters, and that they have such capacities as may fit them for the discharge of their office: respect is likewise to be shown them, proportionable to their usefulness to the societies they belong to, and to the circumstances of life in which they are. Acts vi. 1, &c. 1 Tim. iii. 8—12.

Watts's Foundat. of a Christ. Church. 1pp.[c]

[a] See the several discourses delivered at public ordinations, in opposition to Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Tract upon the subject, see the references in note Preparatory to xxxv. p. 468.

[b] The general obligations of the Christian ministry have been frequently represented in episcopal and archiepiscopal charges, and at the ordination services and charges of the Presbyterian communion. Excellent treatises on the subject are Mr Mason's Student and Pastor, and Mr Bradley's Christian Minister. Among those entered into at ordination may be mentioned Dr Lindsay's Charge at the Ordination of Mr Lindsay; Bishop Burgess's Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Salisbury; and Dr Kippis's Charge to Mr Rees of Rodport, Dorsetshire.

[c] For a general view of the nature and constitution of Christian churches, with directions for conducting and closing their solemn assemblies, in a manner conducive to edification, a short preparatory work is Mr Daniel Turner's Compendium of Social Religion.

9. Hardly any thing can have a happier influence upon the improvement of a virtuous and religious life in all its branches, than a due regard to the mediatorial offices of Christ; and we are encouraged, by the example of good men in Scripture, as well as by other considerations, to pray to him for those blessings which we are sure he is, under his mediatorial character, commissioned and empowered to grant. Compare Acts vii. 59, 60. 2 Cor. xii. 8. Phil. ii. 10. John v. 23. Heb. i. 6. Rev. v. 12, 13. and in all our addresses to the Father, we are habitually to regard him as dwelling in Christ, and manifesting himself to his people in gracious dispensations through him, John xvi. 23, 24. but to address ourselves to Christ *only* in prayer, omitting the mention of the Father, is contrary to the precepts and example of Scripture, and indeed to the whole tenor of it; and is indeed overthrowing the whole mediatorial scheme, while the greatest zeal for it is pretended.

Emlyn's Tracts, p. 27. *Clarke on Trin. Prop.* 53. *Burnet's Doct. Trin.* p. 95.

10. It is also of great importance, in order to our improvement in religion, that we should maintain an habitual sense of the need we have of the influences of the Holy Spirit of God, which are to be sought in earnest prayer, attended with a solicitous concern to cherish those good impressions on the mind, of which we have reason to believe he is the Author. Rom. viii. 11, 13, 14. Eph. iv. 30. Gal. v. 16, 18, 25. And though there be indeed no example or precept concerning the *worship* of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, under a distinct personal character, yet if the preceding propositions relating to his divinity be allowed, there is evidently a foundation for it in the nature of things. Compare Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. *ult.*

Evans's Chris. Temp. vol. i. p. 329.

11. So far as the divine image appears in any creature, we are to express our veneration for it, as a means of promoting virtue in ourselves, as well as an immediate exercise of it; and we may allowably ask the *intercession* of other good men for us: but as we do not certainly know that any invisible being whatsoever, excepting God and the great appointed mediator, Christ Jesus, do hear our prayers at all times and in all places, nor can be sure of it with regard to any particular time or place, it is proper to address our prayers only to God in and through Christ, and not to any inferior invisible being, how great and excellent soever. 1 Kings viii. 39. Rev. ii. 23. Col. ii. 18. Judges xiii. 16. Rev. xix. 10.

Tennison on Idol. p. 222. *Lowman on Rev.* p. 231. *Saul and Samuel at Endor*, c. iv.

12. The worship of *images* has been recommended by many, as a proper means of raising devotion: but images representing God do naturally tend to debase our ideas of him; and images of Christ may easily lay a foundation for idolatry in weak and ignorant minds. The worship of *saints* and *angels* by images is superseded in the preceding step;—and most of those apologies which the Papists make for their image worship, seem to have been borrowed from some of the more intelligent of the *heathen* writers, who could not be stupid enough to imagine that the images themselves were divine, though they did suppose the extraordinary presence of some invisible agent in them or near them, and apprehended that the peculiar favours of that invisible agent would be conferred upon those who honoured the image for his sake.

More's Theol. p. 420. *Tenn. on Idol.* p. 269.

13. As natural reasons mentioned above recommend *fasting* in some circumstances and on some occasions, so many passages in the Old Testament expressly require it, and that on principles common to all nations. Joel ii. 12, &c. Jon. iii. *pass.* It is likewise favoured by Matt. vi. 16. where Christ seems to take it for granted that his disciples would practise it; as also 1 Cor. vii. 5.

Bennet's Christian Orat. vol. ii. p. 18.

LECTURE CXCIV.

SCHOLIUM 1.

That form of prayer, commonly called the *Lord's Prayer*, seems to have been given, in our Lord's sermon on the mount, Matt. vi. as a *directory*; whereas (Luke xi. 1.) Christ seems, in compliance with the request of the disciples, to have given it as a *form*. Some have urged that the *second* and *fourth* petition of that prayer could be intended only for temporary use: but it is most evident that such a sense may be put upon those petitions as shall suit all Christians in all ages; for it is always our duty to pray that Christ's kingdom may be advanced in the world; and to profess our daily dependence on God's providential care. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that Christ meant to enjoin it so absolutely upon all his disciples, that they should be obliged constantly to use this form, or even to dispose their prayers in this method; and that great zeal, which is to be found in some Christians, either for or against it, is to be lamented as a weakness; and it will become us to do all that we can, to promote on each side more moderate sentiments concerning it. The omission of the name of Christ in that prayer, compared with John xiv. 13, 14. shows that this prayer is not to be ordinarily used alone, without either introduction or explication. If the conciseness and variety of the expressions be, as some have thought, an ob-

jection against the use of it, this objection might have taken place from the beginning; nevertheless, it is a good argument why those who use it, should attentively study it, and why it should be often reviewed and explained. Perhaps it can nowhere be viewed to greater advantage than in the pious Archbishop Leighton's explication of it, or in the Assembly's Catechism, in proportion to the number of words used.

Hebden on the Lord's Pr. Watts on Prosper. Hallet on Scrip. vol. iii. p. 20. *West on the Lord's Prayer.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is evidently reasonable and important, that when we pray, it should be with a firm persuasion of the goodness of God, as well as his power, and with a dependence upon the truth of his promises: but as for that firm persuasion of obtaining the particular blessings we ask, which some have called a *special faith in prayer*, it might indeed be an essential condition of the miraculous effects of prayer in the early ages of Christianity; but it is very difficult to determine how far it may now be rational and well grounded, when we are asking for blessings which are merely of a temporal nature, and which God has not by the tenor of the covenant of grace obliged himself to grant to all his people: at least it cannot be matter of universal duty, and can only take place in correspondence to some extraordinary impressions made on the mind, the nature and kind of which are perhaps intelligible only to those who have experienced them. Vid. *Prop.* 140. *Schol.* 7. and the references there. *Vid.* Mark xi. 24. James i. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Calam. Life of Howe. Ogden on Prayer.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is debated, Whether public *liturgies* ought to be established for the use of Christian assemblies? Some have pleaded for it as necessary, and urged Christ's concurring in those forms of prayer which were offered in the Jewish synagogue, as an argument for men's submitting to them. To what was said above, *Prop.* 76. *Schol.* 3. we may add the following remarks:

1. It appears, in fact, by the manner in which the worship of God is discharged in those Christian congregations where liturgies are not used, that it may generally be expected (through the common assistance of the Spirit of God, in consequence of proper care and application on the part of ministers) that the church is never likely to be destitute of teachers, who may carry on that part of worship in a decent and edifying manner, especially when due care is taken in the education of those that are intended for the service of the sanctuary.

2. Nevertheless, as it may so happen that some persons may be employed in the ministry who may not have a talent and capacity for extemporary prayer, it is not at all improper that some forms should be provided for the use of such, if they choose to have recourse to them.

3. But to impose any particular form of prayer upon all ministers, and upon all congregations, without regarding their abilities on the one hand, or their sentiments on the other, is certainly putting a great hardship both on ministers and private Christians; and those who do it had need produce strong evidence that they are the appointed legislators in the church of Christ, if they expect unlimited submission to them.

4. To confine ministers to a form, so as to exclude their offering any prayers but those prescribed, is so apparently absurd, that it has not (that I know of) been practised, at least in any Protestant church.

5. As for the Jewish prayers now used in the synagogues, there is no reason to believe they are so old as our Lord's time; and it is certain that some of them are such as he could not concur in, even though we should grant him to have been present in places where they were used; and all that can be inferred from hence seems to be this, That the use of a form of prayer is not alone a sufficient reason for Christians to separate from such assemblies, which will be readily granted; and it is very hard if no allowance is to be made for a more abundant effusion of the Spirit of God under the Gospel, than under the Mosaic law. Rom. viii. 2.

Bennet, Robinson, and Clarkson on Liturgy. Prince's Vind. c. iv. Predeaux's Con. vol. i. p. 374. *Le Clerc on Matt.* vi. 7.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

Bishop Bull, and some others, have urged the probability of liturgies being of apostolic institution, and 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. is produced very weakly for this purpose, since it may so well be interpreted as a general direction for prayer; and it is certain the quotation from *Prosper* cannot prove the contrary. What looks most specious for this purpose, is the agreement of many ancient liturgies in the *sursum corda*, the exhortation to give thanks to God, with the responses, and the doxologies to Father, Son, and Spirit, together with what he calls the prayer of oblation of the Christian sacrifice in the holy Eucharist, the *ανοναξις*, or renunciation of the flesh, the world, and the devil, in baptism, with the *συναξις*, or joining ourselves to Father, Son, or Spirit; which harmony it is said there could not have been, if there were not some general founda-

* This subject has not unexpectedly been discussed since Dr. Doddridge's Lectures were written. Dr. Taylor's Scripture Account of Prayer, and a tract entitled Public Prayer, are in opposition to liturgies. In favour of them is A Letter to a Dissenting Minister on the Unreasonableness of Forms. This pamphlet was answered by Mr. Jay. A pamphlet under the title of Liturgies according to the Dissenters, or a second letter to a dissenting minister on prayer. What the author proposes is, that students before the ministry occasionally be composed, and delivered by the minister as he does his sermon.

tion in apostolic appointment; but to this it is answered,

1. That the antiquity of all these liturgies is very dubious: nay, several of them are most evidently spurious; and it is certain, if they were forged, many of them might come from the same hand.

2. That the agreement in many of these things is not so entire as is here supposed.

3. That where there is indeed an agreement, it might be derived from primitive custom, though there were no liturgies.

4. That the extraordinary degree in which the primitive Christians were assisted by the Spirit, made it less necessary there should have been any.

5. That several directions given by St. Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 14. make it probable there were none; and that he did not think it necessary there should be any.

6. That the silence of the apostles as to this important fact, supposing it were a real fact, is surprising.

7. It is highly improbable that a diversity of liturgies should have been made in the ancient church, if they had any composed by the apostles.

8. That many passages in ancient writings seem to intimate the contrary practice to have prevailed early, particularly the expression of *ὅση δυναμις*, and *sine monitore*; and Basil, to whom a liturgy with a prayer of consecration for the Eucharist has been ascribed, declares that no such form was, or ever ought to be, composed.

Robins. Ans. to Ben. Clarks. on Litur.

LECTURE CXCV.

DEFINITION XCII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST is a society, consisting of all those who profess to believe in him as a teacher sent from God, and to form their worship and conduct according to what they apprehend to be his institutions.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The church of Christ here defined, is that which is commonly called the *catholic*, and consists of many smaller societies, all agreeing in the general profession of subjection to him, though greatly diversified as to the particular forms of worship and discipline.

SCHOLIUM 2.

The word ECCLESIA, used to express *church*, both in the Latin and Greek languages, does in the general signify any assembly of men, and sometimes is applied even to such assemblies as were not in a regular manner called together, though its etymology expresses *being called out from others*, as indeed assemblies generally are, either more or less expressly. Acts xix. 32, 39, 41. It generally signifies, in the New Testament, "A number of Christians met together in one place;" and sometimes "The whole body of the faithful." Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17. Acts viii. 3. ix. 31. xx. 28. Eph. v. 23, 25, 29, 32. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

Collins on Free-thinking. Bentley on ditto.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Divines have often distinguished between the *visible* and the *invisible* church. All those, and only those, belong to the *visible* church, who submit to the Christian institutions, worship in Christian assemblies, professing their faith in Christ, or are descended from such as do, and are yet in their infancy; though upon this foundation it must be allowed there are various degrees of visibility in church-membership; but the *invisible* church consists only of those who are true believers in Christ, according to *Def.* 82. or, as perhaps some would choose to state it, who have such habits and dispositions as are necessary, in order to their preparation for future happiness, whether they be or be not regularly gathered into the church.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It evidently appears from the preceding definition and scholia, that the supposition of a *visible head*, with whom all the members are to hold communion, is by no means necessary in order to constitute such an *unity* as is essential to the church of Christ; their professed union to Christ is as real a bond of unity as a professed union with and subjection to any *living man* could be; and is that upon which the apostle makes it evidently to depend. Eph. iv. 16. Col. ii. 19. Gal. iii. 28.

PROPOSITION CXLIX.

To take a more particular survey of the various kinds of *public officers*, which are, according to the institution of Christ, appointed in his church.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. It has generally been acknowledged, and was more particularly proved, *Prop.* 148. *gr.* 5, 6. that Christ has appointed certain officers, whose business it is to instruct his people, and to direct them in their spiritual affairs; with respect to which office they are frequently called *pastors*, or shepherds. Acts xx. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Pet. v. 2, 4.

2. These officers are frequently called Elders and Presbyters, as the Jews used to call those who presided in their ecclesiastical or civil assemblies; and from their office of *overseeing* the people, the name of *επισκοποι*, or Bishops, was also given them; and whatever alteration might afterwards be made in the sense of that word, and whatever *distinction* might early be introduced between bishops and presbyters, as signifying two different ranks of

ministers, (of which hereafter,) it is certain that, in the *New Testament*, the words are used *promiscuously*.* *Vid.* Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1, &c. compared with Tit. i. 5—7. Acts xx. 17, with 28. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. Bishop Hoadly and Dr. Hammond do both of them allow this; and it is Dr. Hammond's opinion that there were only presbyters (or bishops) and deacons in each church at first; i. e. one *overseer*, called a *presbyter*, in each, to whom *assistants* and inferior officers were afterwards added; who in process of time took the name of *deacons*, while the presidents were, by way of distinction, called *bishops*. But this does not agree with Acts xiv. 23; xx. 17. Tit. i. 5. which prove there were *several* elders in a place; and this indeed has been generally granted to have been the case *at first*; but it has been asserted that the apostles, in their *last visitation*, settled one of the presbyters or bishops of a place over the rest: but whether they at that time, or ever at all, established such a distinction of names and offices, as had not before been known, will be afterwards inquired.

Boyse's Works, vol. i. p. 81. *Hoadly on Episc.* p. 383. *Hammond on Acts* xi. 30.

3. It appears that another kind of officers, called *deacons*, were used in the Christian church, by the appointment of the apostles: and a parity of reason, at least in some degree, will require that the Christian church should have some such officers among them still, whether they be or be not called by the same name, which plainly signifies *servants* of the church. Matt. xxii. 13. John ii. 9. (Greek.) Vid. *Prop.* cxlviii. *gr.* 8. Acts vi. 1—8. 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. *Collins on Free-thinking*, p. 93.

4. There are some circumstances in the primitive church which have made it peculiarly proper that there should be some *women* appointed to take care of the entertainment of strangers, to attend the sick, and assist at the baptizing of women; these were generally at least *widows*, (1 Tim. v. 9—11.) and seem to have been called *Deaconesses*, Rom. xvi. 1. (Greek). This office is not altogether so needful now as it was then; and whether the office or name should be retained, is to be referred to the judgment of particular societies, upon a view of their own circumstances.

Collins on Free-think. p. 93. *Bingham's Ant.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

There were in the succeeding ages of the Christian church many new officers introduced into it, whose very names were unknown in the most primitive times; which were, for instance, Patriarchs, Exarchs, Archbishops or Metropolitans, Archdeacons, Subdeacons, Acolyths, (a kind of *vergers* to the bishops,) Exorcists, Catechists, Singers, Doorkeepers, the *capitata* or *fossarii*, who had the care of funerals, the *parabolani*, who took care of the sick, the *defensores* and *œconomi*, a kind of churchwardens, of which the first took care of land and houses; the latter of money appropriated to charitable uses: to which we may also add the *cellulani*. Concerning most of them, see

Bower's Hist. of Popes, vol. ii. *Bingh. Antiq.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Of the manner in which the hierarchy was formed under Constantine, during the pontificate of Sylvester, agreeably to the *civil* polity then established in the empire, and the *civil dioceses* into which he divided the *four prefectures*, see Bower's Hist. of the Popes, vol. i. p. 99—110.

Geddes's Tracts, vol. iv. *Essay* 2.

DEFINITION XIII.

Those are said to maintain the DIVINE RIGHT of DIOCESAN EPISCOPACY, who assert that Christ has appointed an order of ministers in his church, superior to the pastors of particular congregations, who are to exercise the highest acts of jurisdiction, especially *ordination*, *excommunication*, and *confirmation*: these they suppose to be, properly speaking, the *successors* of the apostles, in such a sense as no other ministers are; to whose authority therefore neighbouring churches with their pastors are to submit themselves, in all matters which are not apparently contrary to the will of God.

Bingh. Orig. l. ii. c. iii.

SCHOLIUM.

Those who hold every *pastor* to be so a bishop or overseer of his own congregation, as that no other person or body of men have by divine institution a power to exercise any superior or pastoral office in it, may, properly speaking, be called (so far at least) *congregational*: and it is by a vulgar mistake that any such are called *Presbyterians*: for the presbyterian discipline is exercised by synods and assemblies, subordinate to each other, and all of them subject to the authority of what is commonly called *a General Assembly*.

Scottish Confess. and Directory, c. xxxi.

LECTURE CXCVI.

PROPOSITION CI.

To propose and consider the principal arguments which are brought in defence of *diocesan episcopacy*, both from the Scriptures and the primitive fathers.

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. The arguments from Scripture.

1. Some argue that the nature of the office which the apostles bore was such, that the edification of

* See on this subject Dr. Stevenson's Sermon at the ordination of Mr. Moses Alway.

the church would require they should have some successors in those ministrations which are not common to Gospel ministers. It is answered, That as their office was such, as to require extraordinary and miraculous endowments for the discharge of many parts of it, it is impossible that they can have any successors in those services who are not empowered for the execution of them, as the apostles themselves were: and it is maintained, that so far as ordination, confirmation, and excommunication may be performed without miraculous gifts, there is nothing in them but what seems to suit the pastoral office in general, unless further arguments can be brought to prove that Christ has limited them to some superior order of ministers. Vid. *Prop.* 117. *Cor.* 4.

Boyse of Episc. p. 270. *Barr. W.* vol. i. p. 595.

2. It is pleaded, that Timothy and Titus were bishops of Ephesus and Crete, whose business it was to exercise such extraordinary acts of jurisdiction as are now claimed for diocesan bishops, 1 Tim. i. 3; iii. *pass.*; v. 19—22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5. &c. iii. 10. (not to mention the *postscripts* of these epistles, which are evidently spurious.)—To this it is answered, That Timothy and Titus had not a stated residence in these churches, but only visited them for a time: 2 Tim. iv. 9—13. Tit. iii. 12. It also appears from other places, in which the journeys of Timothy and Titus are mentioned, that they were a kind of itinerant officers, called *Evangelists*, who were assistants to the apostles; for there is great reason to believe the *first* epistle to Timothy was written prior to those from Rome in the time of Paul's imprisonment, as some think the *second* was also. To which we may add, that it seems probable at least that they had very extraordinary gifts to furnish them for their superior offices: 1 Tim. iv. 14. Eph. iv. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 5. And though Timothy was with Paul when he took his leave of the elders of Ephesus, (Acts xx.) the apostle gives not the least hint of any extraordinary power with which he was invested, nor says one word to engage their obedience to him; which is a very strong presumption that no such relation did subsist, or was to take place: at least, it is a certain proof that Paul did not think it was necessary to leave a bishop in a place, when making his last visitation to it; for that he at least *thought* that this would be his *last* visitation at Ephesus, is undeniably plain, from Acts xx. 25, 38. Comp. Rev. ii. 4, 5.

Owen's Serip. Ord. p. 11. *Hoare's Epis.* p. 15.

3. Some have argued from the mention of *angels*, *i. e.* as they understand it, of diocesan bishops, in the seven churches of Asia, particularly the angel of Ephesus, though there were many ministers employed in it long before the date of that epistle: Acts xx. 17, 18. But it is certain, that for any thing which appears in our Lord's epistles to them, (Rev. ii. and iii.) they might be no more than the pastors of single congregations, with their proper assistants. Some have urged the use of the word αποστολοι, 2 Cor. viii. 23. (Greek) compared with Phil. ii. 23. (Greek); but it so plainly refers to their being sent by some churches upon a particular occasion, that it is strange any stress should be laid upon it. Compare 1 Kings xiv. 6. *Septuagint.*

Hoare's Episcopacy, p. 45.

4. It is urged that some of the churches, which were formed in large cities during the lives of the apostles, and especially that at Jerusalem, consisted of such vast numbers, as could not possibly assemble at one place. Compare Acts xxi. 20. It is answered, 1. That the word μυριαδες may only signify *great numbers*, and may not be intended to express that there were several times *ten thousand* in an exact and literal sense. Compare Luke xii. 1. (Greek.) 2. That no sufficient proof is brought from Scripture of there being such numbers of people in *any particular place* as this supposes; for the *myriads* of believing Jews, spoken of in the preceding text, as well as the numbers mentioned Acts ii. 41; iv. 4. might very probably be those who were gathered together at those great feasts from distant places, of which few might have their stated residence in that city. Compare Acts viii. 1. 3. If the number were so great as the objection supposes, there might be, for any thing which appears in Scripture, *several bishops* in the same city, as there are among those who do not allow of diocesan episcopacy several *co-ordinate pastors*, overseers, or bishops: and though Eusebius does indeed pretend to give us a catalogue of the bishops of Jerusalem, it is to be remembered how the Christians had been dispersed from thence for a considerable time, at and after the Roman war, and removed into other parts, which must necessarily very much increase the uncertainty, which Eusebius himself owns there was as to the succession of bishops in most of the ancient sees.

Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. ii. iii. *Grot. on Acts* xviii. 17.

Sect. II. Arguments from *antiquity*.

1. The assertors of Diocesan Episcopacy plead,

1. That Clemens Romanus intimates this, when he recommends to the Corinthians the example of the Jewish church, where the high priest, ordinary priests, and Levites, knew and observed their respective offices. To this it is answered, That the high priest may signify Christ; else this parallel would rather imply that the Christian church must be subject to some one *visible head* as the Jewish was, and then *presbyters* and *deacons* may answer to priests and Levites. This interpretation is the more probable, as Clement never expressly mentions presbyters and bishops as *distinct*, nor reflects the

contending Corinthians to any one ecclesiastical head, as the centre of unity, which he would probably have done, if there had been any diocesan bishop among them; nay, he seems evidently to speak of *presbyters* as exercising the episcopal office. See the 39th section of his epistle.

Howe's Episcopacy, p. 107—116.

2. As for Irenæus, I meet with no passage produced from him, to prove that bishops and presbyters were *distinct*. The word *presidency* or *presbyter* is evidently used to signify the highest officer in the Roman church, in a noble fragment preserved, *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xxiv. p. 248. He does indeed mention the succession of bishops from the apostles, which is reconcilable with the supposition of their being *parochial;* nor altogether irreconcilable with the supposition of *joint pastors* in those churches. Iren. l. iii. c. iii. p. 232.

Howe, ibid. p. 132—136.

3. Ignatius is much insisted upon as a most express witness. It is allowed, that in many places he expressly distinguishes between bishops and presbyters, and requires obedience to bishops from the whole church (presbyters not excepted) in very strong terms: but as he often supposes each of the churches to which he wrote to meet in *one place*, and represents them as breaking *one loaf*, and surrounding *one altar*, and charges the bishop to *know* all his flock *by name*, not excepting even the servants of it, it is most evident that he must speak of a *parochial* and not a *diocesan* bishop.

Howe, ibid. p. 122.

4. Polycarp exhorts the Christians at Philippi to be subject to the presbyters and deacons; he urges the presbyters to impartial judgment, &c. but says not one word of any *bishop* as being then at Philippi, nor gives any directions about choosing one; so that it should seem this church, as well as that at Corinth, was governed by joint presbyters, or *copastors*.

5. Justin Martyr certainly speaks of the *president*, whom we may allow to have been distinguished from the presbyter, though Justin does not mention that distinction; but he represents this president as present at every administration of the Eucharist, which he also mentions as always making a part of their public worship; so that the bishop here intended must have only been the pastor of one congregation.

6. Tertullian speaks of *approved elders*, as presiding in Christian assemblies, and glories over the Marcionites, that they could not produce a catalogue of their bishops in a continued succession from the apostles, as the orthodox Christians could: but it cannot be proved that he speaks of a *diocesan*, since all that he says might be applied to a *parochial* bishop.

Howe, ibid. p. 136.

7. Clemens Alexandrinus says, "That the order of bishops, priests, and deacons, is according to the rank and dispensation of angels:" but as he mentions only *angels* and *archangels*, without descending into any more subordinations, it is not easy certainly to determine how far he intended to assert the power of the bishop over the presbyter; much less can it be inferred from hence, that the bishops of whom he speaks were any thing more than *parochial*.

8. Origen speaks distinctly of bishops and presbyters, but unites them both, as it seems, under the common name of *priests*, saying nothing of the power of bishops as extending beyond one congregation, and rather insinuates the contrary, when he speaks of offenders as brought before *the whole church* to be judged by it.

9. The Apostolic Constitutions do indeed very frequently distinguish between bishops and presbyters, and assert the subjection of the latter to the former, as a matter of divine institution: but not to insist upon the evidence there is, that these constitutions were at the earliest a forgery of the *fourth* century, (vid. *Prop.* 103. *Schol.* 5.) there are many passages in them which show that the bishops there spoken of could not stand related to a great number of churches; for they expressly decree, "That the deacons give nothing to the poor without the bishop's consent," and "that the bishops should see to it, that the same person did not receive charities twice in a week, unless the case were very urgent:" they also refer continually to the bishop's assembling with his people in acts of joint devotion; and the liturgies contained in these constitutions generally suppose the bishop present, and assign him some peculiar office in each service, and especially in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

10. Cyprian does indeed speak of the bishop as joining with and presiding over the bench of presbyters, in giving judgment in cases in which the church was concerned; but though he himself was a person of such distinguished sense, and though we have so many large epistles, wherein he gives directions about the manner in which the church under his care was to be managed in his absence, as well as relates several occurrences in which he was concerned while he was at Carthage,—yet it is remarkable, that he gives no intimation of his having had the charge of more than *one* congregation. He speaks of two *readers*, whom he alternately employed, which were capable of being heard by the whole church; and he expressly mentions his people as joining with him in acts of communion and discipline, not by representatives, but in their own person.

11. It is allowed, that in succeeding ages the difference between bishops and presbyters came to be more and more magnified, and various churches came under the care of the same bishop; nevertheless, Jerome does expressly speak of bishops and

presbyters as of the same order; and Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the great and affected distinction made between ministers in prerogative of place, and other tyrannical privileges, (as he calls them,) as a lamentable and destructive thing.

King's Const. of the Ch. part i. *Bayse on Episc.* c. ii. *Milton's Prose Works*, p. 285. *Mem. of Emlyn*, p. 132.*

COROLLARY 1.

The distinction between bishops and presbyters does not appear of earlier date than the time of Ignatius, § 2. *gr.* 1 and 2.

COROLLARY 2.

This distinction does not appear to have been of divine institution; and Dr. Hammond in effect allows this, as was observed *Prop.* 149. *gr.* 2.

COROLLARY 3.

There was little or no conformity between primitive episcopacy, even as it was in the second and third centuries, and that diocesan episcopacy which is established in the Church of England, and in Popish countries.

COROLLARY 4.

Those reformed churches abroad which have not diocesan, may, notwithstanding, retain the true primitive, episcopacy; nevertheless, it is to be observed that they have superintendents, and some of still a superior order, nearly answering to our bishops and archbishops, but with this difference, that it is not pretended their authority is of divine original, nor their existence by any means essential to that of a church; but they are acknowledged to be a kind of officers, set over the church by the civil magistrate; and indeed the constitution of the Church of England is such, that its bishops are properly the king's officers; and it is not in the power of any number of them to make another without him.

Towgood's Append. to his Letter to Whitef.

COROLLARY 5.

The main and most important controversy relating to episcopacy, is that which concerns the *extent* of the bishop's charge.

COROLLARY 6.

To assert in the general that diocesan bishops have such a right to determine all indifferent matters in the church, that private Christians and ordinary ministers must in conscience submit to their dictates, how contrary soever they may be to their own relish and sentiments, and that none may preach who are not authorized by them, is building a vast superstructure upon a very weak and precarious foundation.

COROLLARY 7.

The dissenting churches in this realm are to be justified in the liberty which they take of forming themselves into separate congregations, independently on the authority and jurisdiction of that diocese within whose province they live; especially when submitting to them must in effect be attended with this important additional circumstance, of owning them to be instituted by Christ, as well as with a conformity to certain rites and ceremonies, and forms of discipline, which in themselves considered, separately from any supposed authority appointing them, appear less expedient, though they should not be urged as absolutely unlawful.

Howe's Episcopacy, p. 148.

LECTURE CXCVII.

SCHOLIUM 1.

There seems reason for saying, (as in the last corollary,) that the established Church of England demands that the diocesan bishops should be owned in effect as officers instituted by Christ; for though this be not asserted in the articles of the Church of England, yet in the book of ordination (to which *assent* must be declared, as well as to the common prayer) it is expressly said, "That it is evident to all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, &c. that from the apostles' time there has been this order in Christ's church, bishops, priests, and deacons, as several officers;" and it is sufficiently plain from the whole system of ecclesiastical government, that bishops must here signify diocesan bishops, and not merely pastors of a particular congregation.

Calamy's Abridg. of Baxter's Life, vol. i. p. 222.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is easy to apprehend how episcopacy, as it was in the primitive church, with those alterations which it afterwards received, might be gradually introduced. The apostles seem to have taught chiefly in large cities; they settled ministers there, who preaching in country villages or smaller towns, increased the number of converts: it would have been most reasonable that those new converts, which lay at a considerable distance from the large towns, should, when they grew numerous, have formed themselves into distinct churches, under the care of their proper pastors or bishops, independently on any of their neighbours; but the reverence which

* For a consideration of several of the subjects that are spoken of in hundred and forty ninth, and hundred and fiftieth propositions, recourse may be had to Dr. Benson's Dissertation concerning the first state of the Christian Churches, and concerning the public worship of the Christians, whilst the spiritual gifts continued. See his Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles, vol. i. p. 578. second edit.

† That body of Protestant Dissenters who go under the denomination of General Baptists, have three distinct orders in their churches, answering to bishops, priests, and deacons. They are separately ordained. To the highest order they give the name of Messengers, and to the second that of Elders. The third order is that of Deacons, in the sense of the word as used in the New Testament. See Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Wm. Whiston, part iii. p. 468.

would naturally be paid to men who had conversed with the apostles, and perhaps some desire of influence and dominion, from which the hearts of very good men might not be entirely free, and which early began to work, (3 John 9. 2 Thess. ii. 7.) might easily lay a foundation for such a subordination in the ministers of new-erected churches to those which were more ancient; and much more easily might the superiority of a pastor to his assistant presbyters increase, till it at length came to that great difference, which we own was early made, and probably soon carried to an excess; and if there was that degeneracy in the church, and defection from the purity and vigour of religion, which the learned Vitringa supposes to have happened between the time of Nero and Trajan, it would be less surprising that those evil principles which occasioned episcopal, and at length the papal, usurpation, should before that time exert some considerable influence.

Vitrin. Obs. lib. iv. c. vii. viii.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It might be very expedient, upon the principles of Christian prudence, that, where it can be accomplished, every pastor of a large congregation should still have assistant ministers; and some presidents among the pastors of different congregations, when they are meeting about any public business, is what common sense dictates in such circumstances; and if instead of a chairman chosen for that particular time and occasion, some person of experience, of approved fidelity and ability, should be appointed to exercise some stated oversight over a few of the neighbouring congregations, it might perhaps be attended with such consequences as would render such a sort of discipline not only tolerable, but eligible. Something of this kind was projected in Archbishop Usher's plan for the reduction of episcopacy, by which he would have moderated it in such a manner as to have brought it very near the Presbyterian government of the Scottish church; the weekly parochial vestry answering to their church-session; the monthly synod, to be held by the *Chorepiscopi*, answering to their presbyteries; the diocesan synod to their provincial, and the national to their general, assembly. The meeting of the dean and chapter, practised in the Church of England, is but a faint shadow of the second,—the ecclesiastical court, of the third,—and the convocation, of the fourth.

Hist. of Nonconf. p. 339. *Howe's Epist.* p. 160.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

It seems there was not a perfect uniformity among all the primitive churches in this respect; the power of the bishops seems to have prevailed early in Rome; that of the presbytery at Alexandria; and at Carthage, such a discipline as comes nearest to that which is now called Congregational.

SCHOLIUM 5.

It seems to be solidly argued from 1 Tim. v. 17. that there were in the primitive church some elders who did not use to preach. Nothing very express is said concerning them; only it seems to be intimated in James v. 14. that they *prayed with the sick*. It may be very expedient, even on the principles of human prudence, to appoint some of the more grave and honourable members of the society to join with the pastor in the oversight of it, who may constitute a kind of *council* with him, to deliberate on affairs in which the society is concerned, and prepare them for being brought before the church for its decision, to pray with the sick, to reconcile differences, &c.; but there does not seem any sufficient warrant for making them a kind of *judicatory*, to whose decisions the rest of the society is to submit; and those rules relating to presbyteries, classes, provincials, and general assemblies, which are determined by the constitution of the Church of Scotland, most evidently appear to be at best merely matters of human discretion, and to have no express foundation in the word of God; nor can we trace the existence of such ruling elders higher than Constantine's time.

Maurice Social Rel. p. 143. *Whit. on* 1 *Tim.* v. 17. *Blond de Jure Pleb. Thornton on Relig. Assemb.* p. 96.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It is a very precarious and uncomfortable foundation for Christian hope, which is laid in the doctrine of an *uninterrupted succession* of bishops, and which makes the validity of the administration of Christian ministers depend upon such a succession, since there is so great a darkness upon many periods of ecclesiastical history, insomuch that it is not agreed who were the *seven first* bishops of the Church of Rome, though that church was so celebrated; and Eusebius himself, from whom the greatest patrons of this doctrine have made their catalogues, expressly owns that it is no easy matter to tell who succeeded the apostles in the government of the churches, excepting such as may be collected from St. Paul's own words. See *Euseb.* quoted *Prop.* 150. § 1. No. iv. Contested elections in almost all considerable cities make it very dubious which were the *true* bishops; and decrees of councils, rendering all those ordinations null, where any *simoniacal* contract was the foundation of them, makes it impossible to prove, at least on the principles of the Romish Church, that there is now upon earth any one person who is a legal successor of the apostles; and renders hereditary right as

* Two useful treatises on the general subject of episcopacy, by Clerkson and Dr. Maurice. The latter writes in support of diocesan episcopacy.

precarious in ecclesiastical, as it certainly is in civil, affairs.

Calamy's Life of Baxt. vol. i. p. 122. *Chand. ag. Popery*, p. 34. *Howe's Episc.* p. 174.

SCHOLIUM 7.

Mr. Jones has undertaken to prove at large, that the ordination of our English bishops cannot be traced up to the Church of Rome as its original; that in the year 668, the successors of Austin the Monk, (who came over A. D. 596) being almost entirely extinct, by far the greater part of the bishops were of Scottish ordination, by Aidan and Finan, who came out of the Culdee monastery of Columbanus, and were no more than presbyters; though, when the princes of the northern nations were converted by them, they made them bishops, (*i. e.* gave them authority over the clergy,) and took other bishops from amongst their converts. So that denying the validity of Presbyterian Ordination, shakes the foundation of the Episcopal Church of England.

Jones on the Heart, § 9.* *Bede's Eccl. Hist.* p. 266.

LECTURE CXCVIII.

PROPOSITION CLI.

It is the duty of Christians to observe *one* day in *seven*, and the *first* of the week, as a day of religious *rest*, and *public worship*.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 76. *gr.* 6. 1. Natural religion requires that there should be certain seasons of solemn public worship, universally agreed upon among the members of the same society; but it does not determine how often they should occur, nor what proportion of our time should be employed in them.

2. Were there no intimation from the word of God upon this head, it would, nevertheless, be decent to pay some regard to the laws and usages of our country, so far at least as to abstain from such public labours as they forbid, and to assemble at some place of public worship; and *(cæt. par.)* at times so recommended, rather than at other times; which will afford one evident reason for the observation of the first day of the week among us.

Wright on the Sabbath, p. 165.

3. God appointed for the Jews the observation of a *weekly Sabbath*, (Exod. xvi. 23; xx. 8—11.) and the *rest* there appointed, is said to be in commemoration of God's having *rested* the *seventh* day from his work of creation.

3. 4. This may be considered by us as an intimation of the proportion of time to be given by us to a religious rest; and so much the rather, as the observation of one day in seven seems to have been appointed to Adam in innocence, (Gen. ii. 3.) which is unnatural to understand by way of *prolepsis*. Comp. Heb. iv. 3, 4.

Wotton's Misc. vol. i. p. 201.

Nor is it improbable that this might lay a foundation for dividing time into *weeks*, as so many of the ancient nations did. Compare Gen. viii. 10, 12; xxix. 27; l. 10. See the references to Grotius and Selden, under *Prop.* 109. *gr.* 2.

Strauch. Chronol. lib. ii. c. ii. § 13. *Allix on Scrip.* vol. i. p. 25. *Watts on Holy Times*, p. 5. *Kennicott's Dissert.* p. 157.

5. The peculiar place which this command had in the Mosaic law, as being a part of the ten commandments delivered by God's own voice from Mount Sinai, and written as with his own hand on tables of stone, among moral precepts of the highest importance, may further recommend it to some distinguishing regard.

1, 2, 4, 5. 6. It seems expedient that we in this country, and other Christians, should observe one day in seven to the religious purposes above mentioned; and so much the rather, as our engagements to the service of God are so great, and we are excused from those solemnities which the Jews observed at the Feast of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, besides other sacred times.

7. The apostles, who bore such eminent offices in the church, and were the appointed interpreters of the will of Christ, though they did observe the Jewish Sabbath, resting, that they might not give offence, as well as for the opportunity of meeting and preaching to the Jews attending in their synagogues, (Acts xiii. 14, 15, 42, 44; xvi. 13; xviii. 4.) did also observe the *first day* as a day of religious worship, which (waving John xx. 19, 26.) appears from Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Hence this was called the *Lord's Day*, (Rev. i. 10.) as it might very properly be, since on this day Christ rose from the dead, and the Spirit probably descended on the apostles. Dr. Whitby also contends for that argument from Heb. iv. 3. (vid. *Whitby in Loc.*) but it seems not convincing.

8. The most ancient writers in the Christian church agree in assuring us, that the observation of the first day prevailed early and constantly in it. Ignatius calls this *the Queen of Days*. Melito wrote a book concerning it. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, in their Apologies, speak very expressly of stated Christian assemblies held on this day; not to mention Clemens Alexandrinus, and many more: and Pliny likewise speaks of it as the sacred day of the Christians, a very few years after the death of St.

* See An Account of the Churches in Great Britain, in answer to Jones, by the Bishop of St. Asaph. *Kennet. Editor.*

John. Now we can hardly imagine that such an observation should so early and so universally have prevailed (for we find not that it was ever disputed) had not the apostles directed to it.

Wright on the Sab. p. 145. *Watts*, ibid. p. 72.

9. There is no command in the New Testament whereby Christians are obliged to observe the *seventh day*; but, on the contrary, the apostle plainly intimates that it is abolished. Col. ii. 16.

7, 8, 9. 10. There is reason to believe that the weekly sabbath now to be observed by Christians, is not the *seventh* day, but the *first*. Compare *gr.* 2. 6. 10. 11. *Valet propositio.*

Morer on the Sab. p. 44. *Barcl. Apol. Prop.* xi. 3. 4. *Burn. on the Art.* p. 103. *Wright on the Sab.* p. 24. *Hallet on Scrip.* v. iii. p. 166.*

LECTURE CXCIX.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Against the fourth step of the preceding demonstration it is pleaded, That we do not find that the Sabbath was observed by the patriarchs; and some have thought that when it is mentioned, (Exod. xvi. 23.) it is intimated that it was before unknown by the Israelitish nation, *ibid.* ver. 25—27. It is answered, 1. That the texts quoted above will not prove that the Israelites knew nothing of the Sabbath; but, on the contrary, they rather seem to refer to it as a thing known. 2. That if the Israelites in Egypt had neglected the Sabbath, as it is probable (through the oppression of their enemies) they were forced to do, yet the patriarchs might have observed it, though that circumstance in their lives be not mentioned; and the Israelites might remember it, and esteem it a circumstance peculiarly grievous in their oppression, that they were forced to work on a sacred day:—a consideration which would tend to perpetuate its remembrance, if it were ever known. 3. The observation of the Sabbath is said by some to have been one of the *seven precepts of Noah*, though the authority of those from whom the account of these seven precepts is derived, must be acknowledged so dubious, that no great stress can be laid upon them, especially as some do not reckon the Sabbath among those precepts. *Seld. de Jure*, lib. i. c. x. p. 116.

4. The Sabbath might be observed as a day of some extraordinary *devotion*, though not as a day of such strict *rest* as was afterwards enjoined to the Jews.—5. Supposing the silence of Moses, in the very short account he gives us of the ancient patriarchs, to be ever so entire upon this head, no certain argument can be drawn from thence; for upon this principle we might argue, That the patriarchs had no stated time for the *worship of God*, which is very incredible; and also that the Jews did not observe the Sabbath from Moses to David, since, in the history of all that time, there is no mention of that day; as in the fifteen hundred years between the birth of Seth and the Deluge, no mention is made of *sacrifices*; and yet we have reason to believe they were practised in that period. —6. If it should be granted, That the observation of the Sabbath was disused among the antediluvian patriarchs, it cannot be argued from thence that it was not instituted at the *Creation*. The heads of the Abrahamic family were so remarkable for their devotion, that the strict observation of the Sabbath in their days might be the less necessary.

Patriar. Sab. Heyl. Hist. of Sab.†

SCHOLIUM 2.

Against the argument drawn from the fourth commandment, *gr.* 5. some have argued, That the pronouncing those words from mount Sinai, with an audible voice, was no proof of their extraordinary and universal obligation, since God seems to have intended to have spoken the whole law in that manner, had not the terror of the people prevented (Exod. xx. 18, &c. Deut. v. 23—28); but it is answered, 1. That God's beginning with those precepts was some intimation of their importance, especially as he well knew the fears of the people would prevent his going on to utter more in this audible manner; and indeed Deut. xi. 22. intimates a pause immediately after the uttering those words, otherwise there would have been no decent room for the people to have spoken as they did. 2. His engraving those ten commandments on tables of stone in a miraculous manner, and ordering them to be laid up in the ark, is a plain intimation of their peculiar weight, and a singular distinction worthy our regard. 3. The connexion in which this precept stands with others, which all allow to be of the highest moment and universal obligation, is to be considered as an argument that it is not merely ceremonial. *Hallet on Scrip.* vol. i. p. 152.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Nevertheless, we allow that the observation of the Sabbath is not to be urged as of universal obligation, merely because it is to be found in the Jewish decalogue, and that its place there only

* Publications of a more recent nature on the subject are Dr Chandler's Two Dissertations on the Sabbath, Mr Amner's Dissertation on the Weekly Festival of the Christian Church, Mr Gilpin's Six Discourses on the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day, and Dr Knox's Sermons and Dissertations on the Sabbath. See also Dr Jennings's Jewish Antiquities, vol. ii. book ii. ch. 4. There are many low Grub-Street cavils against the Antediluvian Sabbath, which are rendered by the obligation of observing the seventh day. A treatise in support of this doctrine, was published by Mr Cornthwaite, in 1730.

† See Fleming on the Fourth Commandment, and the same author's Divine Account of the Lord's Day.

obliged the Jews, since, in the preface to those ten commandments, their deliverance from Egypt is urged as a reason for observing them; and the fifth commandment is enforced by promises peculiar to the Jews; not to insist on the addition, (Deut. v. 15.) which is probably to be considered as the words of Moses, not of God, and a *comment* on the fourth commandment, rather than a part of it.

Hallet, ib. p. 161. *Baxt. W.* vol. iii. p. 778, &c.

Mr. Joseph Mede conjectures, that the day of the Jewish Sabbath was *changed* in the wilderness; which he endeavours to prove, by showing that they travelled on the *seventh* day before the first of those Sabbaths which we find they observed, (compare Exod. xvi. 1, 22—26.) and some have taken occasion from hence to assert, That the Patriarchal Sabbath was different from the Jewish, supposing *Monday* to be the day on which God began the creation; which, if it were, the Patriarchal Sabbath will be the same with what is now the *Christian*. But to this argument it is answered, 1. That the *sixth day*, spoken of in the fore-cited text, is not the *sixth* from the *fifteenth of the month*; but from the day on which the *manna* began to fall, which might be the *first* in the *week*, or in general that it might signify the *sixth* of the week, whenever the manna began to fall; and, 2. That allowing it were (as Mede supposes) the *sixth* from their journey on the *fifteenth*, it will not prove a *change* in the Sabbath; but only that *before* the giving the law on mount Sinai, a greater liberty of travelling, on necessary occasions, was allowed on the Sabbath; not here to insist on the possibility there is that the journey they took on the *fifteenth* day of the month might be only the *beginning* of their march from Elim to Sinai; and perhaps no more than would, *after* the giving of the law, have been allowed; not to urge that, upon the signal given by *the cloud*, they might have marched on any future Sabbath; as by special command sacrifice was offered in places not generally allowed by the law.

Mede on Ezek. p. 55. *Patr. Sab.* p. 83. *Watt. Misc.* vol. i. p. 211. *L'Enfant on N. Test.* p. 152.

SCHOLIUM 4.

That the Sabbath is an institution peculiar to the Jews, some have argued from Deut. v. 15. Exod. xxxi. 13—17. Ezek. xx. 20. Neh. ix. 13, 14. Dr. Wright has endeavoured to prove, from Luke xxiii. *ult.* That it was also intended to oblige Christians; but he seems to forget that the persons spoken of there were then Jews.

Wright on the Sab. p. 29.

SCHOLIUM 5.

The rigour of the Jewish Sabbath is by no means to be brought into the Christian constitution, since there is such a silence in the New Testament upon that head. *Watts's Works*, vol. ii. p. 401.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

Some have insisted on an observation both of the *seventh* and the *first* day, as imagining that the fourth commandment, in its most literal sense, designing the particular *time*, as well as the *proportion*, is obligatory upon all Christians; but it has been answered, That in arguing thus, they are but little consistent with themselves, since that commandment requires *six* days of *labour*, as well as *one* of *rest*. Compare *Schol.* 3. and *Dem. gr.* 9.

Baxt. Works, vol. iii. p. 803.

SCHOLIUM 7.

It signifies little at what *hour* the Sabbath is *begun*, if one day be allotted to it. It is plain from Jerome, that some ancient Christians (as some foreign Protestants now do) returned to their secular employments and diversions on the *evening* of the *Lord's Day*; but then they began their Sabbath on the *Saturday evening*; and we are the less to wonder if the primitive Christians took some liberty this way, since they had public worship three days in the week besides, *viz.* Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. *Wright on the Sab.* p. 10.

SCHOLIUM 8.

As it is impossible certainly to determine which is the *seventh* day from the creation, and as (in consequence of the spherical form of the earth, and the absurdity of the scheme which supposes it one great plain,) the change of place will necessarily occasion some alteration in the time of the beginning and ending of any day in question, it being always at the same time, somewhere or other, sun-rising and sun-setting, noon and midnight,—it seems very unreasonable to lay such a stress upon the particular day, as some do, or to require any stronger argument than those assigned above, *gr.* 7, 8, 9. for the *change* of it from the *seventh* to the *first*. It seems abundantly sufficient, that there be *six* days of labour, and *one* of religious rest, which there will be upon the Christian as well as the Jewish scheme.

Wallis on Sab. p. 79. *Peter à Bles. Gener.*

SCHOLIUM 9.

One reason why the abolition of the [illegible] and observation of the *first* day is no more plainly declared in the New Testament, might be out of regard to the Jewish Christians, who could not, without great difficulty and inconvenience, have come immediately into a total change, or strictly have observed

* Mr. Everard [illegible] one day in seven [illegible] twenty, and highly [illegible] part of the [illegible] The controversy was [illegible] Sabbath, but the words, [illegible] Cessation of Bodily Labour, [illegible] Appendix to the first part of Dr. Pocklington's Letter [illegible]

both; and this may answer the argument from Matt. xxiv. 20.

Watts's Works, vol. ii. p. 414. *Ham. in Loc.*

LECTURE CC.

DEFINITION XCIV.

Those rites of the Christian institution, which were intended to be solemn tokens of our accepting the Gospel covenant, peculiar to those who did so accept it, and to be considered by them as tokens of the divine acceptance, on that supposition may properly be called SEALS OF THE COVENANT.

PROPOSITION CLII.

The law of Christ requires that all who believe the Gospel should be *baptized*, *i. e.* should be separated from unbelievers, and joined to the visible Christian church, by being solemnly *washed with water*; which washing is, on the one hand, to signify their faith in Christ and resolution of holy obedience; and, on the other, to confirm their faith in the Gospel promises of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life.

The proposition is to be understood only as speaking of persons as yet *unbaptized*; and it will afterwards be inquired, Whether it extends to those to whom this rite, in its main parts at least, has been already administered, whether in infancy, or upon a false pretence of faith at riper years?

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Our Lord expressly appointed that believers should, in a solemn manner, be washed with water (Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 16.); to which there may also be some allusion in John iii. 5. This is further confirmed by Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 37; xxii. 16.

2. That this is to express faith in Christ in those who are baptized, and solemnly to declare their resolution of openly professing his religion, and cultivating real and universal holiness, (their obligation to which is hereby confirmed,) appears from Rom. vi. 3, 4. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Eph. v. 26.; and Tit. iii. 5. has generally been added to this catalogue, as referring to baptism;—but of that, more hereafter.

3. That God did hereby give to believers a token of the forgiveness of their sins, according to the terms of the Gospel covenant, does also appear from Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16. Tit. iii. 4—7.

1, 2, 3. 4. It appears that Christ instituted such an ordinance as baptism, for the purposes mentioned in the proposition, to those who should believe his Gospel.

5. There is no reason to apprehend that this was peculiar to the apostolic age, since the reasons on which it is founded are common to all ages; and our Lord seems to intimate its perpetual continuance in the church. Matt. xxviii. 20.

4, 5. 6. *Valet propositio.*

Baxt. Inf. Church Memb. p. 341.

COROLLARY 1.

It is evidently a prostitution of the ordinance of baptism, to administer it to any adult person who does not make a credible profession of his faith in Christ and subjection to the Gospel.

COROLLARY 2.

It is the duty of those by whom baptism is to be administered, to make diligent inquiry into the character of those whom they admit to it;—whether they have a competent knowledge of the Gospel, and give reason to believe they will behave in a manner becoming members of the Christian church.

COROLLARY 3.

It is fit that baptism should be administered only by the teachers and ministers of the church, where their assistance can be had; not only because it appears that these were the persons by whom it was administered in the New Testament, but because (*cæt. par.*) they must be most capable of judging who are the fit subjects of it. Vid. *Cor.* 2.

COROLLARY 4.

There is a sense in which baptism may be called *a seal* of the covenant of grace; for though the benefits of the covenant are secured to every believer by the death of Christ, which was the great foundation of it,—yet baptism plainly appears by the proposition to answer to Definition 94. which is the sense in which *circumcision* is called *the seal of righteousness of faith*, by the apostle, Rom. iv. 11. and *God's covenant in the flesh*, Gen. xvii. 13.

Baxt. and Bedford's Lett. p. 347.

COROLLARY 5.

Baptism is not to be *repeated*, since it is a right of initiation into Christ's church; and though it will afterwards appear that vicious members are to be cast out,—yet there is no hint in Scripture, that when re-admitted they are to be baptized again. Compare 2 Cor. ii. 6—8. Nevertheless, consistently with this, those persons might be baptized in the name of Jesus, as the Messiah *already come*, who had before been baptized by John and his disciples into general expectation of a Messiah *shortly to be revealed*. Comp. xix. 5.

Wall on Inf. Bapt. part ii. c. v. *Bens. Prop. Christ.* vol. ii. p. 142. *Foot on Baptism.*

COROLLARY 6.

Though it be allowed not essential to baptism, that the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost should be expressly pronounced, since sometimes mention is only made of baptizing into the name of Christ, as above,—yet considering how express Matt. xxviii. 19. is, it seems highly expedient these

names should generally be used; and the forecited text (Acts xix. 2, 3.) seems plainly to prove that the name of the Spirit was generally, at least expressly, mentioned in Christian baptism; and it seems essential to the ordinance, that every adult person receiving it should be instructed in the distinct characters of each of these sacred persons in the work of our redemption, and should solemnly profess a correspondent regard to each.

Tillot. Works, vol. i. p. 513.

COROLLARY 7.

The *naming* of the baptized person is by no means any part of this institution; and when it is used, is to be considered as an address to the person, calling him by his name, rather than as the manner of giving a name to him; though it is very probable, the custom of naming a child at baptism might arise from the practice of the Jews at their *circumcision*. Luke i. 59—63; ii. 21.

LECTURE CCI.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The Quakers assert, That *water* baptism was never intended to continue in the church of Christ, any longer than while Jewish prejudices made such an external ceremony necessary; which they argue from that passage, in which *one* baptism is spoken of as necessary to Christians, (Eph. iv. 5.) which, say they, must be a baptism of the *Spirit*. But from comparing the text mentioned above, it will plainly appear that water baptism was instituted by Christ in more general terms than will agree with this explication: that it was administered to all the Gentile converts, and not confined to the Jews, appears from Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. compare Acts x. 47. that the baptism of the Spirit did not supersede water baptism, appears to have been the judgment of Peter, and those that were with him; so that the *one* baptism spoken of seems to be that of *water*, the communication of the Holy Spirit being only called *baptism* in a figurative sense. As for any objection which could be drawn from 1 Cor. i. 17. it is sufficiently answered by the preceding verses, and all the many texts in which (in epistles written long after this) the apostle speaks of *all* Christians as baptized; and argues from the obligation of baptism, in such a manner as we can never imagine he would have done, had he apprehended it was the will of God it should be discontinued in the church. Compare Rom. vi. 3, &c. Col. ii. 12. Gal. iii. 27.

Gale's Serm. vol. ii. *Lett. betw. Bp. Clayton and Penn on Baptism.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Mr. Emlyn, and several of the Socinians, have maintained, That baptism was and is only to be used by those who are converted to Christianity from a different profession, the pollutions of which are considered as washed away by it; and they assert, That though the children of such converts were to be baptized with their parents, all that descended from them after they were initiated into the Christian church were to be considered as baptized in them; and the practice of *proselyte baptism* among the Jews is urged, as what must direct the apostles to such an interpretation of the words of Christ. Matt. xxviii. 19. It is answered,

1. That the antiquity of this practice of proselyte baptism among the Jews is a matter of considerable debate; yet, upon the whole, there is so much probability on the side of the fact, from the tenor and genius of the Mosaic law, as well as from some incontestable passages in very early Jewish writers, that this answer is hardly to be supported.

2. That supposing it to be older than our Saviour's time, the apostles might not know all the rules relating to it, any more than common mechanics amongst us know the laws of the naturalization of foreigners, especially considering the afflicted state of the Jews at that time, which was such as would not be likely to invite strangers to incorporate with them; so that perhaps instances of this seldom occurred; and the many *washings* among the Jews might make this rite, as applied to proselytes, less taken notice of, especially as it might seem so very inconsiderable, when compared with the *circumcision* of males, which also necessarily attended their proselytism. What the rabbies say of the extraordinary solemnity with which this rite was to be administered, is far from being authentic evidence.

3. It is probable some of the rules of proselyte baptism did not prevail among them so early, particularly that which supposed that all natural relations were cancelled by it. It may therefore be difficult certainly to determine what was exactly the custom in this respect; and if we were to allow it to be such as the rabbies in after ages describe it, then it can never be imagined that our Lord would direct his apostles in all respects to conform themselves to it; and if not in *all*, who can say exactly in *how many*?

4. Though it is acknowledged, That we do not meet with any instance in the earliest primitive antiquity, in which the baptism of any child of Christian parents, whether infant or adult, is expressly mentioned,—yet it is certain that Christians in general have always been spoken of, by the most ancient fathers, as *baptized persons*; and the apostles, when writing to Christian churches, planted many years before the date of their respective epistles, argue with the members of them from the obligation which their baptism brought upon them,

in such a manner as would lead us to conclude that they were baptized in their own persons: and it is also certain that, as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity reaches, no unbaptized person received the Lord's supper; which yet was an ordinance, none will deny, that the descendants of Christians received. Dr. Benson adds, That on this supposition *genealogies* would be of great importance in religion, contrary to what St. Paul intimates; nor can we reasonably think that God would put our right to Christian communion upon a fact, the evidence of which might sometimes be so obscure as the baptism of some remote ancestor.

Whist. Life, vol. i. p. 367. *Cornish on Bapt.* p. 54. *Jenn. Jew. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 133.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

Mr. Joseph Mede supposes, not without some considerable appearance of reason, that baptism has a reference to washing a new-born infant from the pollution of the birth. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21. Tit. iii. 5. compare Ezek. xvi. 4, 5.

Mede's Diat. on Tit. iii. 5. p. 63.

SCHOLIUM 4.

As to the *necessity* of baptism, some seem to have laid too great a stress upon it, as if it were absolutely necessary in order to salvation, grounding their argument chiefly on John iii. 5. Mark xvi. 16. nevertheless, it will be readily allowed, that for any to abstain from baptism, when he knows it is an institution of Christ, and that it is the will of Christ that he should subject himself to it, is such an act of disobedience to his authority, as is inconsistent with true faith.

Wall on Inf. Bapt. c. vi. *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* lib. v. *Cornish on Baptism*, p. 86.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Some have supposed that God has connected with the administration of baptism some certain degree of the effusion of his Spirit, which the person baptized *(cæt. par.)* would not otherwise have received, and which always remains with the baptized persons till forfeited by some act of wilful sin: but the proof from Scripture seems very deficient on this head. The effusion of the Spirit on the baptized seems chiefly, if not only, to refer to some *miraculous gift* conferred upon them, not always attended with saving grace: and all that we can reasonably promise ourselves from such an institution is, that on complying with this, as with any other evangelical precept, we may more cheerfully expect the blessing and presence of God with us in our Christian course; nevertheless, God does not seem to have bound himself to this or any other ordinance whatsoever, in such a manner that extraordinary immediate influences should necessarily and inseparably be connected with it.

Clarke on Bapt. p. 11. *Bennet's Christian Orat.* vol. i. p. 326.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Mr. Dodwell carried the notion mentioned above so far, as to suppose that there goes along with the administration of baptism, if the person administering it be duly ordained, a certain *immortal seminal spirit*; whereas persons dying unbaptized are not immortal: and though Mr. Hallet does not assert it in express terms, he seems to intimate something very like it, when he expressly says, "That circumcision was that which gave the infant a right to immortality and eternal life; and that baptism in this very respect comes in the room of circumcision; yet that no infants are miserable in a future state."

Doctr. Script. Acc. of Rewards. Hallet on Script. vol. iii. p. 299.†

SCHOLIUM 7.

Upon the principles of the *third* and *fifth Schol.* above, many have maintained that baptism is the Christian *regeneration*, urging for that purpose John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. and the use of the word in primitive Christian authors, where it is certain it has that sense: but we answer,

1. That if by *regeneration* we are to understand that which makes a man a child of God, an heir of eternal life, according to the promises of Scripture, it is certain from the whole tenor of Scripture (vid. *Prop.* 137 and 145.) that baptism *alone* is not sufficient for this purpose: and it is plain in fact, that persons may be baptized, while they continue unrenewed and liable to divine condemnation.

2. That the utmost which the forecited text in John can signify is, that a person, in order to being a regular member of the Christian church must be baptized, having received the purifying influences of the Spirit: and if λουτρον παλιγγενεσιας in Titus, be rendered *of the laver of regeneration*, and explained of baptism, it can only signify the *laver* in which *the regenerate* are to be washed; and it would be as absurd to say Christians are *regenerated by that*, as it would be to say Christians are generated or born in the water with which the pollution of the womb is washed away.

3. That on this principle, regeneration in adult persons is a necessary *preparatory* to baptism, (as it is certain holiness is by the argument in the pro-

* Mr. Wakefield, in his Short and Plain Account of the Nature of Baptism, according to the New Testament, has supported the same opinion which was advanced by Mr. Emyln. On the other hand, the perpetuity of the institution is maintained by Mr. Joshua Toulmin, in his Short Essay on Baptism.

† The notion advanced by Mr. Dodwell produced a considerable controversy, which so far as related to that author's peculiar opinion concerning the efficacy of baptism, was of no consequence. But some divines were taken from new principles to discover the primitive doctrine of a future state, and the original immortality of the soul. The writers who have the principal part in the debate are Dr. Samuel Clarke and Mr. Anthony Collins. Some account of the controversy, which is now published, may be seen in the Biographia Britannica, vol. iv. p. 265. vol. v. p. 20. vol. vi. p. 370. to which, under the respective articles of Clarke, Collins and Dodwell

position,) and therefore must be something *different* from it.

4. That nevertheless, as in the earliest days of the primitive church, persons being brought to embrace Christianity were immediately baptized, the time of their baptism and that of their conversion being spoken of as one, and as the time when they were born as it were into a new world, and joined to the family of God's children, it is no wonder that the *action*, by which they *testified* that change so lately made, should sometimes be put for that *change* itself: and thus *illuminati* also signifies the same with baptized persons; not that they were illuminated by baptism, but because they were generally baptized as soon as enlightened with the knowledge of Christianity; and it is plain that the word παλιγγενεσια is often put for *any great change*.

Suicer's Thesaur. Cicero ad Attic. l. vi. *Let.* vi. *Waterland on Regen. Hebden on Regen.*

LECTURE CCII.

PROPOSITION CLIII.

To inquire whether the *immersion* of the whole body be an essential circumstance in baptism, or whether it may be administered by *sprinkling*, or pouring on water.

SOLUTION.

1. In favour of *immersion* it is pleaded, That the word βαπτιζω, being derived from βαπτω, properly signifies *to plunge*. On the other hand, it is urged, that in this diminutive and derivative form, it may signify *any* method of *washing*, and is sometimes used in Scripture for washing things which were not dipped in water, but on which it was poured. Compare Luke xi. 38. Mark vii. 4. and those Scriptures in which the pouring out of the Spirit is called baptism. Acts i. 5, 8; xi. 15, 16, *et sim.* to which some add 1 Cor. x. 2. and observe that βαπτω is never used for baptism.

Dr. Dan. Scott on Matt. xxviii. 19.

2. It is pleaded, That *plunging* alone represents our being *buried* with Christ in baptism, and consequently that this ceremony is essential. Compare Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.

Ans. It is allowed that there is in this passage an allusion to that mode of baptism which then generally prevailed; but in the institution of that ordinance, there is no declaration that it was chiefly designed to represent this; and persons were baptized, before it was generally known that Christ should die and arise from the dead. Our being *cleansed from sin*, seems the thing primarily intended; which may well be represented by *pouring on* water: and as this more naturally represents the *pouring out of the Spirit*, the *sprinkling us with it*, and the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*, it may answer as valuable purposes as that mode which more expressly represents a *death* and a *resurrection*.

3. The most considerable argument in favour of immersion is, that it was practised in the primitive ages. Several texts in the New Testament plainly declare this: Matt. iii. 6, 16. John iii. 23. Acts viii. 36—39. and it appears by the *fathers*, that this was at least generally retained till *clinic* baptism, *i. e.* a baptism of the sick in their beds, took place.— To this it has been answered, (waving Mr. Maurice's and Mr. Hebden's attempt to prove that baptism by immersion was never certainly used in any one instance,) 1. That though immersion might *generally* be used, there are some cases in which it is dubious whether the persons were plunged or sprinkled: such great numbers were converted and baptized at the day of *Pentecost*, that some think it would have been almost impossible to have plunged them all: nor can it be supposed, that being many of them strangers, and far from their own habitations, they had that change of raiment with them which decency, conveniency, and safety would have required on that supposition. The jailer and his family were baptized in the night. Compare Acts xvi. 33; x. 47. 2. As some circumstances attending the institution of the *passover*, not being essential, were afterwards varied, Exod. xii. 11. and as some who insist on immersion, allow a change in some circumstances as to the administration of the Eucharist, both as to time and gesture, and the form of the elements, we may on the same principles allow of some variation here from what was generally practised at first, especially as the coldness of the climate, and the general disuse of bathing among us, seems to require it.

Wall. on Inf. Bapt. Gale ag. Wall. Let. iii. &c. *Wall ag. Gale*, p. 96. *Shaw's Trav.* p. 4. *Guyse's Par. on N. Test.* vol. i. p. 12. *Foot on Bapt. Towgood on the Mode of Baptism.*

COROLLARY 1.

It will appear hence, that they who practise baptism by immersion, are by no means to be condemned on that account, since, on the whole, that mode of baptism is evidently favoured by Scripture examples, though not required by express precept.

COROLLARY 2.

Nevertheless, considering how little stress is laid on what is merely ceremonial and circumstantial in the Christian dispensation, considering how effectually the main ends of the ordinance may be secured without immersion, and how weak some of the arguments for its universal obligation are, those who approve and practise it ought at least to be candid towards those who differ from them; and

act without sufficient warrant, if they separate from such acts of communion with them, as they might otherwise esteem proper expressions of mutual love, and of their common hope in the Gospel.*

SCHOLIUM.

In answer to the argument hinted at above, from the *coldness of our climate*, it has been urged, That, till within these few centuries, baptism by *immersion* was the general practice here in England, as it is to this day in Russia: and where any particular case required such a precaution, *warm* water might be used instead of cold.

Wall's Defence, p. 144. *Foot, ubi supra*, p. 32.

LECTURE CCIII.

PROPOSITION CLIV.

To give a brief view of the chief arguments for and against *infant baptism*; *i. e.* applying that external rite described *Prop.* 152. to infants, so far as they are capable of receiving it.

SECT. I. The arguments for it are chiefly these:—

Arg. I. The precepts of Christ concerning baptism, were to be explained by the custom prevailing among the Jews in his time. Now, as when proselytes came over to the Jewish religion, the children were baptized with the parents, the apostles would naturally conclude that children were included in the general commission. Matt. xxviii. 19.—It is answered,

1. That there is some uncertainty, Whether proselyte baptism were used by the Jews in our Saviour's time. On the whole, if infant baptism were used in proselyting persons to Judaism, it might be natural for the apostles to think of it in making proselytes to Christianity; and though it should be acknowledged, that at first they might not certainly know whether the children born after their parents' baptism should or should not be baptized, (it not being a point wherein their duty was immediately concerned,) it might, nevertheless, be afterwards revealed to them, as contained in that commission they then received, as we know the preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles was, though they did not at first know that their commission extended to it.

2. That if it did prevail, on the principles of the pædobaptists, it could not be intended as an entire model for baptism,—since it would then dissolve the nearest relations contracted before baptism, and would render it unjustifiable to baptize the children born after their parents' baptism.—It is replied, It might be a model in the leading circumstances, though not in others of a more minute kind.

Arg. II. The apostles are said to have baptized *whole families*, (Acts xvi. 15. 33. 1 Cor. i. 16.) and therefore probably infants among the rest.—It is answered,

1. That it is not certain there were any infants in those families.

2. If there were, it is reasonable to believe, that when it is said whole families were baptized, it is only meant that the ordinance was administered to those of the family that were the proper subjects of baptism; and it is the more reasonable to acquiesce in this interpretation, because whole houses also are said to *believe*. Acts xvi. 32, 34.

Arg. III. Our Lord says, Mark x. 14. speaking of infants, *Of such is the kingdom of Heaven:* which some understand, *q. d.* the rights and privileges of the Christian church belong to such.—It is answered, The word τοιουτων, there used, may signify, not those that are infants in *age*, but persons who in the temper and disposition of their mind resemble the simplicity and innocence of children, which the connexion seems to favour.

Henry on Christ's Favour to little Children.

Arg. IV. Circumcision, as applied to Abraham, was *a seal of the righteousness of faith*, (Rom. iv. 11.) or a token of his being accepted of God as righteous upon his believing; and confirmed a covenant, by which spiritual and eternal blessings were promised to him, as our Lord argues, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. and the apostle, Heb. xi. 16 in both which places it is strongly declared, that for God to call himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, implies his providing for them the blessing of a future state. The apostle does also expressly assert that Christians are the children of Abraham, as they are heirs of the blessings promised to him, Rom. iv. 11—17. Gal. iii. 6—18, 29.—Now, forasmuch as the *seal* of this covenant was by God's express command to be applied to *infants*, (Gen. xvii. 1—4.) it not only shows that there is no absurdity in supposing the seal of the covenant of grace to be so supplied, but lays a foundation for a strong presumption that the children of believers under the Christian dispensation should not be cut off from this *conditional*, though not *absolute*, token of the divine favour to them, at least without some express declaration in the New Testament for that purpose; yet we are so far from finding any declaration, that the contrary seems to be strongly intimated, (Acts ii. 39. and Rom. xi. 17, &c.) where the apostle, representing the Gentiles as grafted upon the stock of the Jewish church, and the Jews as hereafter to be grafted on their own stock, seems likewise further to imply that the privileges of the seed of believers were still the same. Some also

* See Mr. Bickersteth's Two Discourses on Catholic Communion; relating in particular to the reciprocal Sentiments of Churchmen and Dissenters respecting Baptism. Dr. Foster has also a discourse on the same subject.

urge Jer. xxx. 20. and Isa. lxv. 23. as expressly declaring that children should be put upon the same foundation under the Gospel as under the law; which indeed the passages do appear to intimate.—To this it is answered,

1. That circumcision was to the seed of Abraham only a seal of a *temporal covenant*; but this is sufficiently confuted by what has been already observed. So that, on the whole, it appears, as circumcision sealed to Jewish infants their inheritance in the land of Canaan, and title to the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation, on condition of their observing the Mosaic law,—so it likewise assured them that if they imitated the faith of Abraham, they should, though they had no perfect righteousness of their own, be finally accepted of God, as their father Abraham was; which was not a promise of the Mosaic law, though (as the apostle justly argues in the above-cited Gal. iii. 17.) that law could not abrogate it. See John vii. 22.

2. It is pleaded, That the Jewish dispensation, being more imperfect, is not to be made the model of the Christian; but it is replied, We ought to have strong reason to believe the latter *less favourable* than the former, before we grant that in any article it is so. If it be objected that infant baptism is no benefit, it will be considered afterwards.

3. To this argument, drawn from Acts ii. 39. it is replied, That the words may be understood, *q. d.* "Your seed in every generation shall, *on their believing*, receive those spiritual blessings which are now by the Gospel offered to you; and your sons and daughters shall at present receive the extraordinary communications of the Spirit, foretold by Joel, and displayed in us." But the latter part of this paraphrase does not seem to suit with what is added, *to all those that are afar off*, which some would explain, "Even to all those (*i. e.* of your descendants) that are at the remotest distance;" though I should rather think it signifies, "To those among the Gentiles who shall be converted, as well as to you." It is also to be considered, what interpretation a Jew would naturally put on these words. Much the same reply and remarks may be applied to the other texts. Some urge Gal. iii. 28. as a further illustration of this argument; supposing it a clear proof that baptism came directly *in the room* of circumcision; that being the only instance, except the priesthood, (from which *women* are by the Gospel excluded, 1 Cor. xiv. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 12.) in which there was a distinction made between persons of different sexes; and Col. ii. 11, 12. has also been urged, as expressly asserting that baptism is Christian circumcision; but it may be replied, It only signifies that baptism obliges us to that *mortification*, which is the true Christian circumcision.

Watts's Harm. p. 29. *Foot on Baptism*, p. 41.

Arg. V. The words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 14. are pleaded, as having a direct reference to infant baptism; since *holy* often signifies those that might be admitted to sacred rites;—and *unclean*, those that were to be excluded from them. Exod. xix. 6. Lev. xxi. 6, 7. 2 Chron. xxiii. 6. Ezra ix. 2. 1 Sam. xxi. 5. compared with Exod. xix. 15. Lev. xi. 24, 25. and the sense will be, *q. d.* "Were not the matrimonial converse of a believer and unbeliever lawful, the church would not encourage the bringing such children to be baptized, which yet we know it does;" but other interpretations are brought; particularly,

1. That *holy* may signify legitimate; and *unclean*, bastards; but this, besides that it is an unusual sense of the words, would make the argument very weak, and be almost proving *idem per idem*.

2. That it may intimate the prospect of the conversion of the unconverted parent, and consequently of having the children bred up Christians; but they might be so educated, even though the Heathen parents were not converted; which would entirely enervate this answer. *Hallet*, vol. iii. p. 325.

LECTURE CCIV.

Arg. VI. Some have apprehended, that they have been able to trace such intimations at least of infant baptism, in the earliest ages of the church, as may to a high degree of probability prove it an apostolic, and consequently divine, institution.

1. Hermas says, "The baptism of water is necessary to *all*."

Ans. The Pastor of Hermas is a visionary book, the genuineness of which is far from being certain; but allowing it to have ever so much weight, this will only prove that baptism is necessary to those who are the proper subjects of it; but cannot determine that infants are so.

Wall on Inf. Bapt. part i. c. i. *Mosh. de Rebus.*

2. Irenæus (*adv. Hæret.* lib. ii. c. xxxix.) mentions *infants* among *the regenerate*, *i. e.* the baptized, as the word generally signifies in his writings.

Ans. We have only a Latin translation of this work; and some critics have supposed this passage spurious; or, allowing it to be genuine, it will not be granted that *to be regenerate*, always in his writings, signifies *baptized*; nor is it certain how far the fathers extended the period of infancy; but this last answer can be of no avail, as he distinguishes infants from *parvuli* and *pueri*.

Wall, ibid. c. iii. *Gale against Wall. Up.* c. i. *Wallis's Def.* c. xii. p. 282, &c.

3. Justin Martyr speaks of some "Who had been

made disciples from their infancy," but this may only refer to their having been early instructed in the principles of the Christian religion.

Justin Martyr's Works, p. 62.

4. There is indeed a remarkable passage in The Questions and Answers to the Orthodox. (*Quæst.* lvi. p. 424.) which most evidently mentions infant baptism in as express terms as possible, inquiring into the different states of those children who were, and who were not, baptized at the general resurrection; but though these questions are ascribed to Justin Martyr, and are no doubt of considerable antiquity, there is no evidence that he was the author of them; nor can their age be so exactly ascertained as on this occasion, and many others, one could desire.

5. It is allowed there are many passages in Origen that expressly refer to infant baptism; but they are chiefly to be found in those translations of his Greek works which were done by Ruffinus and Jerome, who made some very bold alterations according to their own judgment and taste; but this is not applicable to all the passages brought from him; and it is to be remembered, that he was born of Christian ancestors; and his father having been martyred in the year 202, when Origen himself was 17 years old, the remoter Christians of his family must probably have been nearly contemporary with the apostles. It may be added, that the translations of Jerome, which are often referred to on this occasion, were by no means so lax as those of Ruffinus.

Wall's App. p. 11. *Wall's Def.* p. 372.

6. Cyprian is allowed by all to speak expressly of infant baptism as generally used in the church; but it is justly answered, That he speaks as expressly of infant communion in the *Eucharist*; and consequently that the divine original of the *latter* may as well be argued from him as that of the *former*; yet almost all pædobaptists allow that to be an innovation.

7. Tertullian advises parents to *defer* the baptizing of their children, except where their lives were in danger; which plainly shows it was used in his time. This the antipædobaptists allow, and suppose the practice arose first in Africa, and then came generally to prevail elsewhere, from the mistaken apprehension that baptism was absolutely necessary to salvation.

8. In the Apostolic Constitutions, which are allowed to be an ancient, though not a divine, book, there is express mention made of infant baptism, as commanded by Christ, in Matt. xix. 14.

Apost. Const. lib. vi. § 16. p. 364.

It is replied, That so many superstitions are introduced in this book, that there is no reason to rely much on its authority; and that in the ritual of baptism, *lib.* viii. § 8. there is no rubric for infant baptism, nor any form to be used in performing that office; but it is answered, This being only the rubric for *weekly worship*, there is no rule for baptizing, any, the prayers relating only to those already baptized, and those words of the deacon, § 12. *Let the mother receive the infant*, make it plain that *at least communion*, as well as infant baptism, was then used; which indeed enervates any arguments that are brought from the supposed antiquity of these Constitutions.

Chapm. on Bapt. p. 27. *Pierce on the Euch.* p. 77. *Towgood's Infant Baptism.*

LECTURE CCV.

SECT. II. Arguments *against* infant baptism.

Arg. I. It is pleaded, That infants are incapable of complying with the terms required, in order to baptism, *i. e.* repentance and faith, and of receiving those instructions which Christ directed as previous to it. Matt. xxviii. 19. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21.

It is answered, That those instructions and conditions were only required of those who were capable of them: thus, had Christ sent his apostles to proselyte men to the Jewish religion, he might have said, "Go, proselyte all nations, circumcising them in the name of the God of Israel, and teaching them to observe all things which Moses had commanded." As for the word μαθητεύσατε, which some understand of *preaching* previously to baptism, it may signify *make disciples*, and that *infants* may be comprehended under that name, some have argued from Acts xv. 10.

Gale ag. Wall. Whit. on Matt. xxviii. 19. *Cornish on Baptism*, p. 165.

Arg. II. It is said that infants are incapable of receiving any benefits by baptism, and consequently that the ordinance is exposed to contempt by applying it to them.

It is answered, 1. That it may be on many accounts both useful and comfortable to the parents, for whose sake it might perhaps be chiefly ordained. 2. That it may lay a foundation for serious and affecting addresses to the children, as they grow up (compare Deut. xxix. 10, 11); and, by the way, we may observe the difference between the expression there, and those used Neh. x. 28. which seems to have its foundation in the particular engagements relating to *marriage*, and in those relating to the one-third part of a *shekel*, which they seemed voluntarily to impose upon themselves as an annual tribute; on which account it was natural to assemble the *adult* only. 3. That being thus entered into Christ's visible church, they have a share in the prayers offered for that church in general; to which some have added, that it is proper the ministers and elders of each respective society should maintain

some particular inspection over the children belonging to it, to which inspection their being baptized may give them some additional title; but it is by a very particular turn of thought that Mr. Morrice, in his Dialogues, argues that such relation to the church may bring them within the reach of its *censures*, in case of gross misbehaviour, which, if allowed, may be a considerable benefit; but perhaps it may be urged, that the counterpart to this is admitting them to the Lord's table, if they do nothing to deserve censure. 4. That considering circumcision as a seal of the covenant of grace, both this and the preceding argument would have lain as strongly against applying *that*, as applying *baptism* to infants; and indeed it is plain from that institution, as also from Christ's being baptized himself, that an ordinance may be sometimes administered to those who are not capable of *all* the purposes for which it was originally instituted, and which it may answer to some others.

Calv. Inst. l. 4. c. xix. *Towg. Inf. Bap.* p. 48.

Arg. III. The *silence* of the New Testament upon this head, is further urged as an argument against infant baptism,—it being said to be improbable that, if Christ had intended it, he should not have *commanded* it as expressly as Moses commanded circumcision.

It is answered, That *consequential* arguments are to be allowed their weight, as appears from our Lord's proof of a resurrection (Matt. xxii. 31, 32.); and it has been pleaded on the other side, that had Christ intended to have *cut off* the infant seed of believers under the Christian dispensation from any privileges which they enjoyed under the Mosaic, he would have expressly declared it, or at least would have guarded against any thing that looks like an encouragement to expect and claim them; which, from § 1. it evidently appears he has not.

Foot's Letters, No. 2.

Arg. IV. The silence of the primitive fathers upon this head has been much insisted upon; and it is said that some passages in them strongly oppose infant baptism, particularly that of Justin Martyr; in which he says, That a profession of faith is necessary in order to baptism; which notion gave occasion to the use of *sponsors*, when infant baptism was introduced.

It is replied, That Justin speaks of the *adult*, or may consider the confession of the sponsor as the child's, being made in his name; which is the more probable, as subsequent fathers use the same language, long after infant baptism was confessedly the prevailing practice.

Wall's Def. p. 101. *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* p. 335.

Tertullian is known to have declared against infant baptism, except in case of danger. Gregory Nazianzen advises to defer it till three years old. Basil blames his auditors for delaying it,—which implies there were then many unbaptized persons among them; but these might not perhaps have been the children of Christian parents; which answer may also serve to the argument brought from the case of those who, like Constantine, deferred baptism to their death, on a foolish apprehension that all sins committed after it were unpardonable. It is indeed surprising that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity upon this subject; but it is to be remembered, that when infant baptism is first apparently mentioned, we read of no remonstrance made against it as an *innovation*; and that as we have no instance of any persons expressly asserted to have been baptized in their infancy, so neither of any children of Christian parents baptized at years of discretion; for it is certain Constantine's father did not profess himself a Christian till long after he was born.

Whist. Bapt. Gale. Epist. ix. *Wall on Inf Bapt.* part i.

COROLLARY.

Since there is so great an obscurity on the question, and so many considerable things may be advanced on both sides, it is certainly very reasonable that Christians, whose persuasions relating to infant baptism are different, should maintain mutual candour towards each other, and avoid all severe and unkind censures on account of such difference.

Berry-st. Lec. vol. ii. p. 206. *See Wall, Gale, Rees, Stennett, and Baxter, on Baptism.**

SCHOLIUM.

A further question, distinct from any yet handled, may arise concerning baptism, *i. e.* Whether it is to be *repeated*, if it have been received by those who were not the proper subjects of it? It seems that it *should not*: since it is evident, that when persons have been cast out of the Christian church for their immoralities, the apostle, in the directions

* The question concerning infant baptism has been treated by so many learned writers, that it is impossible for the author to refer to them all; many references may be found in the controversies upon that subject mentioned in the margin. We should recommend a list of such writers to the notice of students, but for the want of our knowledge. Limborch and the generality of the Arminians are very favourable. Dr. Lavington's Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, Dr. Waterland's Critical History of the Athanasian Creed, Mr. Whitaker's Review of the Principles and Practices of the Methodists, Dr. Owen's Discourse on the Holy Spirit, Dr. Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, Mr. Booth's Pædobaptism examined, Mr. Robinson's Claude, Dr. Williams's Sermon on Baptism, Mr. Ivimey's Essay on Infant Baptism, Mr. Addington's Review of the Controversy, Mr. Kinghorn's Defence of Believers Baptism, Mr. Fuller's Dialogues, Mr. Booth's Reign of Grace, Mr. Robinson's Plea for

he gives concerning their re-admission on repentance, does not direct their being *rebaptized*: nor does Peter hint any thing of that kind to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 20, &c.; and perhaps had the contrary principle been admitted, and encouraged in Scripture, difficulties might have arisen, which it was best to avoid, and too great a stress have been laid on what was merely ritual. As for the argument urged from Acts xix. 1—5. it is certain it cannot authorize the repetition of Christian baptism, since that of John could not be so called; and it is certain that the person there spoken of had not been baptized so much as by John the Baptist *himself*, or in a manner agreeable to the exact tenor of his baptism. *Whist. Life*, vol. ii.

LECTURE CCVI.

PROPOSITION CLV.

The law of Christ requires, That Christians, throughout all ages of the church, should in a solemn manner *eat bread* and *drink wine* in their religious assemblies, as a commemoration of his death, and a token of their engagements to be imparted to them, and a badge of their mutual affection to each other.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. Christ did in a solemn manner set apart bread and wine after the paschal supper, distributing each to his disciples for the purposes afterwards to be mentioned. Matt. xxvi. 26—28. Mark xiv. 22—26. Luke xxii. 14—20. 1 Cor. xi. 20, &c. compare Acts ii. 42, 46.

2. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul, in the forecited places, agree that this rite was intended for a commemoration of Christ, and a representation of his body broken and his blood shed; which must intimate that we are hereby publicly to own that we are not ashamed of avowing ourselves the disciples of a crucified Master, and that we desire to impress our minds with a scene of such great and awful importance.

3. As the above-mentioned writers agree that Christ, in delivering the cup, declared it to be *the new covenant of his blood*, or a *token* and representation of that covenant which was established by his sufferings, this must imply, that those who would attend the institution aright must consider the nature of this covenant, must consent to the demands of it, and in so doing, may cheerfully expect the blessings communicated by it.

4. As eating and drinking together is a social action, and as, by the preceding step, eating and drinking in this ordinance represents our common relation to Christ, it does, by consequence, remind all Christians of their intimate relation to each other; and the apostle also represents it in this view. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Elsner's Obs. vol. ii. p. 106. *Whitby in Loc. Chandler's Serm.* vol. iv. p. 351.

5. That this rite was intended for *continued* use in the Church of Christ, appears from the early testimonies of Pliny, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and all the oldest writers, which assure us that it was in fact practised even from the apostles' time; as also from St. Paul's declaring that hereby *we show forth the Lord's death till he come* (1 Cor. xi. 26.) and it may further be urged, from the *ends* of the ordinance specified above; for if it were necessary for those that saw Christ suffer, or lived in the age when that great transaction passed, thus to commemorate his death, and in this solemn manner to renew their engagements, when the assistances and evidence arising from the extraordinary communications of the Spirit were so peculiar; if it were necessary by this token to express and cherish their mutual love, when there were such peculiar bonds of endearment, arising from their being a little number so severely suffering in the same cause, it is certain that we, who do not enjoy any of their advantages, must much more need it for the like ends.

1—5. 6. *Valet propositio.*

Barcl. Apol. Prop. 13. *Justin Martyr*, p. 97. *Hale's Posth. Tract. Whist. Prim. Euch.*[*]

COROLLARY 1.

There cannot be a *change* of the elements of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood, as the Papists maintain; because, waving all the absurdity with which such a doctrine is pregnant, and the many instances in which a thing is said *to be*, what it is only intended to *represent*, (see Gen. xvii. 10; xli. 26. Ezek. v. 5. Dan. vii. 23. John xv. 1; x. 9; 1 Cor. x. 4. Rev. xvii. 9.) if these elements were the very body and blood of Christ, they could not be *the commemoration* of it, which nevertheless we have shown above that they are. *Hoadly*, p. 24.

[*] A very large controversy concerning the nature and design of the Lord's Supper having been published since Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, a few tracts of a smaller size may be mentioned. Dr. Taylor of Lowestoft opposed to Dr. Sykes's Principles in Defence of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, &c. Dissertation the Second, by Mr. Taylor, the Doctrine of Atonement, &c. Dissertation the Second, by Mr. Taylor, the Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by the learned Dr. Owen Ashton in Defence of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, &c. Dissertation the Second, by Dr. Doddridge, and the Preliminary Dissertation Answered. But the most elaborate work upon this point is Dr. Bell's Address to Dissenters and Churchmen, the Authority, Nature, and Design of the Institution of Christ, commonly called the Communion, with Dr. Lardner's Sentiments. Different extracts of this work were given by Rational Reader, in the Letter to Dr. Bell. A recommendation to the perusal of Dr. Bell's publication. An Inquiry, in which many Doctrines relating to the Nature and Effects of the Lord's Supper, are severely examined by the Doctrines of our Lord, contained in the words of Institution of the Gospel of St. James's. An appendix to Dr. Cardale's Answer to the Dissertation concerning the Holy Nature of the Lord's Supper, and other works which have appeared in defence of the Scripture Doctrine by Mr. Wilkes, Dr. Worthington, Rational Worshipper, and Dr. Cramer. See their publications on the subject. An answer to Dr. Worthington appeared in Remarks upon the Scripture. Dr. Cardale's Hypothesis has been supported by Dr. Bell.

COROLLARY 2.

There cannot be a propitiatory sacrifice offered to God in this ordinance; because it is the commemoration of that sacrifice which is frequently said to be offered *once for all*. Heb. ix. 26—28; x. 10, 14.

Hoadly, p. 47. *Bret against Hoadly*, p. 69.

COROLLARY 3.

Considering the ends for which this ordinance was instituted, it is plain that it ought to be approached with great solemnity and serious consideration: and though the charge of *examining themselves*, given to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28. does indeed refer peculiarly to the gross immoralities which prevailed among them in this respect, —yet the words are expressive of a *general* duty: but the Gospel lays down no directions as to the *time* to be spent in preparation, which to be sure in different circumstances may and ought to be different; nor does it appear that any Christian, who in the general behaves agreeably to his profession, need scruple to use this ordinance on a few minutes' recollection, when he has an opportunity to do it.

Burnet's 4 Disc. p. 327—329.

COROLLARY 4.

Those who are guilty of such scandalous immoralities, that we cannot reasonably believe they are in good earnest in their Christian profession, ought not to be encouraged to approach this ordinance, till they have discovered the sincerity of their repentance by the reformation of their lives.

Burn. on the Art. p. 289. *Humphries's Free Admission*, &c.

COROLLARY 5.

It follows from the preceding corollary, that those who behave in so profligate a manner, as to bring a disgrace upon their Christian profession, ought on proper conviction to be excluded, by the society to which they belong, from the participation of this holy ordinance, till they give sufficient proof of their repentance. By this means they may perhaps be reformed, others warned, the honour of religion secured, and a friendly communion of Christians in this institution promoted. Accordingly, we find that this has been customary among the churches from their earliest foundation; and is evidently countenanced, and indeed in effect required, by the following Scriptures, 1 Cor. v. 3—7, 9—13. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14. 1 Tim. i. 20. 2 John v. 10, 11. It is allowed indeed, that *the delivering to Satan*, mentioned 1 Cor. v. 5. may probably refer to some *diseases* inflicted by a *miraculous* power (compare *Prop.* 117. No. ii. § 1.); but the apostle's general rule in the concluding verses of that chapter, must by a parity of reason prevail, where the extraordinary power is ceased.

Limb. Theol. l. vii. c. xviii. *Hooker's Eccles. Polity*, p. 368.

COROLLARY 6.

Any constitution, by which any member of the Christian church, how great soever his rank may be, shall be rendered incapable of being excommunicated if he behaves amiss, is inconsistent with the Scripture plan; and any constitution, by which *temporal* punishment shall be inflicted upon those who fall under the censure of a church, in consequence of such censure, must in like manner be an incumbrance, rather than advantage for the proper exercise of discipline.

Dissent. Gent. Ans. to White. Mem. of Emlyn. App. p. 140.

COROLLARY 7.

The Lord's Supper is a *seal* of the covenant of grace, in the sense stated, *Def.* 94. compared with *gr.* 3. of the above demonstration.

Hoadly's Plain Acc. p. 164.

LECTURE CCVII.

COROLLARY 8.

The Church of Rome has been guilty of a most sacrilegious usurpation, in denying the use of the *cup* to the laity in this ordinance.

Burr. View of Pop. p. 76.

COROLLARY 9.

Solitary Masses, *i. e.* the celebration of the Lord's Supper in secret by the priest alone, are to be condemned as inconsistent with one part of the design of this ordinance, *i. e.* its being a pledge of mutual love among Christians. (Vid. *gr.* 4.) Nevertheless, if a few should join with a sick person in receiving it in private, in some cases it may be very allowable, as not liable to this objection.

Cas. Consult. p. 218.

COROLLARY 10.

To make the receiving this ordinance a *qualification* of admittance to any *office* in or under the civil government, is evidently a profanation of the ordinance itself: not to insist upon the natural iniquity of excluding peaceable and loyal subjects from places of trust and profit, merely on account of their religious opinions.

Abernethy for Repeal of the Test, &c.

* The late applications to parliament for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts have given rise to a number of pamphlets on both sides of the question, some of which we shall enumerate. The following are in favour of the repeal:—The Right of Protestant Dissenters to a Complete Toleration asserted; Reflections on the Office of a Test considered in Subjection to the Civil Magistrate; An Appeal to the Candid, Moderate, and Impartial Friends of Church Power; A Sermon by Dr Evanson; A Letter to the Bishops on the Application of the Protestant Dissenters for Relief; A Letter to Edward Lethieullier, Esq. Chairman of the Committee of Protestant Dissenters; A Letter to a Nobleman, containing Considerations on the Laws relative to the Dissenters; A Letter to the Author of a Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters; A Second Letter to Edward Bott. The Dissenters Plea, by the Rev. George Walker; An Address to the Inhabitants of Nottingham, by the Rev. Gervase Wheatcroft; Cursory Remarks by the same; Cursory Remarks on the Petition, Objections, and Arguments proposing the Repeal of the Corporation

COROLLARY II.

The custom of administering the Lord's Supper to *condemned criminals* just before their execution, is both absurd and dangerous; as there is generally little room to imagine they can be suitably qualified for it: and it is natural for them to consider it as a token that they are already in a state of pardon and acceptance with God; which may prevent their employing the few remaining moments of life in a manner suited to their circumstances, and may harden others in such vain and presumptuous hopes. *Old Whig*, No. lxv.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It plainly appears from the most credible account of the primitive church, that the Lord's Supper was used much more frequently among them than with us; and that it made a part of their public worship every Lord's Day.

Pierce on the Euch. p. 174. *Erskine on freq. Commun.* *Boet.* vol i. p. 470. *Calv. Inst.* l. iv. c. xvii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some have objected against our translation of Matt. xxvi. 26. (compare Mark xiv. 22.) where we render *εὐλογήσας, blessed it*, whereas they suppose it signifies Christ's *giving thanks* to God when he brake the bread, compare Luke xvii. 22. 1 Cor. xi. 24. whence they infer that the *consecration* of the elements has no foundation in the original institution. As for the text in question, it must be allowed to be ambiguous; but as the word [it] must be understood after [brake] though it be not expressed, there is the less reason for censuring our translation; especially since the apostle so expressly speaks of our *blessing the sacramental cup* 1 Cor. x. 16. which cannot without great violence admit of Bishop Hoadly's interpretation, *q. d.* "The cup over which we bless or adore God." That may with great propriety in the language of Scripture be said *to be blessed*, which is in a solemn manner set apart from a common to a sacred use, Gen. ii. 3. and we may be said *to bless it*, when we solemnly pray that God may attend it with such influences from above, as may make it the occasion of edification to our souls. Compare Mark xi. 9—11.

Hoadly's Plain Acc. p. 32. *Brett against Hoadly*, p. 19. *Howe's Episcopacy*, p. 107.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is greatly to be lamented that Christians have perverted an ordinance, intended as a pledge and means of their mutual union, into an occasion of discord and contention, by laying such a disproportionate stress on the *manner* in which it is administered, and the *posture* in which it is received. As to the latter, a *table* posture seems most eligible, as having been used by Christ and his apostles, and being peculiarly suitable to the notion of a sacred feast, in which as children we are invited to attend the board of our heavenly Father, and feast, as it were, upon the great sacrifice: and *kneeling*, which was never introduced into the church till *transubstantiation* was received, may prove an occasion of superstition. Nevertheless, provided it be not absolutely imposed as a term of communion, it will be the part of Christian candour to acquiesce in the use of it in others by whom it is preferred. It appears that *standing* was at least frequently used in the Christian church, viz. always on the Lord's Day, and between Easter and Whitsuntide.

Pierce's Vind. of Diss. p. 489. *Burn. Dict.* p. 321. *Hooker's Eccles. Polity*, p. 244.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Whether the Lord's Supper should be administered at *noon*, or in the *evening*, is a question of very small importance. It is true our Lord instituted it in the *evening*; but probably later than our assemblies are ordinarily held. The primitive Christians often communicated in the *morning* before day; the reason of which probably was, that they made it the last act of their worship, and assembling by night, for fear of their persecutors, and spending most of the night in reading, preaching, prayer, and singing, the celebration of the Eucharist would naturally be driven off till morning. This shows, however, that they did not lay any great stress upon the time. Some urge that *dinner-time*, being our chief meal, answers to the *supper* among the Jews. Perhaps the evening suits best with the convenience of religious retirement immediately after it. But it is most reasonable to

Lord Arlington, by William Beaston, Esq. A Vindication of the Modern Dissenters, by the Rev. Samuel Palmer. Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Bermondsey, by Dr. Priestley. An History of the Corporation and Test Acts, by Capel Lofft, Esq. A Vindication of the same. An Answer to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Some Remarks on the Resolutions of the Aberdeen Society of Clothiers, by the Rev. J. Smythe. Remarks on the Resolutions passed at the University of Warwick, in three Letters to the Earl of Aylesford. A Letter to the Right Reverend the Archbishops and Bishops of England, by an Upper Graduate. A Letter to the Right Rev. Dr. Hurd, on the Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, by a Warm Protestant. The Spirit of the Constitution and that of the Church of England compared. Reasons for assisting a Repeal, by a Dissenter. Facts submitted to the Considerations of the Friends to Civil and Religious Liberty and High Church Practices, as exemplified in the late Opposition to the Repeal of the Test Laws, and in the Riots of Birmingham.

The Letters among others, which were written against the Repeal, are as follows: A Letter to the Dissenters of the Presbyterian Denomination in and about the City of London and Westminster. Observations on the Case of the Protestant Dissenters. Four Letters addressed to the Dissenters of the several Presbyterian Denominations who met at Devizes. A Letter to Earl Stanhope on the occasion of the Test Observations upon the Conduct of the Presbyterian Dissenters. The Danger of repealing the Test Act. A Churchman and Dissenter Answer to the Objections and Pleas of the Protestant Dissenters against the Test. An Essay on the Original Character and Views of the Presbyterian Dissenters. A Letter to the late Duke of Newcastle. A short Examination of some of the grounds and Reasons for the Repeal. A Letter to the Parliament of Great Britain on the intended Application of the Dissenters. A Review of the case of the Protestant Dissenters. Letters to the Bishops of England against the Repeal. A Sermon to the Dissenters. Some Strictures on the Petitions and Other Reasons for and against Repeal of the Test Act. Cursory Reflections on the Repeal. Observations on Mr. Lofft's History of the Corporation and Test Acts, and Historical Memorials of Religious Dissenters. Letter to the Archbishop of [illegible] Bishop Shipley's Arguments against a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and of Bishop Hoadly's Conscience.

refer it to the judgment of ministers and people of particular societies; and it is very absurd to contend eagerly on either side the question.

Watts's Times and Places, p. 83.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Mr. Peirce has at large contended for the admission of *infants* to this ordinance, pleading the use of it even unto this day among the Greeks, and in the Bohemian churches, till near the time of the reformation; but especially from the usage of the ancient churches, as it appears from many passages in Photius, Augustin, and Cyprian. His proof from the more ancient fathers is very defective. His arguments from Scripture chiefly depend upon this general medium, that Christians succeeding to the Jews as God's people, and being grafted upon that stock, their infants have a right to all the privileges of which they are capable, till forfeited by some immoralities, and consequently have a right to partake of this ordinance, as the Jewish children had to eat of the passover and other sacrifices; besides this, he pleads those texts which speak of the Lord's Supper as received by *all* Christians.

The most obvious answer to all this is, that which is taken from the incapacity of infants to *examine themselves*, and *discern the Lord's body*: but he answers, That this precept is only given to persons capable of understanding and complying with it, as those which require *faith* in order to baptism, are interpreted by the Pædobaptists.

As for this argument from the Jewish children eating the *sacrifice*, it is to be considered that this was not *required*, as circumcision was;—the males were not necessarily brought to the temple till they were twelve years old, (compare Luke ii. 42.) and the sacrifices which they ate of were chiefly peace-offerings, which became the *common food* to all that were clean in the family, and were not looked upon as acts of devotion, to such a degree as our Eucharist is, though indeed they were a token of their acknowledging the divinity of that God to whom they had been offered, (compare 1 Cor. x. 18.) and even the *passover* was a commemoration of a *temporal* deliverance; nor is there any reason to believe that its reference to the Messiah was generally understood by the Jews.

On the whole, where *infant baptism* appears dubious, it ought certainly to be an argument against *infant communion*; because the objections that are made to the former, lie with yet greater weight against the latter; and because the *disuse* of infant communion prevents many of the inconveniences that may be apprehended from the practice of baptizing infants. It is certain there would be more danger of a contempt arising to the Lord's Supper, from the admission of infants, and of confusion and trouble to other communicants; so that not being *required* in Scripture, it is much best to omit it. When children are grown up to a capacity of behaving decently, they may soon be instructed in the nature and design of the ordinance; and if they appear to understand it, and behave for some competent time of trial in a manner suitable to that profession, it would probably be advisable to admit them to communion, though very young; which, by the way, might be a good security against many of the snares to which youth are exposed.

Peirce on the Euch. p. 76. *Taylor's Worthy Communic.* p. 147.*

SCHOLIUM 6.

The foundation of the practice mentioned in the preceding scholium, seems plainly to have been a mistaken apprehension of the absolute necessity of this ordinance, in order to salvation; which doctrine was built upon an erroneous interpretation of John vi. 53. which, with the preceding and following passages, we have not quoted above, for the explication of the Scripture doctrine of the Lord's Supper, since they will make so good a sense, if we suppose them only to relate to believing regards to Christ, as the great support of the spiritual life. Compare John vi. 63.†

LECTURE CCVIII

SCHOLIUM 7.

Many have stated the doctrine of this ordinance so as to represent it as if it were a kind of *charm*, and have supposed that some extraordinary communications of divine influence are universally annexed to it, or at least to a regular and serious attendance upon it; which has been grounded in a great measure on John vi. 54, 55. together with some very high things which the fathers have said of the efficacy of it: but if we follow Scripture alone, it will only appear to be an instituted means of our communion with God, in a regular attendance on which we may hope that God will meet us and bless us, as in other ordinances of divine institution; but cannot say that he has invariably tied himself up to it; nor does experience agree with such a notion. Vid. *Prop.* 152. *Schol.* 5.

Clarke's Dis. Taylor's Worthy Communic.

SCHOLIUM 8.

It must be allowed, that it was an ancient usage in the Christian church to mix *water* with the sacramental wine, in commemoration of the water that gush-

* Dr. Priestley in his Address to Protestant Dissenters on the Subject of giving the Lord's Supper [illegible] propriety of admitting them [illegible]

† W. Jones's Essay [illegible] Dr. Doddridge's [illegible] chapel. The editor [illegible]

with blood which came out of Christ's side (John xix. 34.), and it is urged, That the Jews mingled water with the cup of wine which they drank at the Passover; yet this circumstance does not seem essential to the ordinance, more than the particular hour or posture used by Christ and his disciples; and the blood of the grape is mentioned alone, as that to which the institution refers, though there might happen to be some water then mingled with it.

Whist. Prim. Euch. Obs. 17. p. 97.

SCHOLIUM 9.

When the Scripture doctrine relating to baptism and the Lord's Supper is attentively considered, it will appear that there is no foundation for drawing any objection from them against the truth of Christianity,—since the rites themselves are so simple, and their natural tendency to promote good impressions on the mind so obvious; and it is greatly for the credit of the Gospel that these, in their Scriptural simplicity, should be compared with the rituals of other religions, as delivered to us by the most authentic writers (*Prop.* 96. *Cor.*); as it is also to the credit of the *Protestant* cause, that they should be compared with those numerous, perplexing, absurd, and idolatrous additions which the Church of Rome has made to them, whereby each of them is rendered the least part of itself.

Picart's Rel. Cerem. of all Nat. Geddes's Misc. Lel. ag. Tind. Fost. ag. Tind. c. v. p. 310.

DEFINITION XCV.

The ordinances which were instituted by Christ, to be used by *all* Christians as *seals of the covenant of grace*, (*Def.* 94.) may properly be called SACRAMENTS.

COROLLARY.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are *sacraments*. Comp. *Prop.* 152. *Cor.* 4. *Prop.* 155. *Cor.* 7.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The controversy, Whether there be any more sacraments than these, is evidently a question about words. If our definition of it be admitted, it is certain that neither *holy orders*, (as they are called,) nor *matrimony*, nor *extreme unction*, are Christian sacraments, since all allow that at least the two former were not intended for *all* Christians; and there is no proof that the *anointing the sick* was to continue longer than the gifts of healing; nor was that, properly speaking, *extreme unction*, which is a ceremony merely of human device.

The *cross* in baptism, as some have stated it, seems to have much of the nature of a *sacrament*, only that it wants a divine institution.

Hooker's Eccl. Pol. l. v. § 65. p. 226.

The definition of sacrament which some have given, *i. e.* "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," is very obscure, unless it supposes some divine influence of an extraordinary nature inseparably annexed to the outward sign; and if this be the meaning of it, there is reason to question whether there be any sacrament at all. Comp. *Prop.* 152. *Schol.* 5. *Prop.* 155. *Schol.* 7. *Limb. Theol.* l. v. c. 66.

SCHOLIUM 2.

When the doctrine of *confirmation*, as stated by the Church of England, is compared with their definition of *a sacrament*, it must be acknowledged to be one, distinct from baptism and the Lord's Supper; for the laying on the hands of the bishop upon a person professing to take his baptismal covenant upon himself, is a visible sign of his receiving the Holy Ghost, which must be an inward and spiritual grace; and it agrees with all the parts of *our* definition, excepting that it is not *an institution of Christ*; for the imposition of the apostle's hands, by which the visible gifts of the Spirit were communicated, (Acts viii. 14—18.) is something of so different a nature, that it can never be made a just foundation for continuing this rite in the view in which it is practised.

Clarke on Confir. p. 40. *Hoadl. on Conf.* p. 74. *Calam. Def.* vol. ii. p. 268. *Picart's Relig. Cerem. Howe's Episc.* p. 167.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The popish doctrine of *penance* depends entirely upon a supposition that there is a certain order of men, who, by virtue of an authority derived from the apostles, and so from Heaven, may efficaciously absolve men from the guilt of sin, appointing such a punishment to satisfy divine justice as they shall think proper; on the penitent's submitting to which the sentence of absolution is passed, and the favour of God sealed to him, as his repentance has been expressed by it. This would indeed be a sacrament, were it of divine institution; but it is built chiefly on absurd interpretations of Matt. xviii. 18. and John xx. 23. of which see *Prop.* 117. *Cor.* 1 and 5; and by what authority such absolutions are pronounced, as the English liturgy prescribes, it becomes those who venture to act upon it very seriously to consider; as also how such a practice can be reconcilable with the essential principles of the protestant religion.

Scudder's Chris. Daily Walk. p. 42. *Mandev. Free Thoughts.* p. 118.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Some have thought that Christ, in washing his disciples' feet, instituted a Christian sacrament, taking the word *sacrament* not strictly in our sense, but in general for a religious rite instituted by Christ; and have urged John xiii. 13—15. as express words of institution; but they may be fairly understood as a general declaration of the obligation which Christians are under to condescend to each

other; and it is to be considered, that, in cold countries, the washing each other's feet would be a troublesome rather than friendly office; nor are any traces of such a religious rite among Christians to be found in the New Testament, or the most primitive writers (comp. 1 Tim. v. 10.); which plainly intimates this office was not performed by *all*, for then it would not have been made a distinguishing character.

LECTURE CCIX.

DEFINITION XCVI.

One person, or event, or institution, in the divine dispensations, of which an account is given us in the word of God, may be said to be TYPICAL of another and greater person or event, afterwards to appear, when there is a remarkable *resemblance* between the former and the latter, whether that resemblance be or be not known by the manifestation of the latter. This may be called the *theological* sense of the word, and τυπος has sometimes that signification in Scripture, though it is there used in some variety of senses,—sometimes expressing a *model* of a thing exhibited before the thing itself, whose type it is; and sometimes the *copy* made from thence; and sometimes simply a *resemblance*, without determining it to either of the former senses. Compare John xx. 25. Rom. v. 14. Acts vii. 43, 44. 1 Pet. iii. 21. 1 Cor. x. 11. Heb. viii. 5. Phil. iii. 17.

COROLLARY.

It evidently appears from the reasoning of the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, and from comparing the history and economy of Moses with the whole New Testament, that there were many things in the Jewish dispensation which were in this sense typical of Christ and Gospel blessings. How far the resemblance might be revealed to some saints under the Old Testament, we cannot certainly determine; but the observation of that resemblance may be a confirmation of our faith, as it is a proof of the unity of design running through the Old Testament and the New, as was observed above, *Prop.* 97. *gr.* 5. *Prop.* 112. *Cor.* 1.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It may be an agreeable employment to the pious mind, to trace out the resemblance between Christ and several persons mentioned in the Old Testament, and to observe how the deliverances brought to the people of God by them are exceeded by those brought by Christ; though there should be no apprehension at all that any of the Jews were before Christ's appearance taught to look on such persons as *types* of him. *Doddr.* 10 *Serm. No.* 1. *ad fin.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Considering how expressly St. Paul says that the Holy Ghost signified spiritual blessings by some of the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, (Heb. ix. 8.) and comparing it with several of those passages in the writings of Moses, Isaiah, and other prophets, which refer to the Messiah, and the spiritual blessings to be obtained by him, it will appear probable that the evangelical references of several Old-Testament types might be revealed to them; which might probably be one great foundation of that exalted pleasure which they found in their public ordinances and Scriptures. Compare Psal. xxv. 14; cxix. 18. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.—compare also John viii. 56. which will be to the present purpose, whether Dr. Warburton's peculiar interpretation of the words, hinted at *Prop.* 120. *Sol. gr.* 1. be or be not admitted.

Scott's Chris. Life. Sykes on Chris. Lamb. Collat. Scrip. Jenn. Jew. Ant. vol. ii. p. 3.

PROPOSITION CLXI.

No one is by the Christian dispensation obliged to obey any part of the Mosaic law, as such, any more than he would have been if that law had never been given.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. The greatest part of the Mosaic law appears to have been of a *temporary* nature; part of it being intended to typify the Messiah and his kingdom (*Def.* 96. *Cor.* and *Schol.* 2.); many of its precepts being of a *local* nature, which could not be observed any longer than the temple of Jerusalem was standing, and the Jews inhabited their own land; partly as a great multitude of their laws were peculiarly suited to their particular circumstances, and intended (as was observed before) to prevent the danger of idolatry, which they might otherwise have learnt from their neighbours (*Prop.* 122. *Sol.* § 1.); to all which we may add, That it would have been impossible that all the nations of the earth, or even such distant nations as those already constituting the Christian church, should obey some of the Mosaic precepts, particularly those relating to their *yearly feasts*, to which some have supposed the apostle refers, Gal. iv. 26, 27.

Sykes on Chris. p. 179. *Witsii Ægypt.* lib. iii. c. 14. *Warburt. Julian.*

2. The ancient prophets foretold that the Messiah, when he appeared, should introduce a new dispensation and more perfect law, and should abrogate that of Moses. Compare Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. with Heb. viii. 6—13. Dan. ix. 27. Jer. iii. 16. Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 11—19. To which we may add all those texts which declare that, under the Messiah, the Heathen nations should be incorporated with the Jews, and live under the same gracious institution; which could not possibly be effected with-

out an alteration in the Mosaic law, as was observed in *gr.* 1.) Compare Isa. xix. 19. 21. Jer. xii. 17. Mic. iv. 2. Mal. i. 11. to which we may add that celebrated text Deut. xviii. 18. 19. which seems to express that a new *legislator* should arise.

3. The apostle expressly asserts the abolition of the Mosaic law. See the whole epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews; as also Rom. xiv. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 9—11. Eph. ii. 14, 15. Col. ii. 14—17. 1 Tim. iv. 4; and Christ also intimated it. Compare Matt. xv. 11. John iv. 21. 23. 24.

4. The destruction of the temple, and its lying so many hundred years in ruins, whereas even the Babylonish captivity was in comparison so short, and the worship at Jerusalem even then not *totally* interrupted, while the temple continued desolate (compare Isa. xli. 1—5. with 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9.); together with the loss of the Jewish genealogies, and their ignorance of the signification of some words in their own law, especially the names of some of the unclean animals, may afford a probable argument that their law is abolished.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Collins's Lit. Sch. p. 251. *Hooker's Eccl. Pol. Boyle's Works*, vol. iii. p. 146. *Locke on Eph.* ii. 15. *Limb. Collat. South's Serm.*

COROLLARY.

Those precepts which were delivered by the Jewish prophets, and perhaps also all kinds of positive laws instituted before the Gospel, are as much abrogated as the law given by Moses himself. *Vid.* Matt. xi. 13.

SCHOLIUM 1.

To this it is objected, That there are several Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which the *perpetuity* of the Mosaic law is asserted in the strongest terms; *v. g.* Gen. xvii. 13. Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24; xxxi. 16, 17. Deut. xxix. 29. and a multitude of the like texts; to which may be added Jer. xxxviii. 17—22.

To this it is replied, That the Jews must and do allow that the phrases there made use of and rendered *for ever*, often signify a *limited* duration; *v. g.* 1 Sam. i. 22. (compared with Num. iv. 3, 23, &c.) Deut. xv. 17. and Exod. xxi. 6. (compared with Lev. xxv. 41.) Jer. ii. 20. (compare 1 Mac. xiv. 41.), and לעולם may be rendered *for the age*, i. e. so long as *this age or dispensation* shall continue, supposing it distinguished from the *age to come*, or the Messiah's kingdom. Compare Matt. xii. 32. Heb. ii. 5. to which we may perhaps add Isa. ix. 6. It is certain the Jews themselves cannot vindicate some of these prophecies as true, without having recourse to such solutions as may be sufficient to answer this objection. Compare Mal. i. 11.

Berrim. at Boyle's Lect. vol. ii. *Serm.* 18.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It has also been objected, That Christ directly declares against a purpose of abrogating the Mosaic law, even in its least precepts. Matt. v. 17.

It is answered, That *the law and the prophets* sometimes signify the *moral* precepts (compare Matt. xxii. 40.); and as to the rest, Christ could not properly be said to *destroy* those institutions, which he so fully answered, as to set the purpose and wisdom of them in the most advantageous light, though, having *fulfilled* them, they were of course *superseded*.

Limb. Collat. Resp. ad Scrip. iii. p. 202.

SCHOLIUM 3.

The apostles indulged the Jews in the observation of the Mosaic law, and thought it proper themselves, in some instances, to conform to the institutions of it; but they did it upon prudential considerations, not allowing the necessity of it in order to salvation, but strongly contending for the liberty of Christians in this respect (see Acts xvi. 3; xxi. 20—29. compare Acts xv. 29.), to which we may add, That while the temple continued standing, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, the ceremonial and political law were so interwoven with each other, that it was undoubtedly expedient for converted Jews, dwelling in Judea, to comply with and observe those institutions; and the apostles' compliance with *sacrifices* in particular might be owing to this view of them, as a kind of tribute paid to God, under the character of their *King*; and was perfectly consistent with what the apostle so often declared, concerning the freedom of the Gentiles from this yoke, and the absolute necessity that Jews and Gentiles should seek their justification and salvation by Christ alone; so that the great clamour which Morgan raises upon this head, as if Paul and Barnabas on the one side, and all the rest of the apostles on the other, preached a different and inconsistent Gospel, seems very unreasonable.

Both maintained the Mosaic law to have been of divine authority, and recommended a prudential regard to it in *some* instances and degrees; but neither maintained its absolute necessity, nor directed to a dependence upon it for righteousness, as appears from the whole tenor of the epistles.

Burn. on the Art. p. 100. *Mary. Mor. Phil.* vol. i. p. 91. *Lel. Answer to Morgan*, vol. i. p. 399. *Chap. Euseb.* vol. ii. p. 129. *Jenn. Jew. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 26.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

The precepts which Christ gave in Matt. v. 21. &c. are a part of God's natural law, and were con-

* Mr. Collet, however, in a tract entitled A Vindication of the Moral Character of the Apostle Paul, from the Charge of Inconsistency in a Hypothetical Example argued of by Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Middleton, &c. [illegible] that the Jews [illegible] were [illegible] under no obligation to observe the ceremonies of Moses. The same sentiment is maintained by Dr. Benson in [illegible] the Jews and other parts of the world.

tained in those precepts of Moses, which our Lord there sets himself to explain and vindicate; so that they are not in general to be looked upon as institutions peculiar to the Christian religion, as appears from the manner in which they are introduced in Matt. v. 17—20. Compare Rom. vii. 7.

Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. c. ii. *Grow. Not. in Loc.*

PART X.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF GOOD AND BAD ANGELS, AND OF A FUTURE STATE; WHICH CONCLUDES THIS WORK

LECTURE CCX.

PROPOSITION CXLVII.

THE Scripture assures us, there are many created spirits distinct from men, who have a permanent existence, and who from their office are called *angels*; some of whom are and will continually be holy and happy, whereas others are in a state of apostasy and misery.

DEMONSTRATION.

1. That there are many spirits, who have a permanent existence, and from their office are called *angels*, appears from Matt. xxiv. 36; xxvi. 53. Acts xxiii. 6—8.

2. That these spirits are distinct from men, or from human souls, appears from Job xxxviii. 7. Psal. viii. 5. Heb. xi. 22.

3. That some of these spirits are and will continue in a state of holiness and happiness, appears from Matt. xviii. 10; xxv. 31. Luke ii. 13, 14; xv. 10; xx. 36.

4. That others of them are in a state of apostasy and misery, is evident from Matt. x. 1; xxv. 41. Mark v. 8, 9. John viii. 44. James ii. 19. 2 Pet. ii. 4. 1 John iii. 8. Jude 6.

1, 2, 3, 4. 5. *Valet propositio.*

Casmanni Angelogr. p. 23, &c. *Farmer's Diss. on Mir.* ch. iii. *Introd. to Anc. Univ. Hist.* p. 101.

SCHOLIUM 1.

As it was observed above, *Prop.* 86. *gr.* 3. *Schol.* 1. That the Heathens had among them some notion of the existence of benevolent spirits superior to men,—so it seems, from some passages cited there, that they were also persuaded of the existence of *evil demons*: and indeed many of those deities which they worshipped were, according to their own mythology, so vicious and so malignant, as to resemble devils, rather than good angels. See the references under the scholium quoted above.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is certain that the word αγγελος, in the New Testament, does not always signify one of those beings which we call *angels*; but that it frequently imports no more than *messenger*; and is on this account applied to *men* (James ii. 25. Luke vii. 24; ix. 52.); to which many commentators think Acts xii. 15. should be added; and Mr. Gough contends that the word is to be taken in this sense in that celebrated text, 1 Cor. xi. 10. which he supposes to refer to the spies who were sent into Christian assemblies by their enemies, who would severely expose any indecencies observable among them.

Gough's Dissert. in Loc.

In like manner the word διαβολος does sometimes signify a *false accuser*, or a wicked person of the human species (2 Tim. iii. 3. Tit. ii. 3. John vi. 70.); to which may perhaps be added 1 Tim. iii. 7. but Jude 6. is by no means to be added to the instances above, as some have supposed.

Hutchins. of Witchc. p. 252.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is a singular notion of Mr. Lowman, that, according to the Hebrew language, not only intelligent beings or spirits are called *angels*, but every thing that either notifies any message from God, or executes his will, and in particular all visible appearances in material symbols, as fire, air, winds, and storms (Psal. civ. 4. Compare Exod. iii. 2, 4; xiii. 21; xix. 19.); whence, by the way, he observes, that it is not necessary to suppose that *Jehovah* and the *angel of Jehovah*, mean two distinct spirits,—the one God, the other a ministering spirit (compare Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.); but the last of these texts very ill agrees with his hypothesis: for, surely, Jacob would not pray that the *flame of fire* might bless his grandchildren; and the apostle's quotation

of Psal. civ. 4. in Heb. i. 7. determines it to a sense different from what this learned writer could give it.

Lowm. Civ. Gov. of the Heb. p. 45.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is a very peculiar conjecture of Mr. Fleming, but it seems by no means to be sufficiently supported, that all the good angels, who have ever been employed as messengers of God to the inhabitants of earth, had been the spirits of departed saints; and particularly, that the angel who appeared to the shepherds (Luke ii. 3, &c.) was the spirit of Adam, attended by all those of his race who were then in a state of glory, who constituted the heavenly choir there spoken of, and who sung that sublime anthem on the Redeemer's birth. It is true that the Jews had a notion among them, that the departed spirits of good men officiated as angels; which may perhaps be referred to in the forementioned Acts xii. 15. (vid. *Philonis Jud. Op.* p. 131 and 286. and *Fam. Expos.* vol. iii. *in Loc.* and *Waterland's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 90, 91.) but Heb. i. 14. compared with Matt. xxv. 31. where all the angels are so expressly distinguished from the whole human race, then brought to their final judgment, plainly demonstrates this author to be in a great mistake when he carries this peculiar thought to such an extravagant height.

Flem. Christol. vol. i. p. 78.

SCHOLIUM 5.

The Scripture does not particularly inform us what was the sin by which Satan and his confederates fell from their original state of holiness and happiness. Some have conjectured that it might be their aspiring to some higher dignity than God had assigned them, and think that, on that account, they are said, in the place cited above, *not to have kept the state* or *principality they were under* την αρχην εαυτων; and for this reason *pride* may be called *the condemnation of the Devil*, supposing the Devil there to be signified (1 Tim. iii. 6.); and forasmuch as it is hardly to be imagined that they would dispute the throne with God, some have conjectured, that their crime might be refusing that homage to the *Logos*, which God required of the angels (Heb. i. 8.); and they have pleaded, that this supposition illustrates the harmony and beauty of the divine conduct, in making use of Christ as the great agent in destroying Satan's kingdom among men, and finally in condemning Satan to that punishment, to which he and his confederates are reserved.

Boyse's Works, vol. i. p. 266. *Regn. of Ang.* p. 41. *Hunt's Hist. Ess.* p. 312.*

* On the subject of this scholium, see Baumgarten, quoted above, who supposes the crime of Satan and his confederates to have been a combined attempt to seize the sovereignty of this world.

LECTURE CCXI.

PROPOSITION CLVIII.

To enumerate the chief properties of *good angels* mentioned in the Scriptures.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. They are immortal, and do not propagate their species. Luke xx. 36.

Baxter's Works, vol. ii. p. 189.

2. They are in a state of being superior to that of man, even in his original dignity and glory. Psalm viii. 5.

3. They are endued with extraordinary degrees of knowledge and wisdom, which are no doubt continually improving by their long experience. 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

4. They are endued with extraordinary power. Psal. ciii. 20. 2 Thess. i. 7. Compare Gen. xix. 11. and 2 Kings xix. 35. (which is strangely interpreted by Sir Isaac Newton, as referring to Tirshakah, king of Ethiopia. Vid. *Newt. Chron.* p. 282.); besides many other instances of the like kind mentioned in Scripture.

5. They have not such gross bodies as ours. Compare Luke xxiv. 39. with Heb. i. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 50. compare Dan. ix. 21, 23.

6. There are various orders of angels. Jude 9. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Dan. x. 13. Rev. xii. 7. Compare Eph. i. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Col. i. 16.

Baxter's Works, vol. ii. p. 192. *Burn. Archæol.* p. 410.

SCHOLIUM 1.

Mr. Joseph Mede argues, from Zech. iv. 10 Rev. i. 4; iv. 5; v. 6; viii. 2. that there are *seven archangels*; but the passages referred to rather afford an occasion of conjecture than a foundation of clear and convincing argument. Compare Job xii. 15. Zech. vi. 5. *Mede's Diat. on Zech.* iv. 10.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Whether angels be or be not entirely incorporeal, is a question which we are not capable of determining; many have thought that it is the prerogative of the Divine Being alone to be wholly separate from matter; and some have urged, that the manner in which Christ, the Lord of angels, is confessedly united to it, affords a probable proof that they have some body. The offices assigned them at the judgment-day do likewise favour this hypothesis, and especially the forming the blessed, after the resurrection, into one society with them. Compare 2 Kings ii. 11; vi. 17.

Cleric. Pneum. § 11. c. i. *Burn. de Stat. Mort.* p. 170.

SCHOLIUM 3.

It is exceedingly probable that angels were created before the earth; which seems strongly to be intimated in Job xxxvii. 4. 7. The arguments

brought to prove the contrary from Gen. ii. 1. and Exod. xx. 11. are sufficiently answered by observing that the *heavens* there spoken of may be supposed only to signify the *atmosphere*, or at most the luminaries of the firmament. It is also urged, that things done before the creation of our world are represented as *eternal;* but the limited sense of the word *eternal* is a sufficient reply. Compare *Prop.* 156. *Schol.* 1.

Angelogr. p. 48. *Whist. Theory*, p. 9. *Bull's Ser.* vol. ii. p. 447. *Fawcett's 4th Dial. on the other World.**

PROPOSITION CLIX.

To enumerate the chief properties of *wicked angels*, which are mentioned in Scripture.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. That they are spirits of a very impious and malignant character, and the inveterate enemies of God and mankind, appears from the whole series of Scriptures relating to them, particularly those enumerated above.

2. Nevertheless, that they retain some considerable traces of their former knowledge, appears from 2 Cor. ii. 11; xi. 3, 14. Eph. vi. 11. Rev. ii. 24. and no doubt their skill in all the methods of deceit and mischief must be vastly improved by so long experience.

3. They are likewise possessed of considerable degrees of power, though still under a divine restraint, Matt. iv. 5—8; xii. 29. Mark v. 4—13. Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12.

4. It appears there are various orders of evil angels, who are united under one head, from the malignity of his nature called *Satan* and *the Devil*, Matt. xii. 24; xxv. 41. Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12. Col. ii. 15. Rev. xii. 7.

Gilpin on Tempt. p. 19. *Bulk. Gosp. Econ.* iv. 2.

COROLLARY 1.

There is great reason to adore the goodness of God in setting such bounds to the operations of these potent and malevolent spirits, as to prevent their doing that mishief to which they are naturally inclined, and which might otherwise soon turn the earth into a chaos and field of blood. Compare Job i. and ii. Matt. viii. 31.

COROLLARY 2.

Seeing there is something in the thought of such agents as these, which tends to impress the imagination in a very powerful manner, great care ought to be taken that *children*, from the first notice they have of the existence of such beings, be taught to conceive of them as entirely under the control of God. *Watts's Catech.* p. 109.

COROLLARY 3.

We may infer, that they are most certainly mistaken, who maintain that all the texts relating to the Devil are to be interpreted in so figurative a sense as to signify merely the irregular propensities of men's minds, denying the real existence of any such malignant invisible beings as are commonly supposed; to which hypothesis the story of Christ's temptation is alone an apparent and sufficient answer; not to mention the many texts, in which opposition to Satan is represented as the great design of Christ's appearance. Compare Wisd. ii. *ult.* *Dodd. Fam. Exp.* vol. i. p. 211.†

SCHOLIUM 1.

Bishop Sherlock thinks that the design of several passages in the book of Job, is to assert the superiority of God to *Satan*, the great principle of evil; and thus in particular he beautifully explains Job xii. 16. and xxvi. 13. Compare the *Septuagint.* προσαγματι δε εθανατωσε δρακοντα αποστατην.

Sherlock on Proph. p. 242. *Warb. Occas. Rem.* p. 66. *Patrick on Job*, p. 88.

SCHOLIUM 2.

As to the manner in which God cast the devils out of Heaven, there is no express account of it in Scripture. What is said in the preceding passage of Daniel and the Revelations, of an opposition between angels, particularly those of Michael and the Dragon,—has led some to imagine that God made use of the agency of good angels in expelling the evil: but if he did so, we cannot imagine any such resistance on the part of evil angels, as would occasion any pain or terror to those who, on this hypothesis, were the executioners of divine vengeance upon them.

Clarke's Posth. Serm. vol. i. p. 223.

LECTURE CCXII.

PROPOSITION CLX.

To inquire how far *good* angels are concerned in human affairs.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. They are in the general the holy ministers of

* For a general dissertation on the nature and condition of angels, see Bishop Newton's Works, vol. iii. p. 538—588.

† The literal history of our Lord's temptation, and the actual operation of Satan in that transaction, are treated of by Bishop Newton, in his essay on the subject. See his Works, vol. iii. p. 92—104. On the other hand, for explanations which exclude the literal sense, reference may be had to Mr Farmer's Dissertation on the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness. To the Appendix to the Inquiry, to Mr Dixon's Apology of the Devil's Administration vindicated, and to Dr Fleming's Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness, a Proof of a divine Mission, with a previous Dissertation upon the Proosopeion, or personalizing figure. In answer to Mr Farmer was published a tract, entitled Christ's Temptations real Facts: or a Defence of the Evangelic History; showing that the Lord's Temptations may be fairly and reasonably understood as a Narrative of what was really transacted. Concerning the Angels that sinned and the Angels that kept not their first Estate, spoken of by St. Peter and St. Jude, Mr. Henly has published a Dissertation, in which he has endeavoured to prove that these passages relate to an apostasy and rebellion upon earth, which was carried on by the sons of Cuus, under the leader Nimrod. There has lately been printed a tract, by Mr. Ashdowne, entitled An Attempt to show that the Opinion concerning the Devil, or Satan, as a fallen angel, and that he tempts men to sin, hath no real foundation in Scripture.

Divine Providence with regard to the children of men, Zech. iv. 10; i. 10. (Compare Rev. v. 6.) Dan. x. 13, 20; xi. 1. 1 Thess. iv. 16.

2. They are in a peculiar manner the guardians of the saints; and are not only the means of preserving them from danger, but likewise the instruments of conferring many blessings upon them. Heb. i. 14. Psal. xci. 11, 12; xxxiv. 7. to which add many historical passages in the Old and New Testament. See *gr.* 4, 5.

3. It seems that the care of angels over good men extends beyond this mortal life, and that they are appointed to conduct their separate spirits to their seats of future glory. Luke xvi. 22.

4. They have often been made use of as the instruments of inflicting judgments upon wicked men. Gen. xix. 11. Psal. lxxviii. 49. (Compare Exod. xii. 23.) 2 Sam. xxiv. 15—17. 2 Kings xix. 35. Acts xii. 23.

5. The Old Testament gives us an account of the appearance of angels to Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Manoah, David, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, and other prophets. In the New Testament we read of their appearance to Zachariah, Joseph, Mary, to the shepherds, to Christ, to Mary Magdalen, and the other women at Christ's sepulchre; to Peter, Paul, Cornelius, John, &c. in most of which cases they seem to have presented themselves and disappeared on a sudden: but the manner in which they now interpose in human affairs is by an invisible agency; and perhaps much may be done by the changes they produce in the weather, and by the impressions they may be enabled to make on our nerves and animal spirits, whereby such thoughts may be suggested, and such affections excited or moderated, in the mind as may greatly promote the happiness of good men, and subserve the schemes of Divine Providence.

Burnet on Art. p. 32. *Hallet on Script.* vol. ii. p. 258. *Jennings's Abridg. of Mather's Life*, p. 105. *Boyse on the Ministry of Angels.*

6. It seems to be intimated, that they are present in Christian assemblies, 1 Cor. xi. 10. to which some add 1 Tim. v. 21. Some also argue this from the representation of angels in the ornaments of the tabernacle and temple, Exod. xxvi. 31. 1 Kings vi. 23—26, 35. and from Eccles. v. 6. Compare Luke xv. 10. and Eph. iii. 10. but this last text may much more properly be understood of the observations which angels make on God's dealing with the church in general, than on what they can be supposed to learn from the discourses of those that officiate in its public offices.

Mede on Eccles. p. 345. *Tillot. Works*, vol. ii. p. 157. *Doddr. and Guyse in Loc.*

COROLLARY 1.

It hence appears that angels must have a very extensive knowledge of human affairs; but we cannot conclude that they are capable of certainly discerning *our thoughts*: it seems the peculiar prerogative of God fully to know *them*. Nevertheless, angels may, from external circumstances, and perhaps in particular from the alteration of the countenance, if not a view of what passes in the brain and animal spirits, be able to form very probable conjectures.

Gilp. on Temp. p. 25. *Goodw. Child of Light*, p. 65.

COROLLARY 2.

It appears, from comparing this proposition and the 157th with several passages in Plato, Strabo, Tully, Seneca, Plotinus, Maximus Tyrius, Hierocles, Jamblicus, and Plutarch, besides some other Heathen writers, chiefly of the Platonic sect after Christ's time, that the Heathens had a notion of the nature and offices of their inferior deities, very nearly resembling the Jewish and Christian doctrine of angels; and indeed the name of *angels*, and even of *archangels*, sometimes occurs in their writings; and it seems probable that the wiser part of their philosophers, who believed the existence of one supreme God, possessed of infinite perfections, made themselves the easier in conforming to and encouraging the popular superstition, under an apprehension that, on the one hand, there were some beings in nature and office something resembling those whom the people worshipped, (though they held their tales of them to be idle and vain,) and, on the other, apprehending that it might be very dangerous to the political interest of states to have endeavoured entirely to change their religious views; from which the fate of Socrates, and the sentence passed on Alcibiades, might also do much to deter them, out of regard to their own personal security. Compare Rom. i. 20, &c.

Cooper's Life of Socr. p. 166. *Knowl. of Div. Things by Rev. only*, p. 239.*

SCHOLIUM 1.

Some have thought that not only every *region*, but every *man*, has some particular angel assigned him as a *guardian*, whose business it is generally to watch over that country or person; and, besides general arguments from the passages quoted above, in the second step of the preceding solution, they especially urge Matt. xviii. 10. Acts xii. 15. but the argument from both these places is evidently precarious; and it seems difficult to reconcile the supposition of such a continued attendance with what is said of the stated residence of these angels in Heaven, and with Heb. i. 14. where all the angels are represented as ministering to the heirs

* See particularly Apuleius, in his treatise de Deo Socratis, apud Opera, 1688 quarto, tom. ii. p. 624, 684, &c. and 630, &c. where he gives a clear and methodical explication of Plato's doctrine of demons or rather of the three Platonic doctrines of demons, their nature and offices. Apuleius assigns, as others have done, a demon to every man, which demon is in *Vita eventûs Cautes et Testis.*

of salvation; though as there is great reason to believe the number of heavenly spirits is vastly superior to that of men upon earth, it is not improbable that they may, as it were, relieve each other, and in their turns perform these condescending services to those whom the Lord of angels has been pleased to redeem with his own blood; but we must confess that our knowledge of the laws and orders of those celestial beings is very limited, and consequently that it is the part of humility to avoid dogmatical determinations on such heads as these. Compare Col. ii. 8.

Pierce on Heb. p. 32. *Reyn. on Angels*, p. 171. *Bull's Serm.* vol. ii. p. 392. *Limb. Theol.* lib. ii. c. ii. *Essay on Spir.* *Bp. Clayton's Vindic. of the Old Test.* part iii.

LECTURE CCXIII.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is questioned how far angels may be instrumental in working miracles; and when they are so, how far they may be said to work them by their own natural power. That God used the ministration of angels in several of the miracles wrought by Christ, may perhaps be intimated (John i. 51.); but supposing this, and also supposing that on these occasions they only exerted a power equal to what was naturally their own, these events would nevertheless be truly miraculous, because they acted out of their own ordinary sphere, and interposed in circumstances in which God does not commonly allow them to interpose. *Prop.* 90. § 3.

Gilpin on Tempt. part i. c. v. § 34. *Chandler on Mir.* p. 17.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Some have thought that angels may have some concern in suggesting extraordinary dreams; many instances of which there are undoubtedly in Scripture (compare Matt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19.); and some remarkable instances have occurred in latter ages, mentioned by very credible authors; among which see

Wotton's Life, p. 10. *Walton's Lives*, p. 95. *Baxt. Immat. of the Soul*, vol. ii. p. 17.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is likewise questioned, How far departed saints may be employed in services to our world, like those which the angels perform, and how far they may be acquainted with the concerns of the church here. Some suppose that acquaintance to be very considerable, and argue from Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9; vi. 9, &c. To the two former texts it is answered, That the words may be rendered, *q. d.* "I am thy fellow-servant, and *the fellow-servant* of thy brethren;" to the latter, that there is no intimation that the spirits of the martyrs were particularly acquainted with what then passed on earth, but only that they were waiting for some singular triumph of the divine vengeance over the enemies of the church, not yet discovered to them. It may indeed make it probable that some great events relating to the church are revealed to them; though whether by immediate revelation from God, or the report of angels conversant with our world, and the spirits of the faithful more lately departed from it, we do not certainly know; however, it by no means amounts to a proof of such a circumstantial knowledge as will warrant our address to them in *prayer*; against which Protestants have frequently urged Isa. lxiii. 16. though the context proves the argument from thence very inconclusive. It is enough that there is no foundation for such addresses, though it should be granted there is no particular prohibition of them.

Bull's Serm. vol. ii. p. 460. *Watts's Death and Heaven*, p. 142. *Fawcett's Dialogues.*

PROPOSITION CLXI.

To enumerate the chief of those instances in which *evil* spirits concern themselves with human affairs.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Urged by a principle of enmity to God, and envy and malice against mankind, they do their utmost to seduce men into sin; and for that purpose are no doubt employed in studying men's tempers, and making accurate observations on the various circumstances and occurrences of their lives. 2 Cor. ii. 11; iv. 4; xi. 3, 14, 15. Eph. ii. 2; vi. 11, 12, 16. 1 Thess. iii. 5. Matt. xiii. 19. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. v. 8. Luke xxii. 31. (compare 1 Chron. xxi. 1.) Zech. iii. 1, 2. Acts v. 3. John xiii. 2, 27. (compare 1 Thess. ii. 18.)

2. They are sometimes made use of as the instruments of Divine Providence, to inflict calamities on the children of men; but all these their malicious attempts are overruled by the superior wisdom and goodness of God, to answer the purposes of his government. Luke xiii. 16. 1 Cor. v. 5. Job i. 2. 1 Tim. i. 20. (to which some add Dan. x. 13. 20.) Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Howe's Works, vol. ii. p. 360. *Shep. on Angels*, p. 130, &c.†

3. They carry on their attempts on mankind in a

* Some curious observations relative to the phenomena of dreaming will be found in Dr. Dugald Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 320. See also the same work, p. 557.

† Liberal views of the agency of evil spirits is carried a great way by Mr. Burgh, in his Crito. His opinion is, that all the evil, both moral and natural, which prevails in the world, is the effect of the tendency of powerful, malignant, spiritual beings, and that Christianity by the deliverance of the human species from their presence and consequent distress, as an enslaved nation is by a particular law, answered to a tyranny. See Crito, or Essays on various Subjects, vol. i. Essay the third, vol. ii. Essay the fourth.

secret and invisible manner, something correspondent to that in which good angels carry on their purposes of benevolence and friendship.

Gilp. on Temp. c. ix.

4. Nevertheless, they sometimes interpose in a more open and apparent manner; or at least in times past they have been permitted to do so; particularly in the instance of demoniacal possessions, oracles, magic, witchcraft, and violent suggestions, of which we shall more particularly speak in the following scholia.

LECTURE CCXIV.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It has been an opinion generally received, That the Devil has sometimes entered into the bodies of men, and afflicted them in a severe and dreadful manner, by a supernatural agency upon them; and it is evident that many passages in the New Testament, taken in their most obvious sense, appear greatly to favour such a notion; but Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Becker have long since pleaded that these demoniacs were only *lunatics* or *epileptics*; and a learned author, generally agreed to be Dr. Sykes, has lately revived the notion, in a discourse entitled An Inquiry into the Demoniacs mentioned in the New Testament; which has occasioned a great deal of debate; and the late celebrated physician, Dr. Mead, has since declared himself on that side of the question, in his late book on the diseases mentioned in Scripture. It seems therefore not improper to give a brief review of the most considerable arguments which are urged on both sides the question.

SECT. I. In defence of Mr. Mede's opinion, it is observed and pleaded,

1. That the word *demon*, as used among the ancients, properly signifies *the soul of a dead person*. Now, it would be palpably absurd to suppose that the departed spirits of wicked men are permitted to perform such operations as are pretended in this case. It is granted that the word has sometimes this signification; but it is plain, and Mr. Mede allows it, that it is not universally so, as was observed above; nor indeed is this by any means its most common sense; for though those whom the Heathens worshipped were dead men, yet their worshippers did not generally acknowledge it, but looked on the assertion as Atheism, or at least great impiety. (*Prop.* 86. *gr.* 3. and *Schol.*) Vid. *Cypr. Op.* p. 12. *Ed. Fell.*

Mede's Diatr. No. vi. *Peggi's Exam. of Sykes's Inquiry*, p. 4.

2. That among the Heathens, lunacy and epilepsy were ascribed to the operation of some demon upon such patients, who therefore were called from thence *Cerriti* and *Larvati*; but it is answered, That the question is, Whether the Heathens did not in the general represent the matter as it really was, though they might err as to the particular agent by whom they might suppose such persons to be agitated!

3. That it is not only probable, but certain, that the Jews had the same notion; for which the case of Saul when melancholy is urged, and those known passages from Jos. Ant. lib. viii. c. ii. § 5. and Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. vi. § 3. Hudson's edit.; to which are added Matt. xi. 18; xvii. 14, 15. John vii. 20; viii. 48, 52; x. 20. where *demoniacs* and *lunatics* seem synonymous terms. The same also is urged from the account given of those said to be demoniacs, whose symptoms are the same with lunacy and epilepsy; but it is answered, That where lunacy and being possessed with the Devil are here mentioned as the same thing, it is perfectly consistent with the notion that some peculiar kinds of lunacy, and those on the whole the worst, were the effect of diabolical operation.

4. That it was by no means necessary for Christ to change the usual language, and correct these mistakes in philosophy, any more than those relating to the Ptolemaic system in astronomy.*

5. The miracle of a cure by speaking a word, was as really great and valuable in one case as in the other.

6. That it is advantageous to the Christian cause to interpret these histories thus,—because we can give no account why there should have been more demoniacs just in the age in which Christ lived, than at any other time. *Mede's Diatr.* No. 8.†

SECT. II. In defence of the common notion, it is answered and pleaded as follows:—

1. That the foundation of the contrary scheme, § 1. *gr.* 1. is entirely precarious; as it is certain the Heathens had a notion among them of evil spirits distinct from human souls; and if they had not, it would be very unreasonable to make their notion of demons the standard, by which to interpret the sense of the word in the New Testament, especially since the passages quoted from the Old Testament make very good sense on the common interpretation. Compare the Greek translation of Deut. xxxii. 17. Psal. xci. 6, xcvi. 5; cvi. 37. Isa. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 14; lxv. 11. See *Peggi, ubi supra*, and *Trommii Lexic. in verb.* DAIMONION.

* See particularly on this head, Dr Arthur Young's Dissertation on the Gospel Demoniacs.

† Two writers of eminence have more recently appeared on this side of the question. These are Dr Lardner and Mr Farmer.—See Dr Lardner's Case of the Demoniacs mentioned in the New Testament, in four Discourses upon Mark v. 19. with an Appendix. Works, vol. i. p. 429. See also his Remarks upon Dr Warren's Dissertations on it. Works, vol. xi. p. 269. Mr Farmer has written yet more copiously on the subject, in his Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament, and in his letters to the Rev. Dr Worthington in answer to his late publication, entitled An impartial Inquiry into the Case of the Gospel Demoniacs.

2. It is plainly the doctrine of the New Testament, hinted at also in the Old, that there is a number of apostate spirits, who fell from Heaven, under Satan their leader, who makes it his great business, probably in concurrence with them, to do all the mischief he can, both to the bodies and souls of men. Vid. *Prop.* 157. *gr.* 4. *Prop.* 159. and 161. *gr.* 1, 2.

3. That the demons spoken of in Scripture as possessing the bodies of men, are there represented also as the associates of Satan; and Christ's triumph over the demons is continually represented as a triumph over Satan. Matt. xii. 24—27. Luke x. 17, 18; xiii. 16. Acts x. 38. Jam. ii. 19. Rev. xii. 7, 9; xvi. 13, 14; xx. 2.

4. Such facts are recorded concerning the demons mentioned in the New Testament, as could not possibly have been true on the contrary hypothesis; *v. g.* their owning Christ to be the Messiah, beseeching him not to torment them, breaking chains, and especially driving the swine into the sea, which there is no reason to believe that two madmen would have attempted, or could possibly have effected.

Dodd. Fam. Exp. vol. i. § 70. p. 428.

5. The manner in which Christ speaks to them, plainly shows they were really demoniacs; not only *rebuking* them, (which indeed is also said of *fevers* and *winds*,) but calling them unclean spirits, asking them questions, commanding them to come out, &c. It is very mean and unworthy to suppose him merely to have humoured madmen in any case, and much more in this; and the answer, § 1. *gr.* 4. is by no means sufficient, because this is supposed by those on the other side the question to be a mischievous notion; yet it is plain his own apostles were suffered to continue in it, even after the descent of the Spirit; for they expressly assert the person in question to have been actually and really *possessed*; nor can one imagine how they could assert this in plainer and less ambiguous terms.

6. It is not allowed to have been so singular a case as the objection supposes, considering the account which has been given of possessions by many credible persons, especially the writers of the primitive church. See *Prop.* 144. *Dem. gr.* 5. and *Schol.* 4. and the references there.

Whist. on Demon. Hist. Surry Demon.

7. We can conjecture some probable reasons why more frequent possessions might be permitted in Christ's time than were known before or since; *v. g.* to punish the Jews, who were addicted so much to magic (comp. Acts xix. 13, 18, 19.); to convince men of the reality and malice of evil spirits, that they might be alarmed at their danger, and so prepared for the Gospel; to illustrate the power of Christ in his triumph over them; and to give a convincing specimen of his future complete victory. *Prop.* 150. *Cor.* 3.

8. Nevertheless, were the cause utterly unknown to us, it would not become us for that reason alone to deny the fact. Who can say why Satan is permitted to have so much power over men's souls, as many of the forecited Scriptures do plainly express?

Inq. into Script. Demon. Essay on Demon. Twell's Examinat. and Defence.[*]

LECTURE CCXV.

SCHOLIUM 2.

We readily allow that there might be a great deal of artifice in the oracles of the Heathens, so much celebrated by their writers; which appears from the dubious language in which they were often delivered,—from the instances in which clearer predictions were contradicted by the event,—from the apparatus made use of in consulting many of them, whereby the imagination of the suppliant or inquirer was greatly disordered,—and from the servile flattery they used to princes and conquerors, and the machinery and contrivance in some of the scenes and images whence the oracular voice proceeded: concerning all which, consult Vandale on all these subjects, or Fontenelle's elegant abridgment of him; and there is great reason to believe that the ignorance or superstition of the populace would make them an easy prey to artifices of this kind. Nevertheless, considering how expressly devils are said to have been worshipped by the Gentiles, 1 Cor. x. 20, 21. and how supposable it is that many of them might, by their extraordinary sagacity and experience, form probable conjectures with regard to *future* events, and discern *present* things at such a *distance* as they could not be known by the inquirer; and likewise considering the circumstances recorded by some credible historians, for which none of the opposite particulars recorded by Vandale can fully account, it seems reasonable to believe that, in some of those oracles, there was a supernatural interposition of evil spirits, (compare Acts xvi. 16—18.) especially when we compare what is said of *demoniacal possessions* under the former scholium, and of *magical* operations under the next.

Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. vol. i. p. 294.

[*] For additional publications in favour of the commonly received doctrine of demoniacal possessions, reverse may be had to Dr. Mac. Knight's Essay, prefixed to his second edition of his Harmony of the Four Gospels. Bishop Warburton's Sermons, vol. ii. No. 10. Dr. Worth's Dissertations on several passages of the sacred Scriptures, vol. i. No. 20, 21. Mr. Burgh's Critic. Essay on p. 250. Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Demoniacs, in his Works, vol. iii. p. 163. and Mr. Thomas Barker's Nature and Circumstances of the Demoniacs in the Gospels, stated, methodized, and considered in the several Particulars. Mr. Farmer's Essay was attacked on these occasions. Those were Dr. Worthington's Impartial Inquiry into the Case of the Gospel Demoniacs, the same gentleman's Further Inquiry, and Mr. Peirce's Demoniacs, An Inquiry into the Heathen and the Scripture Doctrine of Demons.

Yet we cannot, without stronger proof than can be pretended, suppose that God would *frequently* permit these interpositions to be apparently miraculous, considering how great a confirmation they would give to idolatrous worship; and it is plain, in fact, that after Christianity appeared, they were in very little credit; and both Tully and Plutarch assure us that they began to decline before that time. See *Prop.* 113. *Schol.* 4, and the references there.

Vandale de Orac. Cicero de Div. p. 182. *Gilpin on Tempt.* p. 35. *Farmer on Miracles.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

Many have rejected all stories of *magical* operations, performed by a combination with the infernal spirits, or of diabolical appearances, as being either the dreams of a disordered imagination, the contrivance of art, or the vain fictions of those who aimed at nothing but imposing on mankind. There is great reason to believe this to have been most frequently the case; yet it must be acknowledged, that some stories of this kind come attended with evidence which it is difficult to answer; particularly the dying confession of some, said to have been concerned in them; and it is strange to observe what an agreement there is in many circumstances, among those who have believed and reported such facts, where the scenes have been most distant, and the persons in education and religion most different from each other. It is however certain, that Satan appeared in a visible form to Christ, and that he animated the body of a serpent in the *first temptation*; it is also exceedingly probable there was some supernatural appearance to Saul, (1 Sam. xxviii.) notwithstanding the solution which some have endeavoured to find, in the supposed artifice of *throwing the voice*, which we can hardly suppose to have been common to all the ἐγγαστρόμυθοι. The main objection against the supposed reality of such phenomena is, that being miraculous they would establish the worship of the Devil, on the principles laid down above; but no proof can be brought that such facts were ever done in attestation of a falsehood; the utmost they can be supposed to prove is, that the devils are beings of great power and knowledge, not that they are the proper objects of our worship, dependence, and obedience; and it may be added, that the purposes to which they seem to have interposed have generally been so malignant, as sufficiently to prove they are *evil* demons, and as such to be denounced and detested; and such appearances, where Christianity is known, should be considered as confirming rather than weakening it; since the existence, power, and malice of Satan make so great a part of the Christian scheme. Where the Gospel is unknown, natural religion might teach men that there is a Sovereign Almighty Being, of the most benevolent nature, and consequently that these mischievous beings were to be detested as his enemies, whatever power they might have; from which he would not fail to protect those that should faithfully serve him. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 9—12.

Hutch. on Witche. Le Clerc's Pneum. c. v. Young on Idol. vol. ii. *Beckker's World bewitched*, c. iii. *Gland. Sadducis. Triumphant.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

The Scripture doctrine of Satan makes it probable that many of those horrible thoughts, which sometimes come with an almost irresistible *impetus* into the minds of pious persons, are of diabolical original; which is in some measure confirmed by what has been observed of the subtilty with which atheistical and sceptical arguments have sometimes been presented to the mind, even beyond the natural genius of the person assaulted by them.

Gilpin on Tempt. Burn. Spir. Life, p. 139.

SCHOLIUM 5.

There is no greater evidence of the degeneracy which a rational mind, even with great degrees of sagacity and ability, is capable of, than the implacable malice of those wicked spirits, and the obstinate malignity with which they are opposing the cause of God in the world, though they are sure that opposition will end in their own confusion and ruin. *Dodd. Fam. Exp.* vol. i. p. 115.

SCHOLIUM 6.

Those who professed magical arts, under the various forms of them, were by the law of Moses condemned to death (Exod. xxii. 18. Deut. xviii. 9—11.); and as *idolatry* was generally the foundation of these professions, there were some reasons for their being punished peculiar to the Jewish dispensation; and indeed it seems fit that in Christian communities, persons making such pretensions should be discouraged, since they have an evident tendency to take off men's minds from a dependence upon God, to indulge malignant passions, and at best to fill them with vanity and superstition; but it may be questioned how far the professors of such arts are to be punished by the magistrate. We allow that it is not his province to punish offences against God as such (*Prop.* 77.); and consequently a contract with Satan, considered merely in this view, is not by human laws to be made penal; but if it be proved that real mischief, either to the persons or properties of men be done in consequence of such a contract, the person who can be proved to have done such mischief is certainly answerable for it; and if (which is generally the case) those predictions are only artifices to impose on simple people, and get money from them, the idle pretenders are plainly a pest to society, and may as justly

be punished as those who keep gaming-houses, brothels, &c. Vid. *Prop.* 50. *Cor.* 3.

Hutch. on Witchc. p. 147.

SCHOLIUM 7.

Certain vain ceremonies, which are commonly called *charms*, and seem to have no efficacy at all for producing the effects proposed by them, are to be avoided; seeing, if there be indeed any real efficacy in them, it is generally probable they owe it to some bad cause; for one can hardly imagine that God should permit good angels in any extraordinary manner to interpose, or should immediately exert his own miraculous power on trifling occasions, and upon the performance of such idle tricks as are generally made the condition of receiving such benefits. *More's Immort. of the Soul*, c. xii.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Concerning the vanity of what is commonly called *Judicial Astrology* Vid. *More's Theol.* p. 240.

LECTURE CCXVI.

PROPOSITION CLXII.

To inquire into what shall pass at the *end of this world*, so far as Scripture gives us an account of it.

SOLUTION.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ shall descend with visible pomp and majesty, attended by the blessed angels, who will probably be employed as the instruments of some loud and extraordinary sound, called *the trump of God*, or *voice of the archangel*. This appearance shall be attended with the resurrection of the dead. Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; xxv. 31, 32; xxvi. 64. John v. 28, 29. Acts iv. 2; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 12, &c. 1 Thess. iv. 14—16.

2. In this resurrection, the bodies of the saints shall in a glorious though unknown manner, be transformed into the resemblance of the glorified body of Christ; shall be raised above those miseries and temptations to which, by virtue of their constitution and situation, they are now exposed, and rendered fit to serve the soul in all the entertainments and employments of the heavenly state. Matt. xiii. 43. 1 Cor. xv. 42—49. Phil. iii. 21.

3. Those saints who are found alive at this appearance of Christ shall be caught up with those newraised to meet him; and their bodies shall undergo a change correspondent to that of those who are dead. 1 Cor. xv. 50—54. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

4. All mankind, both good and bad, shall in a solemn manner appear before Christ, that their lives and characters may undergo a strict examination, in order to determine their final state. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Cor. v. 10. *et sim.*

5. The consequence of this judgment will be a sentence of absolution to all the righteous, and condemnation to all the wicked; (in which latter sentence the evil angels shall also be included;) and this on each side will be succeeded by the immediate execution of it, the righteous being received into a state of complete and everlasting happiness, and the wicked cast down to everlasting misery. Matt. xxv. 31—46. Mark ix. 43—49. Rom. ii. 5—10. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Pet. i. 4—7; iv. 13; v. 4. 1 John iii. 2.

Amory's Serm. on the Last Judgment.

COROLLARY 1.

There is great reason to believe that the saints will be made perfect in holiness; without which we cannot conceive how they could be completely happy: and indeed the perfection of their character in their final state is expressly asserted. Eph. v. 27. Col. i. 22. Heb. xii. 23. Jude ver. 24.

Watts's Death and Heaven, Disc. ii. § 2.

COROLLARY 2.

It plainly appears from the passages referred to above, and especially *gr.* 5. that the complete happiness of the saints is to commence from the resurrection; as also the complete punishment of the wicked: but how far there is reason to believe that the one and the other are immediately after death in a state of happiness or misery, far below what they are then to receive, we shall inquire below, *Schol.* 9.

Goodw. Works, vol. v. p. 90. *Flem. Christol.* vol. iii. *Boyse's Four Last Things*, vol. i. p. 301. *Limb. Theol.* c. x. *Bulk. Econ. of the Gospel*, p. 469.

SCHOLIUM 1.

There are many passages in the Old Testament, which either obscurely hint at the resurrection of the body, or immediately refer to it; *v. g.* Job xix. 23—27. Dan. xii. 2. to which many have aded Isa. xxv. 8; xxvi. 19. Hos. vi. 2; xiii. 14. Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14. To these texts Dr. Hodges has added several others, which he interprets as referring to the resurrection, particularly Job xiv. 14; xxi. 30—32; xxix. 19, 20; xxx. 22, 23. But all his efforts will only at best prove these words may be so rendered and explained; whereas they all make very good sense upon the common interpretation. See Hodges's *Elihu*, c. iv. pref. p. 212—214, 230—240.

Sherl. on Proph. p. 255. *Birch's Life of Boyle. Peters on Job.*

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some have not only doubted whether these texts express the resurrection of the body, but whether there be any where in the Old Testament any reference to a future state at all. The case, in a few words, appears to be this:—The Mosaic covenant

contained no promises directly relating to a future state: probably, as Dr. Warburton asserts and argues at large, because Moses was secure of an *equal Providence*, and therefore needed not subsidiary sanctions taken from a future state, without the belief of which the doctrine of a universal Providence cannot ordinarily be vindicated, nor the general sanctions of religion secured: yet, as real piety must imply some views to such a state, it seems evident that good men, even before Moses, were animated by them, (Heb. xi. 13—16.) as he himself plainly was (*ibid.* 24—26.); and that the promises of heavenly felicity were contained even in the covenant made with Abraham (which the Mosaic could not disannul) we have shown before. (See *Prop.* 154. § 1. *gr.* 4.) Succeeding providences also confirmed the natural arguments in its favour, as every remarkable interposition would do. And when general promises were made to the obedient, and an equal providence relating to the nation established on national conformity to the Mosaic institution, and not merely to the general precepts of virtue (which must always make a nation happy); as such an equal providence would necessarily involve many of the best men in national ruin at a time when, by preserving their integrity in the midst of general apostasy, their virtue was most conspicuous,—such good men in such a state would have vast additional reasons for expecting future rewards, beyond what could arise from principles common to the rest of mankind; so that we cannot wonder that we find in the writings of the prophets many strong expressions of such an expectation, particularly Gen. xlix. 18. Psal. xvi. 9—11. (Compare Acts ii. 25—31.); xvii. *ult.* xxiii. *ult.* xxxvi. 9; xlix. 14, 15; lxxiii. 17—27. Prov. x. 2, 28; xi. 7; xii. 28; xiv. 32; xv. 24; xxi. 16. Eccles. iii. 15, 16, 17, 21; vii. 12, 15; viii. 12—14; xi. 9; xii. 7, 13, 14. Isa. iii. 10, 11. Ezek. xviii. 19—21; to which catalogue may be added the texts quoted above, *Schol.* 1. The same thing may also be inferred from the particular promises made to Daniel, Dan. xii. 13. to Zerubbabel, Hag. ii. 23. and to Joshua the high priest, Zech. iii. 7. as well as from those historical facts recorded in the Old Testament; of the murder of Abel, the translation of Enoch and Elijah, the death of Moses, the story of the Witch of Endor; and from what is said of the appearance of angels to, and their converse with, good men. Vid. *Prop.* 149. *gr.* 5.

Against this interpretation of the preceding texts it is objected, That *bringing life and immortality to light* was the peculiar glory of Christianity. Compare 2 Tim. i. 10. with Dr. Hodges's explication. (*Elihu*, p. 252.) But waving this interpretation, we answer, 1. That many of the passages above are ambiguous, though most reasonably explained of a future state. 2. That in others there might be room to doubt whether they express any thing more than the hope these good men in fact had, without determining that it was built on any express revelation. 3. That where there was an express message from God, the consequence, as including a future state, was to be inferred from comparing the inequalities of present providences with that general declaration. 4. That no such passages contain a promise of final, everlasting, and immutable happiness, even to the spirits of good men; 5. Nor a resurrection to their body: nor, 6. Does it at all affect any but the Jews; so that when Christ in his own person, and that of the apostles, declared a future state of endless happiness or misery of the whole person, awaiting *all* men, it may well be called bringing life and immortality to light, when compared with any former dispensation.

Lel. ag. Morg. vol. i. p. 338. *Warb. Div. Leg.* vol. ii. p. 553.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

Those who have thought that the resurrection of the body might be demonstrated, as at least probable, from natural principles, have pleaded,

1. That considering, on the one hand, the immortality of the soul, and on the other, that the body was originally designed to make up a part of the man, it would seem improbable that one part should be utterly destroyed, especially after so short a duration, shorter indeed than the period of many other animal and vegetable bodies. But those that insist upon this argument seem to have forgotten that the sentence of death, introduced by sin, has changed the original state; not to insist upon it, that from the light of nature we might perhaps apprehend the union of our souls to these bodies a punishment.

2. They plead that a more glorious display of the divine justice will be consequent upon a resurrection than can otherwise be supposed. But it is certain, the almighty power of God might without this make it apparent to all human creatures, that virtue was universally rewarded, and vice proportionably punished; and none can pretend to say how far the honours of the divine judgment would necessarily require a more public and sensible triumph.

3. Many have urged the reasonableness of making the body partake of rewards and punishments, as it has partaken of duty or guilt. But it is only in

* Bishop Warburton's opinion has been attacked in various publications, among which it may be sufficient to mention Mr. Peter Croal Dissertation on the Book of Job, and Remarks on Dr. Warburton's Account of the Sentiments of the early Jews concerning the Soul: Views of things different from those maintained by Warburton are advanced by Dr. Addington, in his Dissertation on the Religious Knowledge of the ancient Jews and Patriarchs, containing an Inquiry into the Evidences of their Belief and Expectation of a Future State. This is the case likewise with Dr. Leland, in some parts of his works. A zealous advocate for Dr. Warburton was the author of A free and candid Examination of the Principles advanced in the —— Bishop of London's Sermons. Sherlock's—and in his—Discourses on Prophecy, and of a Critical Inquiry into the Opinions and Practices of the Ancient Philosophers. These performances were written by the Rev. Mr. Towne.

a figurative sense that it can be said to be the subject either of virtue or happiness.

4. The fathers commonly argued from the succeeding daily and yearly resurrection to be observed in the natural world. This was indeed a very just proof to the Heathens, with whom this controversy chiefly lay, that a resurrection from the dead was possible; and the fabulous story of the phœnix was as fine an illustration of it as can be imagined. Vid. *Solinus*, cap. xxxiii. p. 63. with Salmasius's notes, vol. i. p. 548, &c. But we cannot certainly infer from thence that God will effect it: so that it seems to be peculiar to a divine revelation to give convincing evidence of the resurrection of the body. Vid. *Prop.* 82. *Schol.* 6. and the authors quoted there.

Pears. on Creed, p. 375. *Watts's Death and Heav.* p. 228.

LECTURE CCXVII.

SCHOLIUM 4.

It is much debated, how far the body to be raised will be *the same* with that laid in the grave; and it is a question of much greater difficulty than importance. It may be observed,

1. That the raised body cannot be entirely the same mass, *i. e.* cannot consist just of the same particles without either addition or diminution. The continual changes that pass in the body during life would render this body of a monstrous size, if all those particles that had ever been vitally united to it, *i. e.* had made a part of it while living, were then to be restored; which yet might seem as necessary as that just that number should be restored which were laid in the grave: and besides this, the different state of bodies laid in the grave, some vastly overgrown, others much emaciated, others only of infants, others maimed, *i. e.* deprived of some of their limbs and members, would occasion such a diversity of size and forms at the resurrection, as there is no reason at all to imagine, and it would be insufferable to suppose.

2. Some have imagined that there is some part of the brain so exceedingly small as to be invisible, which is in its own nature incorruptible; and that the uniting this to the same soul to which it was before united, will occasion an identity of the whole man. But it is neither certain that there are any such incorruptible particles; nor can we see how the identity of these particles would make the raised body the same that was laid in the dust.

3. Many have supposed that there may be some *stamina*, which are the same in every distinct human body from its birth to its death, only in different circumstances dilated by the fluids to different degrees, and that these are of such a nature, as never to pass from being the stamina of one body to become the stamina of another: which hypothesis, though it be not entirely clear of its difficulties, yet if it be allowed possible, will show the possibility of giving to each what may properly be called *his own body*, even when, as in the instance of cannibals, and no doubt in many others, the same particles at different times make a part of different human bodies.

4. The Scripture speaks not merely (as Mr. Locke maintains) of the resurrection of *the dead*, but also of the resurrection of *the body*, in such terms, as at least strongly to intimate that it may properly be called the same body which was laid in the grave, on some material account, though the organization of it shall no doubt be greatly changed, in such a manner as is to us at present unknown, John v. 28. Rev. xx. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 35—38, 42—44, 53. Phil. iii. 21. to which we may without scruple add Rom. viii. 11.

More's Theol. p. 154. *Keil on Blood*, p. 20. *Witringh. Exulty of the Body*, p. 29. *Mackn. Gosp. Hist. p.* 128. *Locke on Rom.* viii. 11, &c. *Watts's Phil. Essays.**

SCHOLIUM 5.

It is not possible for us to determine, how far the language in which our Lord describes the judgment-day (Matt. xxv. and elsewhere) may be *literal*, and how far *figurative*. There seems no reason to believe that every individual word and action shall be particularly examined in all its circumstances, witnesses heard, refuted, &c.; for were this to proceed according to the method of human courts, it would make the judgment-day millions of years longer than the whole period of the earth's duration has been; neither can we depend upon it that those *excuses* will actually be made which are represented, Matt. vii. 22; xxv. 24 and 44. No doubt, every particular of men's conduct will be weighed, in order to fix their character and their state; and the proceedings of that day will be attended with such convictions of conscience, impressed upon the unhappy creatures condemned in it, as effectually to supersede such pleas, or any other they could be supposed capable of making: but it is probable this last expression, as well as those of *opening the books*, (Rev. xix. 12.) are to be taken figuratively.

* The doctrine of the resurrection of the same body has been called in question by three more recent writers. These are Dr. Sykes, in his Inquiry when the Resurrection of the *Body*, as *Flesh*, was first asserted; Bishop Newton confutes Mr. Alexander Spence's strange Essay on the Resurrection, in the fifteenth Chapter of the first Volume to the Thessalonians, and Mr. Cooper in his first volume of Essays. In 1725, Dr. Henry Felton published a Sermon, entitled, The Resurrection of the same numerical Body, and its Reunion to the same Soul, against Mr. Locke's Notion of Personality and Identity. It was as well suited at the time, as to pass through three editions. On this head, Bishop Newton confronts Spence and Cooper. See Newton's Sacred Works, vol. iii. p. 676.

Sherl. on Judg. c. iv. *Young's Ser.* vol. i. p. 320.

SCHOLIUM 6.

It is expressly said that *evil spirits* are reserved to the judgment of the great day, Jude, ver. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 3. in which there will be a more apparent propriety, if Dr. Hunt's conjecture concerning the fall of the angels be true; which is, that those angels, before they fell, had in their former state some peculiar relation to our system, and that they were in the number of those who attended the *Shekinah* while Adam was in paradise; but by drawing off, forsook their post, out of a principle of rebellion against the Son of God, or of envy to mankind, whom they thought unworthy the guardianship and attendance of such noble spirits.

Hunt's Ess. on var. Dispens. ad fin.

LECTURE CCXVIII.

SCHOLIUM 7.

Many precarious conjectures have been formed concerning the *place* in which good men shall dwell *after* the resurrection. Some have thought it to be *beyond the starry firmament*; and some of the ancients imagined that their dwelling would be in *the sun*, from a mistaken interpretation of Psal. xix. 4. which they rendered, as the Seventy and Vulgate, *He has set his tabernacle in the sun*: but the nature and appearance of the sun, especially considering the spots on his face, so easily expose the weakness of this hypothesis, that it deserves no manner of regard. Mr. Whiston supposes the *air* to be the seat of the blessed, at present at least; and imagines that Christ is at the top of the atmosphere; and other souls nearer or more remote from him, according to the degree of their moral purity; to which he imagines the specific gravity of their inseparable vehicles to be proportionable; a scheme so evidently precarious, that it seems hardly worth while particularly to examine it.

Fawcett's Dialogues, p. 21, &c.

But Mr. Hallet has endeavoured to prove at large that they dwell upon *earth*, when it shall be restored to its paradisaical state; and the substance of his arguments is this:—Saints on their death go to *Heaven*, (2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23. compared with Acts iii. 21.); which place is likewise called *Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. but after the resurrection there shall be *a new earth*, upon which shall descend the *New Jerusalem*, a city to be formed in Heaven, and thence brought down and fixed upon earth, Rev. xxi. xxii. compare 2 Pet. iii. 13. and he supposes this is all that is intended by such expressions as 1 Pet. i. 4. Heb. x. 34. John xiv. 2. and he confidently asserts that *Heaven* does nowhere in Scripture signify a place where good men shall dwell after the resurrection. He urges that many singular advantages attend this hypothesis; *e. g.* it shows the reason why the *body* shall be raised; and it affords the best interpretation of Matt. v. 3, &c.; but as for those passages, Isa. lxv 17, &c.; lxvi. 22, &c. he apprehends that these are only *allusions* to the abode of the saints after the resurrection, but do *immediately* refer to the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and its extraordinary fruitfulness and pleasure; which he supposes by various strong figurative expressions to be compared to the final abode of the blessed. Many objections lie against this scheme, too obvious to need a particular mention: the chief are these:—

1. One can hardly imagine any city upon earth capable of containing the whole number of God's people, especially considering the great triumph of the Christian cause, to be expected in the latter day, (of which see *Prop.* 112. *Schol.* 4.) the great multiplication of the inhabitants of the earth, which will probably be connected with it, and the probable reason there is to hope that all who die in infancy, (which is at least one third of the whole human species,) or at least all the deceased infants of the righteous, may belong to the number of the elect: and if this, or any thing like it, be the case, it is probable that the whole face of the earth would not be able, conveniently, if at all, to contain so great a number; and to say that the size of the earth shall be increased, or the dimensions of the glorified body contracted, would be so groundless and improbable a conjecture, that this ingenious writer, widely as he suffers his thoughts to expatiate, has not seen fit so much as to mention it.

2. It is difficult to conceive how the inhabitants of such a fine city upon earth should by any means be *equal to the angels*; which yet Scripture declares that they shall be. Luke xx. 36.

3. The notion of *the perpetual day* there to be enjoyed, without the sun, seems very ill to suit the apprehension of this our planet's being the seat of that glory. Rev. xxi. 23—25.

4. With the thought of a perpetual abode on earth, seem to be connected several other mean ideas, which will by no means suit the exalted description given of the heavenly state: least of all, therefore, can we imagine that Christ and the holy angels are to have their perpetual abode here; yet it is expressly said, that saints are to be *for ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. that they shall be *caught up to meet him in the air*, (which would be very unnecessary and strange, if they were immediately to descend to earth again,) and that *he will come to receive them to himself, that they may be where he is*, John xiv. 2. which, on this hypothesis, must be a very improper expression.

5. That the Scriptures, on which this hypothesis is founded, are capable of another and very different interpretation; as will appear by consulting the most celebrated commentators upon them, and particularly Mr. Lowman, on those chapters of the Revelations which are the main support of Mr. Hallet's scheme.—On the whole, the place of the blessed is a question of little importance; and if we believe the description of their happiness given in Scripture, we may cheerfully pursue and expect it, though we cannot answer a multitude of curious questions relating to the circumstantials of it.

Hallet on Ser. vol. i. p. 191. *Enty ag. Hallet. Watts's Death and Heaven. Broughton's Prospect of Futurity.*

SCHOLIUM 8.

There have also been various conjectures, equally uncertain, concerning the *place of the damned.* The ancients generally supposed it was a region of fire, near the *centre of the earth:* others have supposed it might be a *comet*, where the extremes of heat and cold, in its access to, and recess from, the sun, would be equally tormenting; and they suppose the latter to be signified by βρυγμος οδοντων, Matt. xxii. 13. which they would render *the chattering of the teeth;* but Matt. xiii. 43. sufficiently overthrows that criticism. Mr. Swinden endeavours to prove at large that Hell is seated in the *sun*, chiefly pleading that this is the grand repository of fire, that its horrible face when viewed by a telescope, suits the description given of the burning lake; and that being in the *centre* of the system, it might properly be said that wicked men were *cast down into it.* How this is reconcilable with what is said of its being *outer darkness*, I think he has not attempted to show. It seems a great objection against each of these hypotheses, that if either of them be admitted, we must allow a vast number of Hells, if, as this author himself supposes, the fixed stars be suns; and it seems extremely improbable that, as soon as a system is created, a seat of torment should be prepared for its inhabitants. Others, by directly the counterpart to Mr. Hallet's hypothesis, have imagined that *Earth* would be the seat of the damned: and that when left in the flames of the last conflagration, wicked men would be cast down into it, supposing some peculiar propriety that the place of their sin should be that of their punishment: but it is something improbable this should be *the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.* Matt. xxv. 41. On the whole, we must here likewise confess our ignorance, and shall be much better employed in studying how we may avoid this place of horror, than in labouring to discover where it is.

Swind. on Hell. Dawes on Hell, p. 13. *Regn. Ang. World. Prosp. of Futurity, Diss.* iv.

LECTURE CCXIX.

SCHOLIUM 9.

Some have thought, that during *the intermediate state* between death and the resurrection, the soul shall be entirely *insensible*, which they suppose to be the natural consequence of its separation from the body. But the contrary seems to be evident with regard to *good* men, from the following Scriptures: Matt. xvii. 3. Luke xxiii. 42. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. Phil. i. 21, 23, 34. to which some add 1 Pet. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 23. and with greater certainty Matt. x. 28.; compare also Acts vii. 59. John v. 24, *et sim.* Rom. viii. 10, 11, 38. 2 Cor. v. 1, 2; xii. 2, 3, 4. 1 Thess. iv. 14; v. 10. Rev. vi. 9, 10. 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. And that the Jews before Christ's time had this notion, is at least probable from Wisdom ii. 2—4, 23, 24; iii. 1—5; iv. 7—15; v. 14, 15. though it is certain, that about the time of the Maccabees, a resurrection from the dead was expected, however they came so confidently to embrace the persuasion of it; and the most considerable rewards of good men, and punishment of sinners, were supposed to commence from this grand period, 2 Mac. vii. 9—11, 14, 23, 29; xii. 43; xiv. 46. Judith xvi. 17. And by a parity of reason, we may conclude the like with regard to the *wicked;* compare Luke xvi. 22, 23.; and it seems plain, as the human mind is constituted, that the expectation of immediate blessedness or misery, as soon as ever death has done its office, increaseth those arguments for virtue which are taken from the future state. The most considerable arguments against this are brought from Isa. xxxviii. 18. Psal. xxx. 9; cxv. 17. Eccles. ix. 4—6. to which some have answered,

1. That the existence of the soul in a separate state might be a truth unknown to the Old-Testament saints. But if we suppose it to be a truth, and yet at the same time allow that in these passages they declared the contrary, we evidently give up the plenary inspiration of this part of Scripture:—most therefore have chosen to reply,

2. That the texts quoted above relate to the inactive state of the body in the grave, and the removal of the soul from all intercourse with this world, and all capacity of doing any thing for the service of God here, which they were peculiarly solicitous about. This reply may properly be made with regard to the two first of the Scriptures quoted above, and will appear of the greater weight, considering the distinguished character and circumstances of David and Hezekiah, (*Herv. Med.* vol. ii. p. 26, 27. *not.*) and as for the passage in Ecclesiastes, if the same reply be not admitted with regard to that, it seems so directly to contradict the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that those who believe that doctrine, and also believe the

plenary inspiration of Solomon, or even that he believed and taught it, (as in this book he seems to have done,) must suppose it the speech of an *epicure*, introduced by a sudden prosopopœia; which if it be allowed, destroys the force of all objection from it. Compare the texts quoted from Ecclesiastes, *Schol.* 2. *De Veaux on Eccles.* p. 171.

3. As to that objection which is taken from such passages of Scripture as refer to the general judgment, as the time when good men enter on their happiness, and the wicked on their misery, (many of which are quoted *Prop.* 162. *gr.* 5.) see *Cor.* 2. and the references there; whence it will appear that such Scriptures have an important sense, consistent with what we have advanced here for the existence of our thinking powers in a separate state. It may be further objected, that the apostle says, "We shall receive according to what we have done *in the body*;" but on the supposition of the soul's existing in a separate state, the time in which many lived in the body will have been but a very inconsiderable part of their whole duration, whereas justice would require the whole to be regarded, (compare 2 Cor. v. 10.) it is answered, God may suspend our probation upon what time of our existence he pleases; and that it is very supposable that both good and bad men may after death go into such a sort of state as may not suit probation, but make a part either of reward or punishment: and whatever can be objected against this, would affect the immensely greater part of our existence, which those who deny the separate state must allow to pass after the final sentence.

Baxt. Saints' Rest. c. x. *Ditton on the Resurr. Watts's World to Come*, vol. i. *Bull's Works*, vol. i.*

SCHOLIUM 10.

There is great reason to believe that the happiness of the blessed does in some measure arise from the converse of each other. Compare Heb. xii. 22. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. nor do those texts, which speak of the favour of God as the final portion of the blessed, (Psal. xvii. *ult.* lxxiii. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xv. 28.) at all interfere with this; seeing God will undoubtedly be owned and enjoyed in all those holy entertainments which arise from the company of angels and glorified saints: and the degree in which he makes benevolent spirits upon earth useful to each other, and the angels serviceable to saints here, as well as the social nature of man, gives additional weight to the argument taken from the passages quoted above, and leaves no doubt concerning the justice of the assertion.

Butl. Anal. Price's Four Diss. No. iii.

SCHOLIUM 11.

That there will be various degrees of future happiness, according to men's various attainments in virtue, and the different degrees of service here performed, appears not only from the justice of God, which seems evidently to require this, and from the nature of things, which would in the same external circumstances render the wisest and most virtuous the happiest,—but likewise from express Scriptures, such as Dan. xii. 3. Matt. x. 41, 42. xix 28, 29. Luke xix. 16—19. Rom. ii. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 8. 2 Cor. v. 10; ix. 6. compare Gal. vi. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15. to which we may perhaps add 1 Cor. xv. 41. Matt. v. 10—12. 2 Cor. iv. 17. To this it is objected,

1. That the rewards of the heavenly state are represented as equal. Matt. xx. 7–10. It is answered, That the parable refers to the calling of the Gentiles into equal church privileges with the Jews, else there would be no room to represent some as murmuring against the rest, since such a temper is plainly inconsistent with the character and happiness of the blessed. It is objected,

2. That as all believers have a perfect righteousness in Christ, the degree of glory, being the reward of that alone, must be equal.

Ans. Though all are accepted for the sake of Christ, and all equally justified from the guilt and condemnation of sin through him, yet there may be room for such a diversity of rewards as was mentioned above; which being expressly asserted, no conclusion from any hypothesis whatsoever ought to be advanced in opposition to that doctrine.

The like diversity of degrees with regard to future *punishment*, may be inferred from a parity of reason, and also from comparing Matt. x. 15; xi. 22. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Limb. Theol. c. xiii. *Watts's Death and Heav. Mede's Doctrine on Matt.* x. *Boyse's Four Last Things.*

* The question concerning the separate existence of the soul between death and the resurrection has of late years been the occasion of much controversy. Various the opinions of such persons as the controversy gave Rise to. Law to the Appendix to his Considerations on the Theory of Religion. Dr. Peckard on the Observations on the Doctrine of an Intermediate State, and on his Further Observations on the same Doctrine. Dr. Berriman Defence of the Resurrection. Mr. Stephen Lobb concerning the State of the Soul after Death, and the Last Day. Dissertations. Mr. Archdeacon Blackburne on the Primitive Creeds, the Last Chapter of the Book Entitled the Confessional. Archdeacon Law's Answer to Dr. Berriman's View of the Controversy. Dr. Berriman's Intermediate State and the Separate Existence of the Soul between Death and the general Resurrection, and an anonymous author in a tract, entitled Mr. Locke and Archbishop Sharpe on the Immateriality of the Soul. Bishop Fleetwood's Sermon before the Queen, and Dr. Rogers's Sermon before the House of Lords, on the Occasion of the Controversy. Dr. Ibbot's Sermon before the Lord Mayor. Dr. Waterland on the Doctrine, Lapse, and Restoration. Mr. Thomas on the Last and General Resurrection. Dr. Bennet's Sermons. Dr. Gastrell on the Sacrament. Dr. Clarke's Sermon before the Lord Mayor. Dr. Sherlock's Sermon before the House of Lords. Dr. Sherlock's Sermon before the Queen. Dr. Rogers's Sermon before the House of Lords. Dr. Sherlock's Sermon before the Lord Mayor. No. 1, 2, and the Three Letters to the Inhabitants of Sodor. Dr. Marshall's Letter addressed to the Rev. Dr. Law. Dr. Pearce's Sermon at the Speech after Sermon. Archbishop Secker's Sermon before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in the Cathedral of Canterbury. Lawrence's Sermon. Mr. Bennet's Letter to Dr. Berriman. Dr. Berriman's Defence of the Resurrection. Dr. Berriman's Historical Account of the Intermediate State. Dr. Berriman's Historical Account of the Intermediate State. Dr. Berriman's Historical Account of the Intermediate State

LECTURE CCXX.

SCHOLIUM 12.

It may not be improper here to mention the doctrine of the Church of Rome, relating to *Purgatory*, which is in short this: That it is a place where the souls of good men remain in torment for a certain time, which torments are in their degree equal to those endured by the damned, till they have by these sufferings satisfied for the guilt of *venial* sins they had committed, or *mortal* sins of which they had truly repented; for the support of this strangely incoherent doctrine, they chiefly urge 1 Pet. iii. 19. Matt. v. 25, 26; xii. 32. 1 Cor. iii. 10—15. xv. 29. As for the arguments drawn from Zech. ix. 11. Mal. iii. 2. Job xiv. 19—22. they are so trifling as hardly to deserve mention. On the other side, the Protestants plead Isa. lvii. 2. Rev. xiv. 13. Luke xvi. 22; xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. v. 8. For the fuller discussion of this point, see the notes in the Fam. Expos. on the texts cited; but we wave it here, and content ourselves with observing the *silence* of Scripture upon this head, which, had the doctrine been true, must be very unaccountable, seeing so important a part of charity would, upon the supposition of its truth, arise from thence, to which we have no exhortation. It is also derogatory from the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction; and it has so great a tendency to encourage men's hopes of finding mercy, in consequence of something to be done for them hereafter, when they are in their graves, that it ought by no means to be admitted upon such shadows of proof as those laid down above; especially when the Romish doctors teach, that one mere act of *attrition* before death delivers a man from mortal guilt, and sends him to purgatory, where it is not possible he should lie any longer than the resurrection, and from whence, if rich, he may be very quickly freed by the prayers of survivors.

Burn. on Art. xxii. *Earl ag. Popery*, vol. ii. *Catholic Christian Instructed*, p. 146.

SCHOLIUM 13.

With the doctrine of purgatory will fall that of *praying for the dead*, which is chiefly founded upon it, and for which the chief text the Papists plead is 2 Maccab. xii. 40, &c. To which it is sufficient to answer, that we showed before, *Prop.* 124. that no regard is to be paid to that book, as divinely inspired. If Judas Maccabeus did indeed offer such a sacrifice, it was probably not to atone for the *dead*, as the author foolishly concludes, but rather to avert the wrath of God from the *living*, lest, as in the case of Achan, the rest of the people should have suffered for the crimes of their brethren. They also urge 2 Tim. i. 16—18. which yet can have no weight, because it does not appear that Onesiphorus was then dead.

Burn. on Art. v. 26. *Limb. Theol.*

That the *commemoration* of the dead, which prevailed in the third century of Christianity, was not *praying* for them, is very evident. Compare

Jurieu's Letters, No. ix. p. 188—196.

SCHOLIUM 14.

It is exceedingly difficult exactly to determine what we are to understand by *Christ's giving up the kingdom to the Father*, at the end of the world, of which we read 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Some have thought that it means no more than Christ presenting the church to the Father in complete glory, even then acknowledging, by some public and solemn declaration, his own subjection to the Father, and derivation of the mediatorial kingdom from him; but as this does not appear a very natural interpretation, others have said that Christ shall then give up his commission, as a general does, when that war is concluded, for the management of which he has received it, and shall remain as one of his brethren; in which interpretation Witsius and Crellius do strangely agree. Against this is objected, The perpetuity of Christ's kingdom, so often declared; or (if that be answered by the ambiguity of the word made use of in declaring it) the glory which must necessarily result to the human nature of Christ, in consequence of its intimate and personal union with the Deity. On the whole, it seems probable that some peculiar authority, which Christ has received from the Father, of managing the affairs of this world for the salvation of his redeemed, will then be solemnly resigned, as the earth itself will then pass away; so that there will, in the nature of things, be no more room left for the exercise of such a kind of authority; and it will evidently appear by the process of the great day, that the destruction of the earth is not a calamity coming upon it while under the Redeemer's care, but a catastrophe to which he appoints it, as having closed all that administration which he proposed at first, when he undertook the management of it. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that he will for ever remain as the glorified head both of elect angels and men, (Eph. i. 10.) the latter being then received to the abode of the former, and incorporated into the same society, and united into one kingdom with them, in such a manner as had not before been known; and that Christ will exercise over the whole kingdom such a mild and gracious government as suits the dignity of his nature, and the greatness of those services which he has performed for the Father; though he shall not then be the medium of their approach to and converse with God in the same manner that he now is; but they, being by the resurrection fully delivered from

all the penal consequences of sin, shall have nearer access to God, and yet more intimate communion with him than they ever before had whether during their sojourning here upon earth, or even during the abode of their separate spirits in the unseen world.

Turret. vol. ii. *Scott's Chris. Life*, vol. iii. *Lardner's Sermons*, vol. i. p. 106.

LECTURE CCXXI.

PROPOSITION LXIII.

To inquire into the most probable things which are said to prove or disprove the *eternity of Hell torments*.

SOLUTION.

SECT. I. The arguments to prove them *eternal* are chiefly these:

1. That the infinite majesty of an offended God adds a kind of infinite evil to sin, and therefore exposes the sinner to an infinite punishment; but as the limited nature of the creature can only bear a finite degree of misery, in any finite duration whatsoever, therefore it must extend to an infinite duration, and the creature must ever be paying a debt, which he will never perfectly have discharged.—To this it is answered, That there cannot be an infinite degree of evil in the punishment of a finite being; but it is replied to this answer, That the enormity of any action is in part to be estimated by the dignity of the person against whom it is committed, and the greatness of those obligations which the offender lay under to him. On these principles, in human judgments, actions, in other respects the same, are punished in very different degrees; and striking a prince is made capital, whereas striking an equal might be sufficiently punished by a small fine; but it may be replied, That the argument here is not from the dignity of the person abstractedly considered, but from the interest which the public has in the safety of the prince, which could not be secured without this extraordinary guard set upon it.—It is further objected to this argument, That it would make all sins equal, whereas both Scripture and reason prove that there are different degrees of guilt, proportionable to the different circumstances attending them. Compare *Prop.* 102. *Schol.* 11. To this it is answered, That where the *duration* of punishment is equal, there may be such a difference in the *degree*, as may be correspondent to the degree of the crime: and if this answer be not allowed to be satisfactory, it will be difficult to say how the doctrine of different degrees of eternal rewards can be vindicated, as consistent with itself; yet this is allowed by all who urge the objection, and is by all parties of reason to be supposed in the very foundation of it.

Whitby's App. to 2 Thess. i.

2. That whatsoever reason requires a *temporary* Hell, will also require an *eternal* one; e. *g.* the display of God's wisdom, holiness, justice, majesty, and power, his regard to his injured Son and Spirit, his violated law, and rejected Gospel, his abused patience, slighted promises, despised threatenings, &c.; the labours of his servants, the ministry of his angels, and the impression it may make on the inhabitants of happy worlds, to whom the punishment of the damned may be an instructive spectacle. It is replied, That all those ends might as well be effected, by supposing a perpetual succession of criminals delivered over to temporary punishment, as by the eternal punishment of each individual; and that, even without this, the remembrance of what guilty creatures had suffered might answer this end; but it may be suggested, on the other hand, that if we believe an eternity of future happiness, and that the punishments of the damned will ever come to a period, the time will come when the whole duration of them will bear less proportion to the time in which happiness has been enjoyed, than a moment to a thousand years; and consequently, that the whole series of punishment will be, as it were, an evanescent thing, by which all the purposes above mentioned will seem to cease. It is further alleged, That if this argument will prove any thing, it will prove that every offence which is punished at all, must be punished to the utmost, even of almighty power, since it seems that the greater as well as longer the punishment is, the more effectual must it answer these ends. On the contrary, may not some good end possibly be answered by the cessation or mitigation of punishment, as well as by its continuance?—and if our conjectures were to take place here, might it not redound to the glory of Christ, if for his sake the punishment of the damned were to be brought to a period, even though it might have been consistent with the divine justice to continue it longer, and even to continue it for ever? *Reyn. Angelic World*, p. 301.

3. It is urged, That the government of the world will require God to threaten eternal misery,—since nothing less than the apprehension of that will keep men from the violation of his laws, as appears in fact; and if eternal punishments are once threatened, the justice, truth, and wisdom of God will require that they be actually inflicted, correspondently to that threatening. The latter part of the argument will be considered under the next head; to the former it is replied, 1. That if the apprehension of punishment not eternal does not deter men from sin, the only reason is, because it is not sufficiently attended to, so that the fault lies upon men's in-

consideration, and not on any deficiency in the sanctions of the divine law, provided the punishment be greater than any pleasure or advantage to be derived from the sin forbidden under that penalty. 2. It is plain, in fact, the threatening of eternal punishment does not prevent sin, which seems in a great measure to overthrow the foundation of this argument; if it be said, It does a great deal more towards it than could otherwise have been done,—it is answered, 3. That eternal punishments, inflicted by perfect wisdom and complete rectitude, seem so incredible, that the threatening is on that very account disregarded; but this answer seems false in fact; since the generality of wicked Christians profess to believe the eternity of them, and build their hopes and false quiet, not on the prospect of seeing the period of them after some far distant revolution of ages, but on some general notion of the divine mercy, and some scheme which they form of escaping them, either by a death-bed repentance, or by some religious hypothesis, which substitutes something else instead of a truly pious and holy temper, in such a manner as to supersede it; and further, if it afterwards appear that God has threatened eternal punishments, such an answer as this is in effect a bold reflection upon his wisdom, as if he did not understand the constitution of human nature, and so, like some weak and angry men, had bent the bow till it broke. The most solid answer to all the preceding arguments is, That we cannot pretend to decide *a priori* in this question, so far as to say that the punishments of Hell must and will certainly be eternal; but if it afterwards appear that the Scriptures declare they shall be so, these considerations may serve to balance the difficulties urged on the other side of the question, from principles of the light of nature; and indeed, on the whole, it seems that it can only be determined by divine revelation. *Burt. Works*, vol. ii. p. 60.

LECTURE CCXXII

1. The Scripture has expressly declared, in a variety of the most significant phrases, that the torments of Hell shall be eternal. Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41, 46. Mark ix. 43—49. 2 Thess. i. 9. Jude ver. 13. Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10. To this it is replied, 1. That it is not certain that the word rendered *eternal*, *everlasting*, &c. is to be taken in its utmost extent; it often signifies no more than *a very long time*, or a time whose precise boundary is to us unknown. *Prop.* 156. *Schol.* 1. It is answered, That the same language is used, and that sometimes in the very same place, to express the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the eternal misery of the wicked; and that there is no reason to believe, especially where it stands in so close a connexion, that it should express two such different ideas; and moreover, that the texts produced on this account in the scholium referred to above, are taken from the Old Testament; for as to that, Jude ver. 7. it may refer to a *future* punishment; and the expression εις τον αιωνα του αιωνος, as used Rev. xx. 10. is so strong, that if it does not express a proper eternity, it will be difficult to produce any Scripture that does; nor can any instance be produced of its being put for a *finite* and limited duration. Compare Psal. cxxxii. 14; lxxii. 17. which is an instance that of all others comes nearest to it. Vid. *Trommii Concordt. Graec. ad verb.* αιων *et* αιωνιος. 2. It is pleaded, That, granting eternal punishments are *threatened*, it does not follow that they must be *executed*, since the faithfulness of God will allow him to dispense with his *threatenings*, though not with his promises, as particularly in the case of Nineveh. It is replied, That where God has not only forbidden any sinful action on such a penalty, but has expressly declared that he will execute that penalty, and that he will not suspend the execution of it on any condition,—though we could not say his *faithfulness* would be impeached by acting in a different manner, yet it would be hard to vindicate his *veracity*, especially since he must know, even when he published the threatening, that it could not be executed without the greatest injury offered to the moral perfections of his nature. It also seems inconsistent with his *wisdom* to have pronounced such threatenings as these, and yet to have given mankind reason to believe that he will not and cannot execute them, which this objection supposes he has given; for a threatening, which the person threatened knows another cannot fulfil, is the vainest and most contemptible thing one can imagine: and it is here particularly worth observing, that Matt. xxv. 41—46. is such a [illegible] of a future and most solemn fact, as cannot with any decency be suspected, and yet cannot on this hypothesis be accounted for. Compare *Prop.* 79. *Schol.*

Dawes on Heb. [illegible] *Watts's Worth to come.* [illegible] *Lardner's Gospel History.*

Sect. II. The chief arguments against this doctrine are these:—

Arg. I. That it is inconsistent with the *justice* of the Divine Being, to inflict eternal punishment for offences committed in so short a space of time. It is answered,

1. That God gives us our choice; and his proposing to us eternal happiness on the one hand, is an equivalent for inflicting eternal misery on the other; but this seems to be taking the question for granted, rather than proving the justice of this appointment.

2. That, considering the infinite meanness and

glory of God, none can say how long he may continue to punish a creature who has wilfully violated his laws; and that our feeble understandings are incapable of judging concerning the rights of the divine government in such a point; but it is said, that the former part of this reply may be admitted, and yet the eternity of these punishments denied; *i. e.* we may conclude they will come to a period, though none can say *when*; and that the latter part is not answering the difficulty, but acknowledging it to be unanswerable. It is replied, That it is only denying the pretended axiom, "That eternal punishments must be unjust," to be a self-evident proposition; and it should further be considered, that in order to determine the proportion between the punishment and the offence, it is of great importance that the *consequence* of crimes be taken into the estimate we make of their guilt.

Bourn's Ser. Jenk. on Chris. vol. ii. c. 14.

3. That if there be an obstinately sinful temper remaining, men may, by new guilt, be for ever exposing themselves to new punishment; but it is answered, 1. That upon this hypothesis, if granted, the eternal punishment of the damned could not properly be said to be inflicted upon them for sins *done in the body*; since the time will come when the punishments inflicted for such sins (let them be supposed to endure ten millions of years) will be less, when compared with the duration of the punishments inflicted for their after obstinacy and rebellion, than a moment is to all those years. This supposes the damned in a kind of probationary state; and it is hard to conceive how it should be possible for them to contract guilt by obstinacy and impenitency, if there were not a possibility of their repentance, and some room to obtain mercy upon that repentance, which is not allowed on this hypothesis.

4. It is further urged, in answer to this objection from the divine justice, That the perpetuity of the future misery of the damned is the necessary result of the constitution of things, in consequence of which human souls are naturally immortal, and vicious habits, after they have taken a certain degree of rooting in the mind, become incurable; so that nothing can prevent the eternal misery of an impenitent sinner but a miraculous interposition of God's divine power, either to change his character, or destroy his existence, which there is no reason to expect: and this obviates the last reply, as it supposes the moral state of agency to be ended when that of final punishment begins. To this it may be replied, 1. That this constitution is owing to a divine appointment; and that as the perpetual agency of God is required to support the soul, so likewise to form those painful impressions of mind, which arise from the exercise of conscious reflection and tormenting passions; just as there is the uniform agency of Providence in that gravitation and animal sensation by which a particle of gravel wounds and tortures the ureters, or other canals of the body, in passing through them; so that if it had been unjust for God to make a sinner for ever unhappy, he could not have chosen and appointed such a constitution. 2. That the Scripture doctrine asserts a state of corporeal punishment, which must imply something external, and cannot be solved by any observations made on the constitution of the human mind, in comparison with the irregularity of the passions, and final exclusion from all happiness; so that none can have a right to urge this plea but those who admit the hypothesis of Dr. Whitby, which is mentioned in the second scholium below. To which it might be added, 3. That as God can with infinite ease annihilate any spirit, it will remain a question why he makes all souls immortal, when the eternal misery of many must be the consequence, and does not rather universally determine to annihilate, when existence is more grievous than non-existence, and when he knew vice to be naturally incurable.

Horberry on Fut. Pun. c. iii.

Arg. II. It is said to be inconsistent with the *goodness* and *mercy* of God to make so many creatures, who he knew would be eternally miserable; and to leave them in such circumstances as those in which it is plain they are left, if all who die impenitent pass into everlasting torment. To this it is answered,

1. That, as we have endeavoured to show above, God has given them sufficient means for their everlasting happiness, so that their misery is to be charged not upon him but upon themselves.

2. That God is to be considered under the character of a Moral Governor, and therefore, in order to approve his goodness, he must consult, not so much the happiness of any particular person, as what may upon the whole be for the benefit of all that moral kingdom over which he presides, and may at the same time suit the majesty and honour of his government. Now, for any thing we certainly know, the everlasting misery of some sinful creatures may be the most effectual means of answering these ends, in harmony with each other.

3. That we are not, on the whole, to judge of the triumph of divine bounty and mercy, merely by what we see on earth, or the state in which the inhabitants of it are left, any more than we are to judge of the magnificence, bounty, and clemency, of a prince, by seeing the manner in which the inhabitants of a rebellious city are treated. For any thing we certainly know, the number of wicked and miserable may bear a smaller proportion to that of holy and happy creatures, than a grain of sand does to the whole body of the sun.

Arg. III. It is further objected, That how minute

soever our rank, number, or figure, in the creation may be, that if God intended man for happiness, as he certainly did in the original constitution of his nature, it would be inconsistent with his *wisdom* to suffer his main end to be frustrated, in the eternal misery of the greater part of the species. It is answered,

1. That we do not know that the greater part of mankind are eternally miserable: perhaps all *infants* may be saved, and such universal virtue may hereafter prevail, for succeeding, and those very long-lived and fruitful generations, as shall turn the balance of number, even among the *adult*, on the side of religion and happiness.

2. That it may be much questioned, whether it is proper to say that the ultimate end of God in the creation of man, was the final happiness of the greater part of the species. This principle must prove every individual person to be intended for it, or it proves nothing; for the human species may be no more in the works of God, than an individual to the whole human race; yet it is most apparent in fact, that *all* are not, and consequently that God did not intend the happiness of *each*, as his final end, in the creation of each, unless we will grant that end to be disappointed; so that it seems much safer to say that he intended to put all into such a state, that nothing but their own abuse of their liberty should prevent their happiness, than that all, or even the greater part, should eventually obtain it.

Limb. Theol. c. xiii. *T. Burn. de Stat. Mort.* *Dawes's Hell Torm.* *Whist. on Hell Torm.*[*]

LECTURE CCXXIII.

COROLLARY 1.

It must be acknowledged, on the review of these arguments, that there is at least so much force in those urged on the affirmative side of the question, and in the solution given to preceding objections, as to render it both imprudent and unsafe to go out of the way of Scripture on this head; or to explain those expressions in such a manner as positively to determine that future eternal punishments, in strict propriety of speech, are not to be apprehended. It is plain the chief hazard lies in representing the state of the damned less miserable than it may in fact prove to be; and we must have very low notions of Scripture, if we do not think fit to follow it in this affair.

Lucas on Happiness, vol. ii.

COROLLARY 2.

From the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, compared with all those glorious demonstrations of the divine holiness and goodness which are contained in Scripture, especially when taken in comparison with all the solemn protestations with which God charges the misery of sinners upon themselves, (see *Prop.* 139. *Schol.* 4.) we may infer a very convincing additional argument in favour of *Prop.* 16. *i. e. the natural liberty of the will*, beyond what the light of nature will afford (see *ibid. Schol.* 7.);—for that such a Being, who is said *not to tempt any one*, and even *swears that he desires not the death of a sinner*, should irresistibly determine millions to the commission of every sinful action of their lives, and then with all the pomp and pageantry of a universal judgment condemn them to eternal misery, on account of those actions, that hereby he may promote the happiness of others, who are or shall be irresistibly determined to virtue in the like manner, is of all incredible things to me the most incredible. Hence most who have held the doctrine of necessity, have denied the eternity of future misery; but in proportion to the degree of its duration and extremity, the objection will still be cogent.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It has been debated, Whether there be properly *material fire* in Hell. The chief arguments on each side are these:—In proof of the *affirmative* it is said,

1. That *fire and brimstone* are represented as the ingredients of their torment, and that the *smoke* of them is said continually to go up, Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xx. 10. It is answered, That fire in this place may only signify *the raging desire*, or any other violent agony of the mind; and that there is no more reason to interpret it of material fire, than there is to understand *an animal* ever living in that flame, by *the worm that never dies*, which, nevertheless, most expositors who believe a material fire, understand of the stings and reproaches of *conscience*. It is probable the phrases used by Christ, particularly Matt. ix. 43—49. may allude to Isa. lxvi. *ult.* which may immediately express the terrible slaughter made on the enemies of God's people in the latter day, our Lord intending by this allusion to assert, that the punishment of the wicked in Hell should be infinitely more dreadful. Compare Judith xvi. 17. Eccles. vii. 17.

Driesberg de Statu Hom. fut. p. 167.

2. That as the *body* is to be raised, and the whole man to be condemned, it is reasonable to believe

[*] A middle scheme is apprehended by some divines to be most consonant to Scripture, which is, not that the wicked shall be for ever miserable, or finally saved but that, after passing through a mental judgment, and condemnation proportioned to their crimes, they shall be punished with an utter extinction of their being. This scheme is examined by Mr Samuel Bourn, in a letter to a friend, in the first edition of his Discourses on the Principles and Evidences of Natural Religion, and the Christian Revelation, and in his Letter to the Reverend Samuel Chandler, D. D. concerning the Christian Doctrine of Future Punishment. The same scheme has recently been supported in a very elaborate manner, by Mr. Clark, in a publication entitled A Vindication of the Honour of God, in a Scriptural Refutation of the Doctrines of Eternal Misery and Universal Salvation.

there will be some *corporeal* punishment provided, and therefore probably material fire. Some have answered, That God can give a most acute sense of pain, without any external apparatus for that purpose, and that a perpetual *fever* might render an imbodied spirit as exquisitely miserable as any external fire could do.

Against the supposition of such a fire, it is urged,

1. That the body would quickly be consumed by it: but it is obvious to answer, that God might give it such a degree of fixedness and solidity, or might in the course of nature provide such recruits, as should prevent its dissolution. Compare Mark ix. 49. *Fam. Expos. in Loc.*

2. That the fire into which the damned are sent, is said *to have been prepared for the Devil and his angels*, who cannot be subject to the action of material fire: but this goes upon the supposition of their being so entirely incorporeal, as to be united to no material vehicle; which is a supposition that none can prove. *Prop.* 158. *Schol.* 2.

3. That a material fire would be inconsistent with that *darkness* which is said to attend the infernal prison. It is answered, That darkness might be metaphorical, or might refer to that *feast*, from which sinners are supposed to be excluded, (compare Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 30.) and the gloomy horror and despair which shall surround them; nor could the terrible glare of such supposed flames be properly expressed by what is so amiable to the eye as light.

On the whole, it is of very little importance whether we say there is an external fire, or only an idea of such pain as arises from burning: and should we think both doubtful, it is certain God can give the *mind* a sense of agony and distress, which, though it be not analogous to any of those perceptions which the nerves convey from external objects now surrounding us, should answer and even exceed the terror of those descriptions we have now been examining: and care should certainly be taken to explain Scripture metaphors, so as that Hell may be considered as consisting more of mental agony than bodily tortures.

Dawes on Hell, p. 13. *Swind. on Hell*, c. iv.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Dr. Whitby thinks that the bodies of the damned, after the resurrection, shall be cast into a burning lake, where they will all at length be utterly consumed, though probably by slower degrees than such bodies as ours would be, on account of some alteration to be made in their contexture when raised from the dead. The separation of the soul from the body, occasioned by this terrible execution, he supposes to be, in the strictest propriety of speech, *the second death*, and that, after it, the *soul*, being in its own nature immortal, will for ever subsist in a separate state, and must be unutterably miserable, as the natural consequences of exclusion from Heaven, and of all those guilty passions which it will carry along with it into this state. But this seems hardly consistent with those Scriptures which represent, not merely the *punishment* of the wicked, but the *fire* in which they are tormented, as *everlasting* and *unquenchable*, and insist on this unquenchableness as a most important circumstance in the punishment of the damned, which on this hypothesis it could not be; for these separate spirits would be very little concerned in the question, whether the fire in which their bodies had been consumed were afterwards put out, or still kept burning. It is urged also, that Rev. xx. 14. is directly contrary to this hypothesis. And, by the way, it may be observed, that ἀδης spoken of here, may be the same with that visionary person represented as following death, Rev. vi. 8. and their being both *cast into Hell*, might signify expressly that there should be *no more death* properly so called, and consequently no separate state ever to succeed.

His main argument is, that this hypothesis makes the future punishment of the wicked eternal, not in consequence of any particular act of divine judgment towards them, but as the result of the natural constitution of things. Nevertheless, since he allows God to have been the Author of that constitution, and to have known all the particulars arising from it, it will (as was hinted and urged above, *Sol.* § 2. *Arg.* i. *gr.* 4.) be as hard to account for a *general constitution*, whereby creatures are made perpetually miserable, as for a *particular interposition* with regard to each; or rather (on the principles laid down, *Prop.* 32.) the difference between the one and the other is verbal rather than real. *Horberry on Fut. Punish.* p. 107.

LECTURE CCXXIV.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Origen, and some modern writers, particularly Dr. Hartley (in his treatise entitled *Observations on Man*) and Chevalier Ramsay, have apprehended, that at length all the damned, not excepting the fallen angels, and *Satan* the head of the apostasy, will be so reformed by the discipline of their punishment, as to be brought to real repentance and piety; upon which they will not only be released from their prison, but admitted to partake with the blessed in everlasting happiness. Those Scriptures, in which God is said *to desire* and *will the salvation of all*, as well as the preceding arguments in the *second section*, supposed to demonstrate the absurdity of eternal punishments, compared with the arguments

both from reason and Scripture in proof of the immortality of the soul, are urged to this purpose. But these Scriptures admit of so just an interpretation another way, that there is little reason to entertain such an apprehension; and all that was urged under the *first section* of the proposition lies yet more directly against *this* hypothesis than against that of the *annihilation* of the damned, after they have endured punishment of some determinate time, the length of which might be proportionable to their respective offences. And it must be added, that the whole tenor of Scripture lies against this hypothesis, since it represents the judgment day as that in which the final states of men are to be irreversibly determined (compare Rev. xxii. 11. Matt. xxvi. 24.); and nothing can be more dangerous than to encourage sinners to hope that, though they should reject the Gospel, and run into the commission of all kinds of wickedness, how aggravated soever, yet the time will come when they shall outlive all the evils they are to endure on that account, and that they shall throughout all eternity be happy beyond all conception, in consequence of this temporary punishment. This representation seems utterly to subvert the whole Gospel scheme; and if any hypothesis stands in need of such a support, nothing can be more reasonable than to reject it, unless we are determined to throw aside Christianity itself.

World Unmasked. White's Restitution of all Things. Trav. of Cyrus, vol. ii.*

SCHOLIUM 4.

Mr. Whiston, in order (as it seems) to get clear of the argument for the eternity of Hell-torments, from those texts of Scripture which speak of them in the same language as of the eternal duration of heavenly felicity, has thought fit to intimate his doubts concerning the *latter*, as well as to declare his disbelief of the *former*, though he owns its duration shall be much *longer*.—But most of the natural arguments for the immortality of the soul plead strongly against the supposition of the annihilation of good men, after having existed many millions of ages in a state of virtue and happiness: it seems not to suit our natural notions of the divine goodness and justice, to imagine he will annihilate them, though no offence has been committed to forfeit his favour: and Mr. Whiston himself does not intimate any apprehension of their falling into sin and condemnation, and so going a perpetual round of probations. We may add, that such a supposed revolt would be utterly inconsistent with what the Scripture asserts, of the care of Christ over his people, and the security especially of their heavenly state, as well as with what it says of the complete happiness of that state, which could not consist with the apprehension of annihilation, though the time when it was to be expected were or were not particularly known. But Mr. Whiston does not stop here: he in effect intimates, that the time may come when Christ also himself shall cease to be; so that the Redeemer himself and all his redeemed, according to his hypothesis, may at length be blotted out from among the works of God:—a thought so inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ's Deity, as laid down above, and on the whole so shocking, that merely to mention it seems sufficient to expose the absurdity of the principle from which it could follow. *Whist. Eter. of Hell Torm.*

PROPOSITION CLXIV.

To give a brief view of the Scripture doctrine of the *general conflagration*, which shall attend the last judgment.

SOLUTION.

1. Scripture assures us in the general, that this Earth in its present form will not be perpetual, but shall come to an end. Psal. cii. 25, 26, *et sim.*

2. It further tells us, that this dissolution of the world shall be by a general conflagration, in which all things upon the face of the Earth shall be destroyed; by which the atmosphere shall also be sensibly affected, as in such a case it necessarily must be (2 Pet. iii. 5—7. 10, 12.); where, from the connexion of the words, the opposition between the conflagration and the Deluge, as well as the most literal and apparent import of the phrases themselves, it is plain they cannot, as Dr. Hammond strangely supposes, refer to the desolation brought on Judea when destroyed by the Romans, but must refer to the dissolution of the whole Earth. *Ray's Three Disc.* p. 303.

3. The Scripture represents this great burning as a circumstance nearly connected with the day of judgment (2 Pet. iii. 7. compared with 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Heb. x. 27. 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.); and it is probable there may be an allusion to this in several passages of the Old Testament, such as Psal. xi. 6; l. 3; xcvii. 3. Isa. xxxiv. 4, 8—10; lxvi. 15. Dan. vii. 9, 10. Mal. iv. 1. Zeph. iii. 8. Deut. xxxii. 22. to which many parallel expressions might be added, from the canonical and apocryphal books.

4. It is not expressly declared how this burning shall be kindled, nor how it shall end; which has given occasion to various conjectures about it; the chief of which will be mentioned below.

Burnet's Theory, c. xii. *Whist. Theory*, c. v.

* The doctrine of the final salvation of the wicked has been maintained by several late writers. Dr. Isaac Mr. Stennett, in his Universal Restitution a Scripture Doctrine. Mr. Winchester, in his Outcasts conducted; and his Universal Restitution. Dr. Chauncy, in his Mystery hid from Ages and Generations made manifest by the Gospel Revelation; Mr. Brown, in his Restitution of all Things; and Mr. Pettipiece, in his Thoughts on Divine Goodness reconciled with Moral Agents, particularly displayed in Future Rewards and Punishments. To these authors may be added Bishop Newton, in his Dissertation on the final State and Condition of Men. See his Works vol. iii. p. 749.

SCHOLIUM 1.

The Heathens had some notion of such a conflagration; particularly Pliny the Elder, who thought there was such a propensity in nature to it, that he wondered it had not happened long ago, and the Stoics, who seem to have thought fire the first principle of all things, or the supreme God, but they held that there would through all eternity be certain periodical conflagrations and renovations of nature, in which, by a certain fatal necessity, the same persons and same events should in an endless series be produced.

Orig. con. Cels. p. 208. *Inq. into a Fut. State*, p. 87. *Grot. de Verit.* p. 81. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* c. cvii.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Some, on the contrary, have thought a conflagration impossible, on account of the great quantity of liquids which are to be found in the Earth, sea, and atmosphere. But it is answered, 1. That the Earth may be heated to such a degree, that all these may be evaporated; of which the state of comets, in their nearest access to the sun, seems to be in fact a proof. 2. That the air is sometimes so heated, that fire is soon kindled in it, which cannot be extinguished without great difficulty. 3. That though no natural cause could be assigned, the miraculous power of Christ, or agency of his angels, may suffice: and indeed, on the whole, it seems that we could not from natural causes certainly infer that there would be a conflagration; and consequently, what some of the ancients have so confidently said of it, is to be regarded chiefly as a *tradition*. Vid. *Prop.* 21. *Schol.* 2. *More's Theol. Works*, p. 159.

LECTURE CCXXV.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Dr. Thomas Burnet supposes that many natural causes will concur, as the occasion of this burning: *e. g.* that many dry summers preceding it will render the face of the Earth combustible in an uncommon degree; that volcanoes will break out in many places, and that there will also be an eruption of that central fire which Dr. Woodward and some others suppose to have been lodged in the bowels of the Earth at the creation, (Woodw. Nat. Hist. part iii. § 1.) and he particularly conjectures, that one violent eruption preceding the general conflagration, will swallow up the city of Rome, and perhaps all that tract of land which is called *the state of the church*, in Italy, which event he thinks is intimated Rev. xix. 20. But it seems a strong objection against this supposed *gradual* approach of a conflagration, that our Lord describes the day of judgment as coming at an *unexpected* season, and supposes men in such a state of sensuality and luxury, as one could hardly imagine an Earth so desolated and ruined would be capable of affording materials for. Luke xvii. 30 (compared with 2 Pet. iii. 10.) xxii. 26—30. 1 Thess. v. 2—4.

Burnet's Theory, c. vi.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Mr. Whiston supposes that a *comet* will be the cause of the conflagration, as it was of the Deluge; which it may effect, either by drawing the Earth into the sun, in its *descent* towards it, or (which he supposes more probable) in its *ascent*, when heated by the sun, drawing off the vapours, emptying the seas, inflaming the air, and perhaps the surface of the Earth, or at least operating upon it so far as to make way for that action of the *central fire*, which he supposes would of itself be sufficient to produce a conflagration, were it not balanced by a proper degree of moisture and of cold. And indeed such alterations the access of a comet, so heated as some have been, would naturally produce, even though it should not pass close to the Earth. He supposes the comet, seen in the year 1680, may be the executioner of the divine vengeance upon the Earth, in some of its revolutions; but when that will be, he pretends not to determine. But if the possibility of calculating this period by astronomical observations be admitted, it seems inconsistent with what is said in Mark xiii. 32. and elsewhere, of the absolute uncertainty of the time when this great event will come to pass, and may perhaps afford an objection against that part of the scheme, which in other branches it appears very probable.

Whist. Theory, c. v.

SCHOLIUM 5.

What will become of this Earth, after this burning is kindled, and has done its work, it is hard to determine. Some have thought it would continue inflamed, and so become the seat of the damned; others have imagined it would rise like a phœnix out of its ashes, which hypothesis will more particularly be considered in the next proposition; and some imagine its annual motion will be so disturbed that it will become a *comet*, and continue for some time in that state, till possibly the approach of some other heavenly body may so alter its motion, and correct its eccentricity, as to reduce it again to a planetary state; and it is said, we know not but this may be the case with regard to many other planets and comets; and that perhaps, as the dissolution of one *animal body* supports the growth of another, so dissolving *systems* may with immense variety support and form others; but this is a very precarious conjecture, and would intimate a wider extent of natural and probably moral evil in the universe than one would be forward to allow: for

the conflagration of a planet can hardly be conceived to happen without the ruin of its inhabitants. Some have thought Rev. xx. 11. and xxi. 1. some argument for this hypothesis; but it must be owned to be a very precarious one, considering how different an interpretation these words may admit of.

Burnet's Theory, lib. iv. c. viii. x.

SCHOLIUM 6.

The *order* assigned for this conflagration is not expressly determined in Scripture; but it seems probable that it will be *after* Christ's appearance, rather than *before* it; since it is expressly said, that some believers should be found *alive* at Christ's coming; which plainly shows that no such calamity will then have befallen the Earth as must destroy the whole human race, which a conflagration probably would. Therefore, comparing 2 Pet. iii. 10—13. with 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. there seems reason to conclude that, on our Lord's appearing, the living saints, together with the dead now raised, will be caught up to meet him, the bodies of the former undergoing some great, yet gentle, and probably delightful, change, to make them fit for a celestial life (1 Thess. iv. 15, &c.); but as for the wicked, whether they will be judged and condemned before this fire is *kindled*, after it is *spent*, or while it *continues*, is not expressly asserted; perhaps, by the righteous judgment of God, those found alive may be left to die by these flames, of which they will be the more worthy, considering the peculiar aggravation attending their crimes, in consequence of those circumstances which will hereafter be represented. Vid. *Prop.* 166.

SCHOLIUM 7.

Bishop Burnet thinks that the action of this fire upon the bodies of the dead would have some *natural* efficacy, to render the particles of them more pure and fixed, and so to fit them for an immortal life; but it is not easy to understand this efficacy, or to reconcile this hypothesis (so far as it may relate to the righteous) with what is said in the preceding scholium, and with 1 Thess. iv. 15. where it is expressly asserted, "That the living saints shall not be changed before the dead in Christ are raised;" so that, on the whole, if there be any thing at all in this conjecture, it must only relate to the bodies of the wicked. *Burn. on the Art.* p. 66.

SCHOLIUM 8.

Mr. Fleming also supposed that the conflagration would attend Christ's first appearance to judgment; and would not only precede the general resurrection, but also the change of those who were found alive. He thought the most eminent saints would immediately be caught up and changed; that the wicked who were then alive would (as was intimated at the end of the sixth scholium) be burnt to death by the last fire; and that persons in the main good, but whose characters were attended with some remarkable imperfections, would feel in proportion to those imperfections some different degrees of pain and terror on this occasion; which he supposes to be intimated, when it is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of some good men, that *they should not be hurt by the second death*, (Rev. ii. 2.) and *that it should have no power over them*, Rev. xx. 6. He seems to think that something like this would also be the case of those true Christians who were before dead in the like imperfect state of virtue and holiness; for he fancied the resurrection would be accomplished before the conflagration was entirely over, and to this he refers that disputed passage, 1 Cor. iii. 15. Origen taught a doctrine nearly resembling this; but he extended the efficacy of this *purging fire* in some degree to the most eminent Christians, not excepting the apostles themselves; and this, by the way, was the first *purgatory* taught in the Christian church; but this order is directly contrary to 1 Thess. iv. 15. and the text referred to above will so easily admit of a different interpretation, that few will believe, in consequence of his arguments from them, that Christ should appear to torment them, and terrify great numbers of those whom he immediately intended to raise to perfect glory and felicity, and most of whom had dwelt with him in the holiness and happiness of the intermediate state.

Flem. on the Millen. vol. iii. p. 44.

LECTURE CCXXVI.

PROPOSITION CLXV.

To state the hypothesis of those who assert that, after the conflagration, there shall be *a renovation of the Earth*; and to enumerate the chief Scriptures which they urge in support of that assertion.

SOLUTION.

1. Dr. Thomas Burnet and Mr. Whiston concur in asserting that the Earth will not be entirely consumed; but that the matter of which it consists will be fixed, purified, and refined; which they say will be the natural consequence of the action of fire upon it, though it is hard to say what such a purification can do towards fitting it for its intended purpose: for it is certain, a mass of crystal or glass would very ill answer the following parts of this hypothesis.

2. They suppose, that from these materials thus refined, as from a second chaos, there will, by the power of God, arise a new creation; and that the face of the Earth, and likewise the atmosphere, will then be so restored, as to resemble what it originally was in the paradisaical state, and consequently to

render it a more desirable abode for human creatures than it at present is; and they urge for this purpose the following texts, viz. 2 Pet. iii. 13 (comp. Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22.) Matt. xix. 28, 29. (compare Mark x. 29, 30. Luke xviii. 29, 30.) Psal. cii. 25, 26. Acts iii. 21. 1 Cor. vii. 31. Rom. viii. 21.

3. They agree in supposing that, in this new state of things, there will be no sea. Rev. xxi. 1.

4. Mr. Whiston also supposes that the comet, which will occasion the conflagration, coming on the east side of the Earth, will impress a force upon it, by which its diurnal motion will be impaired to such a degree, as that the remainder of it will only suffice to carry it round its own axis once, while it dispatcheth its course in the ecliptic; the consequence of which will be, that one hemisphere will have perpetual day, and the other never see the sun at all; but the want of that, he supposes, will be supplied by some bright luminary, which shall appear fixed in the zenith of that hemisphere, and which may therefore be called, *The glory of the Lord*. He also supposes that the attraction of the comet will occasion a final separation of the Moon, which will be no longer necessary. Rev. xxi. 23—25; xxii. 5. Dr. Thomas Burnet conjectures that the renovation of the earth will, in a great measure, be occasioned by correcting the obliquity of its axis, and causing it to remain at right angles with the ecliptic; but Dr. Keil has admirably proved, in his Examination of the Theory, that this would be a mischief to the Earth, rather than a benefit; and, besides all the other inconveniences and difficulties attending this part of Mr. Whiston's hypothesis, that of continual summer and day, at least in that hemisphere towards the sun, seems to be of great weight; and if the Earth were supposed to be hereafter removed so far from the sun as to render such a degree of heat tolerable, the degree of light on that hemisphere must be proportionably diminished.

5. They both suppose that the Earth, thus beautified and improved, shall be inhabited by those who shall inherit the first resurrection, and shall here enjoy a very considerable degree of happiness, though not equal to that which is to succeed the general judgment; which judgment shall, according to them, open when those *thousand years* are expired, mentioned Rev. xx. 4, &c. 1 Thess. iv. 17. (comp. ver. 15.); which passage is thought by some to contain an insinuation that Paul expected to be alive at the appearance of Christ; which must imply an expectation of being thus raised from the dead before it; but it is answered, That the expression *We that are alive*, may only signify "Those of us that are so," speaking of all Christians as one body, 1 Cor. xv. 49—52. It is remarkable that Dr. Hartley has declared it as his opinion, that this Millennium shall consist of a thousand *prophetical* years, where each *day* is a year, i. e. of 360000 years, pleading that this is the language used in other parts of the Revelations.

Whist. Theory. Burn. Theory. Keil's Exam. of Burnet.

SCHOLIUM 1.

It seems an invincible objection against this hypothesis, which places the Millennium *after* the conflagration, that the saints inhabiting the Earth after the *first* resurrection, are represented as distressed by the invasion of some wicked enemies, who are called *Gog* and *Magog*. Rev. xx. 7—9. Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. Now, forasmuch as the whole race of mankind must be destroyed from the face of the Earth by the conflagration, if not miraculously removed from it, it is impossible to account for the existence of those wicked men on the renewed Earth,—not to mention the difficulty of saying what would become of those good men who were found alive at the conflagration, who cannot all be supposed worthy of the first resurrection; nor can we imagine they would be changed to dwell here. It is difficult, with respect to the forementioned objection, either to suppose that some of the saints shall be perverted, or that the wicked shall be raised before their time, as it seems, purely to afflict God's people. To solve this objection, Dr. Burnet, on Glanville's wild principles, is driven to the wretched expedient of supposing a race of earth-born men to spring like mushrooms out of the ground.

Gibson. Luc. Orient. p. 142. *Campbell's Necessity of Revelation*, p. 273.

SCHOLIUM 2.

Though Mr. Fleming does not entirely agree with Dr. Burnet and Mr. Whiston in all the foregoing particulars, yet he interprets Rev. xx. 6. as referring to a proper resurrection. He supposes that what happened Matt. xxvii. 52. was a pledge of this; and, by the way, he conjectures that the most celebrated saints of the Old-Testament times then arose, and ascended with Christ to Heaven (forgetting, as it seems, the strong objection against this from Acts ii. 29). Agreeably to this, he apprehends that the saints, who are to be the subjects of the *first* resurrection, will perhaps appear to some of the inhabitants of this Earth, which may be a means of reviving religion among them; yet will not have their abode here; but that during the thousand years in which the kingdom of Christ shall have its highest triumph on Earth, they shall be rejoicing with him in Heaven, in a state of happiness far superior to that which they enjoyed in the separate state, yet not equal to what is to be expected after the general judgment. To this peculiar privilege of the martyrs, and some other eminent saints, he supposes St. Paul to have referred, Phil. iii. 9—11. in that very emphatical phrase, (especially accord-

ing to the Alexandrian reading, which is well attested by several other copies,) *την εξαναστασιν την εκ των νεκρων*; and he lays it down as a general rule, that εξαναστασις, or *αναστασις εκ των νεκρων*, whenever either of them is used, signifies this *first resurrection from among the rest of the dead*; and on this foundation he gives a peculiar but very precarious turn to Luke ii. 34; xx. 35, 36. John xi. 25, 26. Acts iv. 2; xxvi. 23. Rom. i. 4.

Elem. on the First Res. p. 29.*

LECTURE CCXXVII.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Mr. Ray agrees that there will be a renovation of the Earth, and though he does not grant, as some have supposed, a resurrection of the *same* animals that once lived upon it, (as well seeing there would not be room to contain them,) yet he supposes that other like animals will be created anew, as well as like vegetables, to adorn the Earth, and to support the animals, only all in higher degrees of beauty and perfection than they have ever before had; but he pretends not to determine whether the Earth, thus beautified and adorned, as he supposes, after the general resurrection, shall be the seat of a new race of men, or only remain as the object of contemplation to some happy spirits, who may behold it, though without any rational animals to inhabit it, as a curious plan of the most exquisite mechanism; which last seems to be a very wild, as well as the former a very precarious, hypothesis,—and would make all the supposed bounty of God bestowed upon it perfectly insignificant and useless.

Ray's Disc. Nat. Disp. vol. i. p. 290.

SCHOLIUM 4.

The patrons of the *millenary* scheme, as laid down in the proposition, plead, not only that there was among the Stoic philosophers a tradition of the renovation of the Earth, (vid. *Prop.* 164. *Schol.* 1.) but also that it was generally asserted by the Christian fathers. But Dr. Whitby supposes the Millennium to refer entirely to the prosperous state of the Christian church after the conversion of the Jews, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall also flow into it, denying that such a tradition did ever universally prevail,—the chief authority of which rests on a passage of Irenæus, where he relates it as a report of Papias, a person generally esteemed of but little credit: and indeed it is certain that the account he gives of the matter does by no means agree with that of Burnet and Whiston; and contains some particulars too gross to be admitted on such slender evidence.

What. on Millen. Burnet's Theory. Burn. Archæol. p. 236. *Ray's Disc.* p. 406.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Dr. Whitby endeavours to invalidate all those Scripture proofs which Burnet, Whiston, and Ray, have urged in favour of their respective schemes, especially the two *former*; and further pleads against it,

1. That it would be a great detriment to the glorified saints to be brought down to dwell upon Earth, in the most pleasing form which it can be supposed to put on.

2. That it is inconsistent with the description which the Scripture gives of the resurrection, and the change to be made in the body that shall be raised.

3. That it is contrary to the genius of the Christian religion, to suppose it built on temporal promises.

To the *first* of these objections it may be replied, That none knows to what degree the Earth may be beautified and adorned, or to what happiness the saints may arrive, when free (as this hypothesis supposes they will be) from all moral and penal law. To the *second*, That the account of the spirituality of the saints' bodies after the resurrection, is to be understood as referring to the general resurrection only; and may be consistent with supposing that some saints shall at first be raised in a less perfect state, (as we know some few who have already been raised were,) who shall, at the consummation of all things, undergo a proper change. To the *third*, That though it is the genius of the Christian religion to govern its professors by *faith* rather than sight, nevertheless, as this *first* resurrection is the object of faith, there is no absurdity in supposing it to be promised,—especially since all agree that there will be some pleasure in Heaven suited to the corporeal part of our nature;—and Whitby himself allows that there are promises of great temporal prosperity made to the church in the latter days.

On the whole, the most considerable argument against the literal interpretation of the passages in question, arises from the nature of the book of the Revelations, which is so plainly figurative in the greatest part of it, that it seems reasonable, on principles of analogy, to suppose it to be so here, and to interpret this resurrection as a revival of the *cause*, rather than of the *persons*; and the rather, as the resurrection of the *two witnesses*, mentioned Rev. xi. 11. is generally acknowledged to be meant in this figurative sense: but the expression of *the*

* Dr. Caleb Fleming, in his Survey of the Search after Souls, has advanced an opinion, That the final judgment of every man takes place immediately after his dissolution, and that the mediatorial kingdom of Christ consists in the exercise of this judgment, until the restitution or consummation of all things. The same opinion is maintained by a writer in the Theological Repository, vol. — No. 12. Dr. Fleming's Survey was answered by Dr. Peckard.

rest of the dead, is hard to be explained, even with this key. *Whitby on Millen. Mil's examination concord.*"

SCHOLIUM 6.

Dr. Worthington has advanced a scheme very different from any of these writers in the main, though in some circumstances resembling theirs, which is, that the Gospel, being intended to restore the ruins of the Fall, will gradually meliorate the world, till by a train of natural consequences, under the influence of Divine Providence and grace, it is restored to a paradisaical state. He supposes this plan is already advanced through some important stages, of which he thinks the amendment of the Earth's natural state at the Deluge (which, with Dr. Sherlock, he maintains) to have been a very considerable one. He considers all improvements in learning and arts, as well as the propagation of the Gospel among the *heathen* nations, as the process of this scheme; but he apprehends much greater advances are to be made, about the year of Christ 2000, when the Millennium will commence; which shall be, according to him, such a glorious state as Whitby supposes, but with this additional circumstance, that, after some interruption from the last effects of wickedness by *Gog* and *Magog*, this shall terminate in the yet nobler state of *the new Heaven* and *the new Earth*, spoken of Rev. xxi. xxii. which he supposes will be absolutely Paradise restored; in which all natural and moral evil shall be banished from Earth, and death itself shall have no further place; but good men shall continue in the highest rectitude of state, and in the greatest imaginable degree of terrestrial felicity, till the coming of Christ and universal judgment close this beautiful and delightful scene, perhaps several thousands of years hence. Indeed, he seems to intimate some apprehension, that the consummation of all things will happen about the year of the world 25920, the end of *the great year*, as the Platonics called it, when the equinoxes shall have revolved. But the reasonings by which these conjectures are supported, are, on the one hand, too diffuse to be represented; and, on the other, too superficial to need to be confuted here.

Worthington on the extent of Redemption.†

* The sentiment of the Millenarians, in a liberal sense, is mentioned by Mr. Lyon, as a tract entitled, Remarkable Visions: or, Predictions relating to the Restoration of the Jews, and the Destruction of Antichrist, by Daniel Neaves, an Irish Dissenting minister, in the Presbyterian. See his Dissertations, vol. ii. p. 1. in the appendix to the Bishop's Works, vol. v. p. 541, 542. Of the same subject Dr. Priestley, in his Sermons preached at Oxford, some of the Fast appointed by Government, February 28, 1794.

† A very worthy man, but somewhat singular in his sentiments, in a publication of uncommon penetration in 1761. The book treats almost entirely on the Millennium, and one of the subjects is expressed, *De Locorum in Terris Futurâ Felicitate.*

LECTURE CCXXVIII.

PROPOSITION CLXVI.

Briefly to survey the chief prophecies of Scripture, relating to the *conversion* of the Jews, and its consequences with regard to the Gentile world.

SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATION.

1. Though the Jews have for many ages been rejected by God, and driven out from their ancient inheritance, and though, during their dispersion, they have generally expressed an obstinate and implacable aversion to Christianity, and indeed a great disregard to all true morality and religion,—it is foretold that they will at length embrace their own Messiah, whom they now reject, and thereupon be taken into the divine favour and covenant anew. Rom. xi. 11—36. Isa. xlv. 17, 23—25; liv. *per tot.*; lx. lxii. lxv. lxvi. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Hos. iii. 4, 5. Zech. xii. 9; xiii. 1; and many Scriptures quoted below.

2. On their conversion, they shall, by a train of wonderful providences, be gathered together from the countries in which they are now scattered, and conducted to their own land, where they shall become a prosperous and honourable, as well as a religious, nation. Isa. xxvii. 12, 13. Ezek. xi. 17—21; xxxvi. 24—28; xxxvii. 21—28; xxxix. 25—29. Hos. i. 10, 11. Amos ix. 14, 15. Zech. xiv. 10, 11, 21.

3. Whereas, on their settlement in their own land, some enemies shall make an assault upon them, some celebrated victory over such enemies is foretold, Isa. lxvi. 16, 24. Ezek. xxxviii. 39. Joel iii. 9—14. Zech. xiv. 1—15. Rev. xx. 8—10. to which we may perhaps add Isa. lix. 19. Micah iv. 11, 13. Zeph. iii. 8.

4. This interposition of God, in the methods of his providence and grace, for the recovery and defence of the Jews, shall make such impressions on the Gentiles, as to be a means of bringing in the fulness of them. Isa. xlix. 6. Rom. xi. 12, 15, 25, 26. See the passages quoted *pr.* 1.

Burn. App. ad Stat. Mort. Clark on the Proph. p. 243. *Powell's Concord. Lavdn. Circumst. of the Jews*, p. 65.‡

SCHOLIUM 1.

When the context of most of those places referred to is examined, it will appear that few, if any of them, can be justly applied to the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish *captivity*; especially considering how expressly their regard to David their king, *i. e.* to Christ, is mentioned, as previous to

‡ Dr. Boothroyd, in his new translation of Jeremiah, has considered the subject of the restoration of the Jews. See the introductions and notes on that and other chapters. The same excellent commentator is engaged in the second part of Dr. Priestley's Sermons, and has contributed to the Discourses on the Theology of Revelation. Discourse the second, p. 205—240.

those gracious appearances of God in their favour; and also how expressly it is promised, in some of those passages, that the Jews, after the restoration referred to in them, shall *never* be rooted out of their land *any more*.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is not improbable that Deut. xxx. 1–6. and many other places in the Pentateuch, refer chiefly to this greatest dispersion of the Jews, and their *final* restoration; though most of the phrases there used are such as suited all the eminent deliverances God wrought out for them, so that each of those deliverances might be looked upon as an accomplishment of this prediction; nevertheless, those treated of in the proposition, being the greatest events of the kind, it seems reasonable to consider this prophecy of Moses as chiefly centring in them, though comprehending the other as types or models, which preserves a unity of sense and design as much as any interpretation whatsoever can do: and indeed the passage referred to above seems a general prophecy, That, upon their return to God, they should always be delivered; with an intimation, (ver. 6.) that, through God's gracious operation, this happy turn should be the final catastrophe of their nation. Compare *Prop.* 112. *Cor.* 1.

Jackson's Credibility, p. 169. &c. *Patrick in Loc.*

SCHOLIUM 3.

How far the form of government and religion among the Jews may, upon their restoration to their own land, be changed from what it originally was, we cannot certainly say; but it is exceedingly probable that so much of their ancient law will continue in force, as can be reconciled with the genius of the Christian religion; and that God will raise up some divinely inspired prophets among them, with a full declaration of his mind and will in relation to a variety of questions, which we have not light enough to decide: and some have thought that Elias, i. e. John the Baptist, (of whom the Old Testament prophesied by that name,) will then be raised from the dead, and bear a considerable part in the glorious work of converting and settling them. Jer. iii. 15. Mal. iv. 5, 6.

Jeffries's Review. Mede on Mark i. 11.

SCHOLIUM 4.

Some have supposed that the ancient *patriarchs* will then be raised from the dead; and Lord Barrington, in particular, thinks (as Irenæus formerly did) this supposition necessary for vindicating the truth of God, in promising to them, as well as to their seed, the land of Canaan, which they never in their lifetime possessed. He thinks that this is the easiest way of clearing up our Lord's argument for a resurrection, from God's calling himself *their God* after their death, Matt. xxii. 31. and the parallel places. But it is certain our Lord's argument will be conclusive without this; and the land might be said to be given to the patriarchs, as they were secured by the divine promise, that their *seed* should possess it: and if the Hebrew particle be rendered *even*, as it often is, all shadow of an argument from this promise will be removed. Compare Isa. lvi. 5. Ezek. xx. 11. Psal. li. *ult.* Mic. ii. 13. where it is thus rendered.

Barrington's Ess. on Dis. Disp. p. 84.

SCHOLIUM 5.

Some have apprehended, that several extraordinary miracles shall be wrought to assist the Jews in their return, Mic. vii. 15. particularly, that the rivers shall be dried up which would oppose their passage, (Isa. xi. 15, 16. Zech. x. 11. compare Rev. xvi. 12.) that others shall be open in dry places through which they are to march, (Isa. xli. 17, 18; xliii. 19, 20.) and that Christ himself shall appear in person among them, to lead them on in a considerable body, (Isa. lii. 12; lviii. 8. Hos. i. 10, 11. Mic. ii. 12, 13.) But it is certain several of these texts may admit of a different interpretation, and may perhaps be only figurative expressions of their being the objects of God's peculiar care and favour. Nevertheless, should these events actually happen, there would be great reason to believe that an all-seeing God, whose work is always actually before him, referred to them in such predictions.

SCHOLIUM 6.

A late writer has given it as his opinion, that the Jews shall be restored to their own land, and live for some time in great prosperity there, under the Mosaic economy and law, the Lord being their King, *before* they become Christians: which he argues, partly from the latter part of the prophecy of Ezekiel, concerning the building of a temple, which must be intended for such a ritual as the Mosaic law appointed, in connexion with several other passages referred to above, predicting the observation of such rites, (compare Zech. xiv. 16.) and partly from the *order* of the events foretold, Zech. xii. xiii. But it is answered, 1. That this is in the nature of things improbable. 2. That Ezekiel's temple may be mystically explained: or that, even under Christianity, some Jewish rites may in that place be restored. 3. That great absurdities would follow, from supposing all the events described in Zech. xii. and xiii. to follow each other in the order there laid down; and, among the rest, Christ's death would happen, after they had looked to him whom they had pierced.

Restoration of Jews and Israelites, p. 37.

SCHOLIUM 7.

As for the *time* when those glorious scenes shall open on the Christian church, commentators and other critics have been much divided among themselves. Some passages in the Revelations seem

to fix the beginning of them at the distance of 1260 years from the rise of *Antichrist*, Rev. xii. 6, 14: xi. 2, 3. (compare Dan. xii. 7.) but the main difficulty lies in fixing the date of that *rise*. Most Protestant writers have dated it from the year 606, when Pope Boniface the Third assumed the title of *Universal Bishop*, conferred upon him by Phocas, ending A. D. 1866. But Mr. Fleming, and after him Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Lowman, fix it about the middle of the eighth century, A. D. 756, when Pepin invested Pope Stephen with the *temporal* dominion of Rome and the neighbouring territories, on the ceasing of the exarchate of Ravenna; which is the more probable, as the other *horns* mentioned in the context are plainly *temporal* kingdoms: and as this happened nearly 666 years after John saw the vision recorded in the Apocalypse, A. D. 90. that seems the most probable interpretation of the *number of the beast*. Sir Isaac (after Irenæus, l. v. c. xxx.) refers it to the numeral letters of the word Α Α Τ Ε Ι Ν Ο Σ, and the Hebrew ס מ י ט ן, which do each of them make 666, and supposes that the *mark* of the beast is the *sign of the cross*, Rev. xiii. *ult*. On this hypothesis, that period will end in the year 2016.

Mr. Maurice dates the rise of the beast from the year 606, (which he supposes was 666 years after the Romans possessed Judea, when the rise of the *fourth monarchy* there must begin,) and adding to this number the 1260 days, (or years,) with 30 more for the *languishing* state of the Antichristian glory, and 45 for the pouring out of the vial, which was to be attended with its *utter ruin*, he fixes the end of this period in the year 1941. (Compare Dan. xii. 7, 11, 12.) And, by the way, he observes, that as the Turks ruined the eastern empire, A. D. 1453, and are to continue *an hour, a day, a month, and a year*, (see Rev. ix. 15.) *i. e.* according to the Julian reckoning, 396 years, they shall fall, A. D. 1849; and that after seventeen years triumph, Antichrist shall come to his end; *i. e.* begin to fall, A. D. 1866; which coincides with the former period, and so confirms it. Compare Dan. xi.

Maurice's Serm. of Tribes appearing, p. 54.

Mr. Fleming, computing the last-mentioned time, Rev. ix. 15. by *prophetic* years, makes it 391, and refers it to another event, *viz.* to the taking of Constantinople, in the year 1453, which was just that distance of time from the uniting the four Turkish kingdoms under one head.

Flem. on the First Resur. p. 126.

We shall conclude this scholium with observing, That when *three years and a half* are supposed equal to 1260 days, it plainly goes upon the supposition that the *prophetic* year, which probably was the ancient year, (see *Whist. Theory*, l. ii. p. 144—182.) consisting of twelve months of 30 days each, *i. e.* of 360 days, is made use of;—and if it be, the *end* of the period when Antichrist is to fall should be reckoned by the same year; which will make an alteration in all the computations above, and will reduce the fall of Antichrist, on Fleming's hypothesis, to A. D. 1998, and on the common, to A. D. 1848. And if, upon the same principles, the 666 years be reckoned by *prophetical*, not Julian, years, it will amount to very little more than 656 Julian; which, if the above hypothesis be allowed, will fix the date of the Revelations to about the year 100.

Newt. on Proph. *Pyle on Rev.* p. 103. *Warb. Serm.* vol. iii. No. 2. *Holland on Rev.*[a]

LECTURE CCXXIX.

PROPOSITION CLXVII.

To give a summary view of Mr. Lowman's late celebrated and valuable scheme for interpreting the book of the Revelations.

SOLUTION.

1. He proves that the seven epistles, contained in the second and third chapters, are not prophetic, but relate to the state and circumstances of the seven churches to whom they are directed, at the time when this book was written. Compare cap. i. 19.

2. He supposes the remainder of the book to be a prophetical representation of the most remarkable events which were to befall the Christian church, from that time to the consummation of all things; rejecting those schemes, in which, by various fanciful synchronisms, the *seals*, *trumpets*, and *vials* are represented and expounded as successive representations of the same event.

3. He considers the fourth and fifth chapters as only introductory to the prophetic part of the book; and justly observes, (as Sir Isaac Newton and many other good commentators had done,) that there is in the scenery here, and all along, a beautiful reference to the *temple worship*. *Sir Is. Newton on Proph.*

4. He divides the remainder into seven periods: the first of which, represented by the *seals*, shows, according to him, the state of the church under the Heathen Roman emperors, from A. D. 95—323. and here he more particularly explains the first seal (Rev. vi. 2.) of the triumph of Christianity over Jew-

[a] For views of the discussion of many curious questions relating to Antichrist, and the accomplishment of other prophecies connected with the study of the Christian church, and especially the apostasy of Papal Rome, as made by the learned and pious Bishop Wordsworth, Three of the previous publications [and have appeared in succession of this indefatigable prelate, those of Dr. Hurd, Dr. Hartley, and Dr. Bagot, are these respectively volumes of sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn Chapel. Bishop Bagot's have given rise to a publication by Mr. Forshall, the Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, on the Importance of the Prophecies of the New Testament, and the Nature of the great Apostasy predicted in them, are particularly and impartially considered.

ish and Heathen oppression; the second (ver. 3, 4.) of the judgments of God on the Jewish persecutors, under Trajan and Adrian; the third (ver. 5, 6.) of the famine in the time of the Antonines; the fourth (ver. 7, 8.) of the pestilence and other calamities which befell the empire, in the reigns of Maximian, Valerian, and the intermediate emperors; the fifth (ver. 9—11.) of the persecution under Diocletian, A. D. 270—298; the sixth (ver. 12—17.) of the commotions of the empire from Maximian to Constantine; the seventh chapter, *i. e.* the sealing of the 144,000, he interprets of the numerous converts to Christianity, which happened between this and the second period, (vii. 1—8.) in the triumphs of which the heavenly world is beautifully represented as rejoicing (vii. 9—12.) The seventh seal is only introductory to the *trumpets*.

5. The second period, which is that of *the trumpets*, (cap. viii. ix.) according to Mr. Lowman, relates to what was to happen in the Christian church from Constantine, A. D. 337—750, when the Mahometan conquests ceased in the West. More particularly, the first trumpet, which produced *hail and fire, mingled with blood*, (cap. viii. 7.) he refers to the bloody wars which happened in Constantine's family, A. D. 337—352; the second, of the *burning mountain*, (ver. 8, 9.) to the invasion of Italy by the northern nations, and the taking of Rome by Alaric king of the Goths, A. D. 359—410; the third, of *the star of wormwood*, (ver. 10, 11.) the succeeding ravages of Italy, and founding the Gothic kingdom there, A. D. 412—493; the fourth, of *darkening the sun, moon, and stars*, (ver. 12.) to the wars in Italy between the Goths and Justinian's generals, which ended in erecting the exarchate of Ravenna, A. D. 493—558; the fifth trumpet, of the *locusts from the bottomless pit*, (ix. 1—12.) to the rise and increase of the Mahometan religion and empire, till checked by internal divisions, A. D. 568—675; the sixth, of *loosing the four angels and flaming horsemen*, (ver. 13—21.) to the Saracens invading Europe and ravaging it, till their defeat by Charles Martel;—the seventh trumpet is only introductory to the vials.

6. The third period, according to him, represents the state of the church and world in the time of the last head of the Roman government, *i. e.* under the Pope, for 1260 years, *viz.* from A. D. 756 to 2016. Vid. *Prop.* 166. *Schol.* 7. This grand discovery, being introduced by the solemnity of a peculiar message from God by an angel, (cap. x.) is first described by general representations of *the temple*, and *the witnesses* (cap. xi.); then of *the woman in the wilderness* (cap. xii.); then by a monstrous *wild beast*, signifying the new Roman and persecuting power (cap. xiii.) The xivth chapter is, according to him, an episode, containing strong representations of the happiness of those who should preserve their integrity, and the general purpose of God to bring vengeance in due time upon this wicked and persecuting power. The xvth contains the appearance of the *seven angels* with the *vials*, and a song of celestial praise on that account. Then follows the *pouring out of the vials*, (cap. xvi.) each of which he expounds of some great judgment upon the Papal kingdom. The first, (xvi. 1, 2.) on *the earth*, of the wars in the family of Charles the Great, by which it was ruined, A. D. 930—988; the second, (ver. 3.) on the *sea*, of the effusion of blood in the holy war, A. D. 1040—1190; the third, (ver. 4—7.) on *the rivers and fountains of water*, of the civil wars between the Guelphs and Ghibellins, when the Popes were driven out of Italy, A. D. 1200—1370; the fourth, (ver. 8, 9.) on *the sun*, of the long wars in Italy, Germany, France, and Spain, occasioned by schisms in the popedom, A. D. 1378—1530; the fifth, (ver. 10, 11.) on the *seat of the beast*, he explains of the Reformation, A. D. 1560—1650; the sixth, (ver. 12—16.) of *drying up Euphrates*, he supposes yet to come, and conjectures it may be some invasion of the Pope's dominions from the East; the seventh, (xvi. 17, &c.) of the final destruction of Rome. The following chapters (xvii—xix.) are assurances and descriptions of this final ruin, given by angelic messengers to John, and consist of songs of praise on the occasion; and in the last, Christ is represented as leading an army out of Heaven to effect this grand event.

7. The fourth period is that of a thousand years, or the Millennium, in which the church will be in a most prosperous state, A. D. 2000—3000 (*Prop.* 165. *Schol.* 4, 5.); so that, according to him, the seventh chiliad is to be a kind of Sabbath.

Ainsw. on Gen. i. 31. *Burn. Theory*, p. 209.

8. The fifth period is the renewed invasion of the enemies of the church, for a short time, not defined, but which is to end in their final extirpation and ruin (cap. xx. 7—10.) Compare *Prop.* 166. *gr.* 3.

9. The sixth period is the general resurrection and final judgment, (cap. xx. ver. 11—15.) which terminate.

10. In the seventh grand period, in which the saints are represented as fixed in a state of everlasting triumph and happiness in the heavenly world (cap. xxi. 1—5.)

11. The conclusion of the book confirms the truth of all, and deduces the grand moral which runs through it, *viz.* That though the church of Christ is to struggle with great difficulties, he will support it in the midst of all, and make righteousness and truth finally victorious.

Pyle's Ded. and Pref. to Rev.[*]

[*] Mr Daubuz's book on the Revelation, which was written a considerable number of years before that of Mr. Lowman, is considered as a work of great learning and merit. The discussion of several particular points relative to the Apocalypse may be seen in the Synopsis, Bishop Hurd and Bishop Halifax, referred to in the last note. Mr. Fleming's Dissertation on the Rise of Antichrist has likewise excited extraordinary attention. The whole book of Revelation has been

SCHOLIUM 1.

On the whole, it must be acknowledged that there is a beautiful resemblance between the prophetic representations, and the events supposed to be correspondent to them in many particulars; and the historical facts are represented with great learning and judgment by this excellent author; yet the correspondence is not in all respects so clear as might be expected, nor can we sometimes say why those in question are represented by one of the emblems, rather than by another. Yet, after all, he has finely illustrated many passages, by similar phrases from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, in which he is quite unequalled; and has made out so much, especially with respect to the first, and the beginning of the third, period, as evidently proves the book to be a glorious confirmation of Christianity, and well worthy our most attentive study.

SCHOLIUM 2.

It is to be observed, That the book of the Revelations does not contain a view of things and persons *really existing*, but merely a view of what passed in the imagination of St. John; in which scene there were plainly some allegorical persons, *v. g.* the animals, by a mistake called *beasts* in our translation; and it is on these principles that the representation of the New Jerusalem, under the figure of a city coming down from God, is to be explained.

SCHOLIUM 3.

Dr. Hartley (in his Observations on Man, vol. ii. p. 366) supposes that all present civil and ecclesiastical governments will be dissolved; and that, as other churches have copied after the Babylonish whore, they will in their degree partake in her plagues: and the author of the *Critical Notes on some passages of Scripture* (printed for Davis, 1747) thinks, that when Babylon shall be brought to utter destruction, that event will be a signal to the ten kingdoms that their dissolution is also approaching (*Crit. Notes*, p. 14, 15). These ten kingdoms he reckons:—1. Ireland; 2. Great Britain; 3. Germany, south of the Elbe; 4. France; 5. Spain; 6. Lombardy with Istria, Sardinia, and Corsica; 7. The Pope's patrimony, with Romania and Tuscany; 8. The Two Sicilies; 9. Pannonia, or Hungary; and, 10. Illyricum, or Turkey in Europe. Supposing these two circumstances must meet, *viz.* That the kingdoms must all have made a part of the old Roman empire, and must also have been, for a time, devoted with the rest to the spiritual power of Rome (*ibid.* p. 130, 131.); but it may seem surprising that *reformed* countries should be involved in the ruin of the church they have reformed from and protested against. Compare Rev. xviii. 4. and it is evident that the particular division above is very precarious.

Newton on Proph. part i. c. vi.

commented upon by Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations on the Prophecies. See the Dissertations, volume the third, preceding the Bishop's Works, vol. i. p. 544. See also Sir Isaac Newton's Observations upon the Apocalypse of St. John, annexed to his Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, p. 246. A Commentary on the Revelations has very recently been published by Dr. Johnston, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland.

LECTURE CCXXX.

PROPOSITION CLXVIII.

Christianity is not only attended with such external evidences as are represented in the former part of this work, but with considerable degrees of *internal* evidence. Vid. *Def.* 70. Compare *Prop.* 95.

DEMONSTRATION.

Prop. 95. *gr.* 1. 1. The most considerable doctrines of natural religion are so far from being contradicted, that they are established, by the Gospel; particularly those which relate to the being, perfections, and attributes of God, his universal providence, government, and a future state of rewards and punishments. *Prop.* 95. *gr.* 1.

Ibid. gr. 6. 2. The most important branches of those duties which we owe to God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves, are plainly described and inculcated in the precepts of the Gospel. *Ibid. gr.* 6.

Prop. 96. *Cor.* 3. The ceremonial observances instituted in the Gospel are but few; and those evidently calculated to answer the great ends of practical religion.

Prop. 95. *gr.* 2. 4. The Gospel discovers to us many particulars, of which the evidence on the principles of natural religion was dubious, and which a fallen creature might greatly and painfully doubt of; particularly the pardon of sin, however aggravated, on sincere repentance, and a state of complete and eternal glory reserved for all that are sincerely virtuous, notwithstanding the imperfection of their present attainments, while it threatens to the vicious and impenitent final and everlasting punishment.

Amory on Christ the Light of the World.

Ibid. gr. 3, 6. 5. The Gospel discovers a rich variety of truths, relating both to Christ and the Holy Spirit, which by the light of nature alone we could not possibly have found out; but which, when they are known, tend greatly to encourage the mind, and strike in a very powerful manner on those principles of gratitude which are the noblest sources of genuine and acceptable obedience.

Ibid. gr. 7. 6. As the apparent end of all is to promote virtue in general, so it is observable that

this scheme of salvation, by faith in Christ, and through the free grace of God in him, together with what relates to the influence of the Divine Spirit upon our souls, has the most admirable tendency to promote humility, representing us as ignorant and guilty, polluted and enslaved. 1 Cor. i. 30.

Chandl. Posth. Serm. vol. i.

Ibid. gr. 4, 5. 7. It further appears, from a survey of the foregoing heads, that though many things yet remain mysterious and obscure,—yet those in which the regulation of our tempers and practice is most immediately concerned, are so plain as to admit of very little dispute.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 8. *Valet propositio.*

*Baxt. Reas. of Chris. Reynolds to a Deist.**

COROLLARY 1.

Hence it evidently appears that they do much mistake the nature and design of Christianity, who represent it as merely a republication of the religion of nature. *Warburton's Divine Leg.* vol. i.

COROLLARY 2.

It further appears, that we have great reason to bless God for a revelation, attended with so many important circumstances, and so excellently adapted to answer the necessities of mankind. Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

COROLLARY 3.

We may further argue, that an attentive study of the Scriptures, and especially of the New Testament, may be an excellent mean of establishing our faith in the Scripture revelation. Acts xx. 32.

COROLLARY 4.

It appears from hence, that we shall serve the cause of virtue and piety in the world, by endeavouring all we can to establish the character and reputation of the New Testament; and that those schemes which would represent the writings of the apostles, as merely their own private opinions, or the relations concerning Christ, as liable to the common imperfections which attend well-meant reports of long-distant facts, must be very prejudicial to Christianity, and of practical religion, so nearly connected with it. *Chub's true Gosp.*

COROLLARY 5.

It is highly proper that the peculiarities of the Gospel scheme should be much insisted upon by Christian preachers; which may also further be argued from the pomp of miracles, by which this revelation was introduced into the world, and which must have appeared unworthy the Divine Wisdom and Majesty, if those things which were peculiar to it are of so little importance as many seem to suppose. Heb. ii. 3, 4. *Watts's Redeemer, &c. Jennings on Christ.*

COROLLARY 6.

It is of the highest importance to fall in with the practical design of the Gospel, and always to consider and represent it, not merely as an object of amusement and speculation, but as a system of truths intended to sanctify the heart, and to regulate the life, and thereby to train us up for the complete happiness of a future state. Matt. vii. 24—27. John xiii. 17.

COROLLARY 7.

They who have experimentally felt the power of the Gospel on their hearts, will have an additional evidence to confirm their faith, in proportion to the degree that its efficacy has prevailed. John vii. 17. 1 John v. 10.

Watts's Ser. vol. i. *Boyse's 2 Serm. on 1 John* v. 10.

COROLLARY 8

It follows from all, that to cultivate a devotional temper, and study as much as possible to enter into the spirit of the Gospel, and to conform every action and every sentiment to the tenor of it, must be one of the most important branches of a proper furniture and preparation for the ministerial work;—and God grant *this* remark may be deeply fixed on the memories and hearts of all who have studied this various course of Theological Lectures, *whatever else* be disputed or forgotten!

Watts's Hum. Attempt. Somes for recav. Relig.

Ὃς αὐτὸς, καὶ ὃ αὐτὸς, καὶ ὡς αὐτὸς τὰ πάντα.

* The subject of the internal evidence of Christianity occurs, more or less, in most of the general treatises on the divine authority of our holy religion. To this head also may be referred Dr Benson's History of the Life of Jesus Christ, and Dr Craig's Essay on the Life of Jesus Christ. Bishop Newcome's Observations on our Lord's Conduct as a Divine Instructor, and on the Excellence of his Moral Character, come under the same class. Direct publications on the subject are, Mr Soame Jenyns's View of the Internal Evidence of Christian Religion, Dr Maclaine's Series of Letters, addressed to Soame Jenyns, Esq. on Occasion of his View of the Internal Evidences of Christianity, Mr Toulmin's Dissertations on the Internal Evidences and Excellence of Christianity, and on the Character of Christ, compared with that of some other celebrated Founders of Religion and Philosophy; and Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Remarks on the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion. Two additional books, of singular merit, are Dr Duchal's Presumptive Arguments for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, and Archdeacon Paley's *Hora Paulinæ*.

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SETS OF SERMONS,

ON THE

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN,

TO THE YOUNG,

POWER AND GRACE OF CHRIST, AND EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

AND

ON REGENERATION.

SERMONS

ON THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

DEDICATION.

To the Church of Christ, in Northampton, under my ministerial care

My dear Friends,

As I reckon the providence which fixed me with you, in the pastoral relation, amongst the most singular blessings of my life, I would always retain a sense of those engagements which it brings me under, to labour to the utmost for your spiritual improvement. And though the divine goodness, I find it a delightful work; as your candid and serious temper adds a freedom and pleasure, both to my public ministrations and private converses with you.

I take this opportunity of renewing the assurances I have often given you, that I could gladly converse with you more frequently at home; did not the other work, in which I am engaged as a tutor, demand so large a share of my time. I heartily thank you, that you so kindly consider it, and make all the allowances for it I could reasonably desire.

I trust, God is my witness, that it is a sincere concern for his glory, and the interest of a Redeemer in the rising age, that has determined me to undertake the additional labour of such an employment: and as you voluntarily chose to sacrifice something of your private satisfaction to these great and important views, I hope you will have the pleasure to see them answered, and that you yourselves will not, on the whole, be losers by them. You know, it is my desire, that as my pupils advance in the course of their preparatory studies, they would endeavour by their religious visits, conversation, and prayer, to supply in part, that lack of service to you, which my care for them must necessarily occasion: and it is as a further supply of it, that I now offer you these Sermons on the Religious Education of Children, which you heard from the pulpit some months ago.

The indulgence and thankfulness with which you then received them, is one instance, amongst many others, of your relish for plain and practical preaching. When some of you expressed your desire that they might be made more public, I confess I knew not well how to deny you; and I was the more willing to comply with your request, because it is a subject which cannot be often handled, so largely, in the course of preaching.

That tender concern for you and yours, which led me to treat of Education, engaged me also to manage it in such a manner, as I apprehended might be most for your advantage and for theirs: that is, to make it, as far as I could, a warm and serious address to you. I have likewise, for the same reason, retained that form in transcribing them for the press; though I am sensible it might have appeared more fashionable and polite, to have cast them into a different mould, and to have proposed my remarks in a more cool and general way.

It is indeed my deliberate judgment, that there is an important difference between popular discourses and philosophical essays. The more I converse with the most celebrated speakers of antiquity, the more I am confirmed in that thought: and I will take the liberty to add, that, for the sake of common Christians, I could wish it were more generally considered. But whether in this respect I am in the right or the wrong, I must say with the apostle to the Corinthians, Brethren, it is for your sakes.

I would not willingly disgust persons of elevated genius and refined education; but I must confess, the great labour of my life is to bring down my discourses to common apprehensions, and to impress the consciences of men by them in subserviency to the momentous design of their eternal salvation. And as I am your shepherd, and you in a peculiar manner the people of my care, whom God has committed to my hand, and of whom he will require an account from me, I would always cherish a peculiar concern for you; and desire that, whenever I appear amongst you, my heart may overflow with a kind of paternal tenderness for you. There are, perhaps, some traces of this in these Discourses, which a severe critic may censure, and a profane wit may deride; nevertheless I have a cheerful hope, that they will be accepted by God and approved by you. If divine grace render them useful to others, I would own it as an additional favour; and that they might be so, I have diligently avoided whatever might offend any serious reader; yet they are yours by a peculiar claim. For you I composed them, for you I published them; and to you I now present them; humbly commending them and you to the blessing of God, and entreating your continued prayers that it may attend all the labours of

Your very affectionate brother, and obliged servant, in our common Lord,

Newington, July 14, 1732. P. DODDRIDGE.

THE RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE.

The subject of the following discourses is of high importance to the interest of religion, and justly claims a share in our labours, if we would fulfil the ministry we have received in the Lord, and give a good account of it another day. This led the author to insist upon it, in the congregation under his care. What was delivered from the pulpit met with a favourable reception, and many who heard these Sermons, have importunately desired they might be published, for the benefit of others. I have perused them with some attention, and such special satisfaction, that I heartily concur in the same request.

The neglect of the rising generation, which so generally prevails, ought, surely, to awaken our serious concern for it: and I persuade myself, that the present attempt will be welcome to all who are duly impressed with that concern; for so far as I am capable of judging, it is well adapted to answer its intended purposes. The method is natural and easy, the language correct, the reasoning strong, the address pathetic and convincing, and the whole is so agreeably adjusted, that I can with pleasure recommend it as a valuable and useful performance.

The peculiarities of the Christian scheme are frequently and pertinently interspersed through the several parts of this work; which will be acceptable to them, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. I look upon these as the brightest ornaments of practical discourses; and when they are introduced to this view, it must evidently appear, that the principles of our holy religion are not merely refined speculations for the entertainment of curious and inquisitive minds, but doctrines according to godliness, and the great support of virtue and goodness in the world. When arguments are drawn from the glorious dispensation of the grace of God, to persuade us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such endearing motives represent duty in its most amiable light, and have a most direct tendency to engage our cheerful compliance. It deserves our serious consideration, whether this be not a proper method to prevent the growth of infidelity; if not to reclaim those, whose arguments against the sacred Scriptures are mere banter and ridicule, and who are gone so far as to glory in their contempt of the gospel; yet, at least, to prevent the spreading of that dangerous infection.

It has been justly observed by an excellent person,* whose practical writings meet with that general acceptance which they so justly deserve, "That when men have heard the sermons of their ministers, for many years together, and find little of Christ in them, they have taken it into their heads, that they may go safe to heaven without Christianity." And this I apprehend will ever be the consequence, if we so lay the whole stress of our moral obligations on the reason and fitness of things, as to neglect that Saviour who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. When Christian preachers seldom mention redemption and salvation by the Son of God, unless it be to expose an absurd sense, which some have put upon those doctrines: and thereby more artfully slur them, than by a direct and open attack; they cannot expect their hearers should have any great regard for them. Their people will be insensibly led into this conclusion, that they have little concernment with any thing in the New Testament but the morality of it, and that the other parts of the gospel may be neglected without hazard to their souls. And when they have advanced thus far, the next step will be, to set the inspired writings on a level with heathen authors, whose moral sentiments are admired, though there are many poetical fictions and fabulous stories intermixed with them.

The apostles took a different method, and constantly supported their instructions by considerations peculiar to the gospel of Christ. And if our schemes in religion will not permit us to follow their example, and we feel a secret unwillingness to form ourselves on their model, lest our discourses should not be polite and rational, we have reason to fear we are declining from that faith which they once delivered to the saints. But if we copy after these wise master-builders, we may hope the hand of the Lord will be with us, and that we shall see something of that Divine success attending our labours, which so remarkably accompanied theirs, when many believed and turned unto the Lord. And they, who have experienced the powerful influences of the gospel, in forming their hearts and lives for God, will be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight and craftiness of men, nor easily prevailed upon to part with it. And I am confirmed in this opinion, by observing that deism makes little progress in those auditories, where the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are frequently and judiciously considered.

For this reason, I would humbly propose the following composures to the imitation of younger ministers. And I cannot but indulge a reasonable expectation, that those who are forming for the service of the sanctuary under the instructions of the learned and worthy author, having so good a pattern daily before them, will appear in our assemblies with a fixed resolution to exalt a Redeemer in all their ministrations; that they will stand as pillars in the temple of our God, and be the ornaments and supports of the Christian cause, when their fathers shall sleep in the dust.

As the subject of these Sermons is not matter of controversy, but plain and important duty, one would hope they will not fall under the severe censure of any. At least, I am fully persuaded, that humble and serious Christians, whose chief concern is to know and do their duty, will find agreeable entertainment, and much profitable instruction, in the perusal of them.

D. SOME

* [illegible]

ADVERTISEMENT.

I HOPE the reader will pardon me, that I trouble him with the mention of two things, which, for some obvious reasons, I thought it not proper to omit.

The one is, that as my very worthy and condescending friend, Dr. Watts, had promised the world an essay on education, I would not have published these papers, without his full approbation of the design, as no way injurious to his; and I have omitted some particulars I might have mentioned, that I might interfere with him as little as possible.

The other is, that when I came to look over Dr. Tillotson's sermons, and some other treatises on this subject, I found many of the thoughts I had before inserted in my plan. They seemed so obvious to every considerate person, that I did not think myself obliged to mention them as quotations. What I have expressly taken from others, I have cited as theirs in the margin; and if I have been obliged to any for other thoughts or expressions, which is very possible, though I do not particularly remember it, I hope this general acknowledgment may suffice.

SERMON I.

PROVERBS xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

IT is a most amiable and instructive part of the character which Isaiah draws of the great Shepherd of the church, that he should gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; a representation abundantly answered by the tender care which our Redeemer expressed for the weakest of his disciples, and beautifully illustrated by the endearing condescension with which he embraced and blessed little infants. Nor is it foreign to the present purpose to observe, that when he recommends to Peter the care of his flock, as the most important and acceptable evidence of his sincere affection to his person, he varies the phrase; in one place saying, Feed my sheep, and in the other, Feed my lambs. Perhaps it might be in part intended to intimate, that the care of a gospel minister, who would in the most agreeable manner approve his love to his master, should extend itself to the rising generation, as well as to those of a maturer age, and more considerable standing in the church. It is in obedience to his authority, and from a regard to his interest, that I am now entering on the work of catechising; which I shall introduce with some practical discourses on the education of children, the subject which is now before us.

I persuade myself that you, my friends, will not be displeased to hear that I intend to handle it at large, and to make it the employment of more than a single sabbath. A little reflection may convince you, that I could hardly offer any thing to your consideration of *greater importance*; and that, humanly speaking, there is nothing in which the comfort of families, the prosperity of nations, the salvation of souls, the interest of a Redeemer, and the glory of God, is more apparently and intimately concerned.

I very readily allow that no human endeavours, either of ministers or parents, can ever be effectual to bring one soul to the saving knowledge of God in Christ, without the cooperating and transforming influences of the blessed Spirit. Yet you well know, and I hope you seriously consider, that this does not in the least weaken our obligation to the most diligent use of proper means. The great God hath stated rules of operation in the world of grace as well as of nature; and though he is not limited to them, it is arrogant, and may be destructive, to expect that he should deviate from them in favour of us or ours.

We live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; and were he determined to continue your lives, or the lives of your children, he could no doubt feed or support you by miracle: yet you think yourselves obliged to a prudent care for your daily bread, and justly conclude, that were you to neglect to administer it to your infant offspring, you would be chargeable with their murder before God and man; nor could you think of pleading it as any excuse, that you referred them to a miraculous divine care, whilst you left them destitute of any human supplies. Such a plea would only add impiety to cruelty, and greatly aggravate the crime it attempted to palliate. As absurd would it be for us to flatter ourselves with a hope that our children should be taught of God, and regenerated and sanctified by the influences of

his grace, if we neglect that prudent and religious care in their education which it is my business this day to describe and recommend, and which Solomon urges in the words of my text: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

I need not offer you many critical remarks on so plain and intelligible a passage; you will easily observe, that it consists of an important advice, addressed to the parents and governors of children—Train up a child in the way he should go; and also of a weighty reason by which it is enforced—and when he is old he will not depart from it.

The general sense is undoubtedly retained in our translation, as it commonly is, but here, as in many other places, something of the original energy and beauty is lost.

The Hebrew word,* which we render, train up, does sometimes signify, in the general, to initiate into some science or discipline; and, very frequently, to apply any new thing to the use for which it was intended.† It is especially used of sacred things, which were solemnly dedicated, or set apart, to the service of God.‡ And perhaps it may here be intended to intimate, that a due care is to be taken in the education of children, from a principle of religion, as well as of prudence and humanity; and that our instructions should lead them to the knowledge of God, and be adapted to form them for his service, as well as to engage them to personal and social virtue.

It is added, that a child should be trained up in the way in which he should go; § which seems to be more exactly rendered by others, at the entrance, or from the beginning of his way, to express the early care which ought to be taken to prevent the prevalency of irregular habits, by endeavouring, from the first dawning of reason, to direct it aright, and to infuse into the tender unpractised mind the important maxims of wisdom and goodness.

To encourage us to this care, the wise man assures us, that we may reasonably expect the most happy consequence from it: that if the young traveller be thus directed to set out well in the journey of life, there is a fair prospect that he will go on to its most distant stages, with increasing honour and happiness. Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

I shall endeavour to illustrate and enforce this important advice in the following method, which appears to me the most natural, and for that reason the most eligible.

I. I shall more particularly mark out the way in which children are to be trained up.

II. Offer some plain and serious considerations, to awaken you to this pious and necessary care.

III. Direct to the manner in which the attempt is to be made, and the precautions which are to be used in order to render it effectual. And then,

IV. I will conclude the whole with a more particular application, suited to your different characters, relations, and circumstances of life.

I am very sensible, that it is a very delicate as well as important subject, which is now before me; I have therefore thought myself obliged more attentively to weigh what has occurred to my own meditations, more diligently to consult the sentiments of others, and above all, more earnestly to seek those Divine influences, without which, I know, I am unequal to the easiest task; but in dependence on which, I cheerfully attempt one of the most difficult. The result of the whole I humbly offer to your candid examination; not pretending at any time to dictate in an authoritative manner, and least of all on such an occasion as this; but rather speaking as to wise men, who are themselves to judge what I say. May the divine assistance and blessing attend us in all.

First, I am to describe the way in which children are to be trained up.

Our translation, as I have told you, though not very literal, is agreeable to the sense of the original, The way in which the child should go. And undoubtedly this is no other than the good old way, the way of serious, practical religion: the way which God has in his word marked out for us; the way which all the children of God have trodden in every succeeding age; the way, the only way, in which we and ours can find rest to our souls.

But it is not proper to leave the matter thus generally explained. I would therefore more particularly observe,—that it is the way of piety towards God,—and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ:—the way of obedience to parents,—and of benevolence to all;—the way of diligence,—and of integrity;—the way of humility,—and of self-denial. I am persuaded, that each of these particulars will deserve your serious attention and regard.

1. Children should undoubtedly be trained up in the way of piety and devotion towards God.

This, as you well know, is the sum and the foundation of every thing truly good. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The Psalmist

* חנך imbuere, primis rudimentis dare, eandem docere. Pagn. initiare. Cocc. The LXX render it with an exactness which our language will not admit, by διδασκειν. It is used of the early attendance of Abraham who is the first who is said to have used arms in any war, as this instructed, so skilful, from Gen. xiv. 14. a circumstance formed to military discipline, though religious instruction is not to be excluded. Gen. xxiv. 2. מנחה a word derived from the same root in the old sacrificial worship, a meat-offering, and therefore the margin of our text reads, meat-offering, &c.

† Thus it is applied to any new house. Deut. xx. 5. to that of David. Psal. xxx. 1. and to the work of Jerusalem. Neh. xii. 27.

‡ Thus it is applied to the dedicated vessels. Num. vii. 10. 11. 84. 88. 2 Chron. vii. 9. and to that of the temple. 1 Kings viii. 63. 2 Chron. vii. 5.

§ על פי דרכו which the French versions render, à proportion de son train, yet I am sensible, when read with the accompanying verse, as Gen. xlvi. 7. Numb. xxxv. 20. one of the ancient Versions, and some translators, think, that the text implies no more than לפי חנכו, &c. pag. 482.

therefore invites children to him, with the promise of instructing them in it; Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. And it is certain, some right notions of the Supreme Being must be implanted in the minds of children, before there can be a reasonable foundation for teaching them those doctrines which peculiarly relate to Christ under the character of the Mediator; for he that comes unto God (by him) must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The proof of the being of God, and some of those attributes of the divine nature in which we are most concerned, depends on such easy principles, that I cannot but think, the weakest mind might enter into it. A child will easily apprehend, that as every house is builded by some man, and there can be no work without an author, so he that built all things is God. And from this obvious idea of God, as the Maker of all, we may naturally represent him as very great and very good, that they may be taught at once to reverence and love him.

It is of great importance, that children early imbibe an awe of God, and a humble veneration for his perfections and glories. He ought therefore to be represented to them as the great Lord of all; and when we take occasion to mention to them other invisible agents, whether angels or devils, we should, as Dr. Watts has most judiciously observed,* always represent them as entirely under the government and control of God; that no sentiments of admiration of good spirits, or terror of the bad, may distract their tender minds, or infringe on those regards which are the incommunicable prerogative of the Great Supreme.

There should be a peculiar caution, that when we teach these infant tongues to pronounce that great and terrible name, The Lord our God, they may not learn to take it in vain; but may use it with a becoming solemnity, as remembering that we and they are but dust and ashes before him. When I hear the little creatures speaking of "the great God, the blessed God, the glorious God," as I sometimes do, it gives me a sensible pleasure, and I consider it as a probable proof of great wisdom and piety, in those who have the charge of their education.

Yet great care should be taken not to confine our discourses to these awful views, lest the dread of God should so fall upon them, as that his excellences should make them afraid to approach him. We should describe him, as not only the greatest but the best of beings. We should teach them to know him by the most encouraging name of The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. We should represent him as the universal, kind, indulgent parent, who loves his creatures, and by all proper methods provides for their happiness. And we should particularly represent his goodness to them; with what more than paternal tenderness he watched round their cradles; with what compassion he heard their feeble cries, before their infant thoughts could form themselves into prayer: we should tell them, that they live every moment on God; and that all our affection for them, is no more than he puts into our hearts; and all our power to help them, no more than he lodges in our hands.

We should also solemnly remind them, that in a very little while their spirits are to return to this God; that as he is now always with them, and knows every thing they do, or speak, or think, so he will bring every work into judgment, and make them for ever happy or miserable, as they on the whole are found obedient or rebellious. And here the most lively and pathetic descriptions, which the Scriptures give us, of heaven and of hell, should be laid before them, and urged on their consideration.

When such a foundation is laid, in the belief of the being and providence of God, and of a future state both of rewards and punishments, children should be instructed in the duty they owe to God, and should be particularly taught to pray to him and to praise him. It would be best of all, if from a deep sense of his perfections, and their own necessities, they could be engaged to breathe out their souls before him in words of their own, were they ever so weak and broken. Yet you will readily allow, that till this can be expected, it may be very proper to teach them some forms of prayer and thanksgiving, consisting of such plain scriptures, or other familiar expressions, as may best suit their circumstances and understandings. If the Lord's Prayer be taught them, as a form, I hope you will consider, how comprehensive the expressions are; how fast the ideas rise and vary; and consequently how necessary it is, that it be frequently and largely explained to them; lest the repetition of it degenerate into a mere ceremony, as I fear it does amongst many, who are perhaps most zealous for its use.

But what I have said, on this head, of piety and devotion, must be considered in an inseparable connexion with what I am to add under the next.

2. Children must be trained up in the way of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, my friends, and I hope many of you know it to the daily joy of your souls, that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and that it is by him we have boldness and access with confidence to a God, who might otherwise appear as a consuming fire. It is therefore of great importance to

* Discourse on Catechism.

lead children betimes into the knowledge of Christ, which is, no doubt, a considerable part of that nurture and admonition of the Lord, which the apostle recommends, and was perhaps what he principally intended by those words.

We should therefore teach them betimes, that the first parents of the human race most ungratefully rebelled against God, and subjected themselves and all their offspring to his wrath and curse. The awful consequences of this should be opened at large, and we should labour to convince them, that they have made themselves liable to the divine displeasure (that dreadful thing!) by their own personal guilt; and thus by the knowledge of the law should we make way for the gospel, the joyful news of deliverance by Christ.

In unfolding this, great care ought to be taken that we do not fill their minds with an aversion to one sacred person, while we endeavour to attract their regards to another. The Father is not to be represented as severe, and almost inexorable; hardly prevailed upon by the intercession of his compassionate Son to entertain thoughts of mercy and forgiveness. Far from that, we should speak of him as the overflowing fountain of goodness, whose eye pitied us in our helpless distress, whose almighty arm was stretched out for our rescue, whose eternal counsels of wisdom and love formed that important scheme to which we owe all our hopes. I have often had occasion to show you at large, that this is the Scripture doctrine; our children should be early taught it, and taught what that scheme was, so far as their understandings can receive it, and ours can explain it. We should often repeat it to them, that God is so holy, and yet so gracious, that rather than he would on the one hand destroy man, or on the other, leave sin unpunished, he made his own Son a sacrifice for it, appointing him to be humbled, that we might be exalted, to die, that we might live.

We should also represent to them, (with holy wonder and joy,) how readily the Lord Jesus Christ consented to procure our deliverance in so expensive a way. How cheerfully he said, Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God! To enhance the value of this amazing love, we should endeavour, according to our weak capacities, to teach them who this compassionate Redeemer is; to represent something of his glories as the eternal Son of God, and the great Lord of angels and men. We should instruct them in his amazing condescension in laying aside these glories, that he might become a little weak helpless child, and afterwards an afflicted sorrowful man. We should lead them into the knowledge of those circumstances of the history of Jesus, which may have the greatest tendency to strike their minds, and to impress them with an early sense of gratitude and love to him. We should tell them, how poor he made himself, that he might enrich us; how diligently he went about doing good; how willingly he preached the gospel to the lowest of the people. And we should especially tell them how kind he was to little children, and how he chid his disciples when they would have hindered them from being brought to him: it is expressly said, Jesus was much displeased, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. A tender circumstance! which perhaps was recorded (in part at least) for this very reason, that children in succeeding ages might be impressed and affected with it.

Through these scenes of his life we should lead them on to his death: we should show how easily he could have delivered himself, (of which he gave so sensible an evidence in striking down by one word those who came to apprehend him,) and yet how patiently he submitted to the most cruel injuries, to be scourged and spit upon, to be crowned with thorns, and to bear his cross. We should show them how this innocent, holy, and divine person was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and while they were piercing him with nails, instead of loading them with curses he prayed for them, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And when their little hearts are awed and melted with so strange a story, we should tell them, it was thus he groaned, and bled, and died for us, and often remind them of their own concern in what was then transacted.

We should lead on their thoughts to the glorious views of Christ's resurrection and ascension; and tell them with what adorable goodness he still remembers his people in the midst of his exaltation; pleading the cause of sinful creatures, and employing his interest in the court of heaven, to procure life and glory for all that believe in him and love him.

We should then go on to instruct them in those particulars of obedience, by which the sincerity of our faith and our love is to be approved; at the same time reminding them of their own weakness, and telling them how God helps us, by sending his Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts, to furnish us for every good word and work. An important lesson, without attending to which, our instruction will be vain, and their hearing will likewise be vain!

3. Children should be trained up in the way of obedience to their parents.

This is a command which God recommended from Mount Sinai, by annexing to it a peculiar promise of long life; a blessing which young persons greatly desire. The apostle therefore observes, that it is the first commandment with promise; *i. e.* a command eminently remarkable for the manner in which the promise is adjoined. And it is certainly a wise constitution of Providence, that gives so much to parental authority, especially while chil-

dren are in their younger years, their minds being then incapable of judging and acting for themselves in matters of importance. Children should therefore be early taught and convinced by Scripture, that God has committed them into the hands of their parents; and consequently, that reverence and obedience to their parents, is a part of the duty they owe to God, and disobedience to them, is rebellion against him. And parents should by no means indulge their children in a direct and resolute opposition to their will in matters of greater or smaller moment; remembering, that a child left to himself brings his parents to shame, and himself to ruin; and with regard to subjection, as well as affection, it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.

4. Children should be trained up in the way of benevolence and kindness to all.

The great apostle tells us, that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that all those branches of it, which relate to our neighbour, are comprehended in that one word, love. This love, therefore, we should endeavour to teach them; and we shall find, that in many instances it will be a law to itself, and guide them right in many particular actions, the obligations to which may depend on principles of equity, which lie far beyond the reach of their feeble understandings. There is hardly an instruction relating to our duty more happily adapted to the capacity of children, than that golden law, (so important to all of the maturest age,) Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye so unto them. This rule we should teach them, and by this should examine their actions. From their cradles we should often inculcate it upon them, that a great deal of religion consists in doing good; that the wisdom from above is full of mercy and good fruits; and that every Christian should do good unto all as he has opportunity.

That such instructions may be welcome to them, we should endeavour, by all prudent methods, to soften their hearts to sentiments of humanity and tenderness, and guard against every thing that would have a contrary tendency. We should remove from them, as much as possible, all kinds of cruel and bloody spectacles, and should carefully discourage any thing barbarous in their treatment of brute creatures; by no means allowing them to sport themselves in the death or pain of domestic animals, but rather teaching them to treat the poor creatures kindly, and take care of them; the contrary to which is a most detestable sign of a savage and malignant disposition. The merciful man regardeth the life of his beast.

We should likewise take care to teach them the odiousness and folly of a selfish temper, and encourage them in a willingness to impart to others, what is agreeable and entertaining to themselves: Especially we should endeavour to form them to sentiments of compassion for the poor. We should show them where God has said, Blessed is the man that considereth the poor, the Lord will remember him in the day of trouble. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again. And we should show them, by our own practice, that we verily believe these promises to be true, and important. It might not be improper sometimes to make our children the messengers, by which we send some small supply to the indigent and distressed; and if they discover a disposition to give something out of the little stock we allow them to call their own, we should joyfully encourage it, and should take care that they never lose by their charity, but that in a prudent manner we abundantly repay it. It is hardly to be imagined, that children thus brought up, should, in the advance of life, prove injurious and oppressive; they will rather be the ornaments of religion, and blessings to the world, and probably will be in the number of the last whom Providence will suffer to want.

5. Children should be trained up in the way of diligence.

This should undoubtedly be our care, if we have any regard to the welfare, either of their bodies or their souls. In whatever station of life they may at length be fixed, it is certain there is little prospect of their acquitting themselves with usefulness, honour, and advantage, without a close and resolute application; whereas the wisest of princes and of men has said, Seest thou a man diligent in his business; he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men. And it is evident, that a diligent prosecution of business keeps one out of the way of a thousand temptations which idleness seem to invite, leading a man into numberless instances of vice and folly, because he has nothing else to do.*

A prudent and religious parent will therefore be concerned that his children may not early contract so pernicious a habit, nor enter upon life like persons that have no business in it, but to crowd the stage, and stand in the way of those who are better employed. Instead of suffering them to saunter about from place to place, (as abundance of young people do, to no imaginable purpose of usefulness, or even of entertainment,) he will quickly assign them some employment for their time: an employment so moderated, and so diversified, as not to overwhelm and fatigue their tender spirits;† yet sufficient to keep them wakeful and active. Nor is this so difficult as some may imagine; for children are a busy kind of creatures, naturally fond of

* Thus it is said of Egisthus.
——— Ne mi agricolæ, amavit. —*Ovid.*

† Nec sum adeo Etatium imperitus, ut studendum teneris puerisque acribe putem, exigendamque plenam Operum ——— Lusus inesse sc. —*Quintil. Orat.* lib. i. cap. 1.

learning new things, and trying and showing what they can do. So that, I am persuaded, were perfect inactivity to be imposed upon them as a penance, but for one hour, they would be heartily weary of it, and would be glad to seek their refuge from it, in almost any business you would think fit to employ them about.

Thus should they be disciplined in their infant years, should early be taught the value of time, and early accustomed to improve it, till they grow fit for some calling in life; in which they should at length be placed with this important maxim deeply engraven upon their minds, "That full employ, in whatever service they are fixed, is a thing by no means to be dreaded, but, on the contrary, greatly to be desired."

I shall conclude this head with the mention of a very remarkable law amongst the Athenians, which ordained, "That those who had been brought up to no employ by their parents, should not be obliged to keep them, if they came to want in their old age; which all other (legitimate) children were."*

6. Children should be trained up in the way of integrity.

Simplicity and godly sincerity is not only a very amiable, but an essential, part of the Christian character; and we are every one of us indispensably obliged to approve ourselves Israelites indeed, in whom there is no allowed guile. And this is a circumstance that will peculiarly require our regard, in the education of our children, and of all young persons under our care.

It is very melancholy to observe, how soon the artifices and deceits of corrupt nature begin to discover themselves. In this respect we are transgressors from the womb, and go astray almost as soon as we are born, speaking lies. Great care therefore should be taken to form the minds of children to a love for truth and candour, and a sense of the meanness as well as the guilt of a lie. We should be cautious, that we do not expose them to any temptations of this kind, either by unreasonable severities, on account of little faults, or by hasty surprises, when inquiring into any matter of fact, which it may seem their interest to disguise by a falsehood: and when we find them guilty of a known and deliberate lie, we should express our horror of it, not only by a present reproof or correction, but by such a conduct towards them for some time afterwards, as may plainly show them how greatly we are amazed, grieved, and displeased. When so solemn a business is made of the first faults of this kind, it may be a means of preventing many more.

I will further add, that we ought not only thus severely to animadvert upon a direct lie, but likewise, in a proper degree, to discourage all kinds of equivocations and double meanings, and those little tricks and artifices, by which they may endeavour to impose on each other, or on those that are older than themselves. We should often inculcate upon them that excellent scripture, He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his way, (that twists and distorts it with the perplexities of artifices and deceit,) shall at length be known.† Be showing them every day how easy, how pleasant, how honourable, and how advantageous, it is to maintain a fair, open, and honest temper; and on the other hand, what folly there is in cunning and dishonesty in all its forms; and how certain it is, that by studying and practising it, they take the readiest way to make themselves noxious and useless, infamous and odious. Above all, should we remind them, that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his favourable countenance beholds the upright; but lying lips are such an abomination to him, that he expressly declares, All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

7. Children should be trained up in the way of humility.

This is a grace, which our Lord particularly invites us to learn of him, and most frequently recommends to us; well knowing, that without it, so humbling a scheme as he came to introduce, would never meet with a welcome reception. And with regard to the present life, it is a most lovely ornament, which engages universal esteem and affection; so that before honour is humility. On the whole we find, he that exalteth himself is abased, and he that humbleth himself is exalted, both by God and man.

A regard therefore to the case, honour, and happiness of our children, should engage us to an early endeavour of checking that pride, which was the first sin, and the ruin of our natures; and diffuses itself so wide, and sinks so deep into all that draw their original from degenerate Adam. We should teach them to express humility and modesty in their converse with all.

They should be taught to treat their superiors with peculiar respect, and should at proper seasons be accustomed to silence and reserve before them. Hence they will learn in some degree the government of the tongue; a branch of wisdom, which, in the advance of life, will be of great importance to the quiet of others, and to their own comfort and reputation.

Nor should they be allowed to assume airs of insolence towards their equals, but rather be taught to yield, to oblige, and to give up their right for the sake of peace. To this purpose I cannot but think it desirable, that they should be generally accustomed to treat each other with those forms of

* Potter's Greek Antiq. vol. i. p. 142.

† Prov. x. 9. כְּתָם ... כְּתָם [illegible] Pagn.

civility and complaisance, which are usual among well-bred people in their rank of life. I know these things are mere trifles in themselves, yet they are the out-guards of humanity and friendship, and effectually prevent many a rude attack, which, taking its rise from some little circumstance, may nevertheless be attended with fatal consequences. I thought it proper to mention this here, because (as Scougal very justly and elegantly expresses it)* "These modes are the shadows of humility, and seem intended to show our regard for others, and the low thoughts we have of ourselves."

I shall only add further, that it is great imprudence and unkindness to children, to indulge them in a haughty and imperious behaviour towards those who are most their inferiors. They should be made to understand that the servants of the family are not their servants, nor to be under their government and control. I the rather insist upon this, because I have generally observed, that where young people have been permitted to tyrannize over persons in the lowest circumstances of life, the humour has shamefully grown upon them, till it has diffused insolence and arrogance through their behaviour to all about them.

Lastly, Children should be trained up in the way of self-denial.

As without something of this temper we can never follow Christ, or expect to be owned by him as his disciples; so neither indeed can we pass comfortably through the world. For, whatever unexperienced youth may dream, a great many distasteful and mortifying circumstances will occur in life, which will unhinge our minds almost every hour, if we cannot manage, and in many instances deny, our appetites, our passions, and our humours. We should therefore endeavour to teach our children this important lesson betimes; and if we succeed in our care, we shall leave them abundantly richer and happier, in this rule and possession of their own spirits, than the most plentiful estates, or the most unlimited power over others, could make them.

When a rational creature becomes the slave of appetite, he sinks beneath the dignity of the human nature, as well as the sanctity of the Christian profession. It is therefore observable, that when the apostle mentions the three grand branches of practical religion, he puts sobriety in the front; perhaps to intimate, that where that is neglected, the other cannot be suitably regarded. "The grace of God (i. e. the gospel) teaches us, to live soberly, righteously, and godly." Children therefore, as well as young men, should be exhorted to be sober-minded; and they should be taught it, by early self-denial. It is certain, that if their own appetite and taste were to determine the kind and quantity of their food, many of them would quickly destroy their constitution, and perhaps their lives; since they have often the greatest desire for those things which are the most improper. And it seems justly observed by a very wise man, (who was himself a melancholy instance of it,) "That the fondness of mothers for their children, in letting them eat and drink what they will, lays a foundation for most of those calamities in human life, which proceed from bodily indisposition."† Nay, I will add, that it is the part of wisdom and love, not only to deny what would be unwholesome, but to guard against indulging them in too great a nicety, either of food or dress. People of sense cannot but see, if they would please to consider it, that to know how to fare plainly, and sometimes a little hardly, carries a man with ease and pleasure through many circumstances of life, which to luxury and delicacy would be almost intolerable.

The government of the passions is another branch of self-denial to which children should early be habituated; and so much the rather, because, in an age when reason is so weak, the passions are apt to appear with peculiar force and violence. A prudent care should therefore be taken to repress the exorbitances of them. For which purpose it is of great importance, that they never be suffered to carry any point by obstinacy, noise, and clamour, which is indeed to bestow a reward on a fault that deserves a severe reprimand. Nay, I will venture to add, that though it be very inhuman to take pleasure in making them uneasy by needless mortifications, yet when they are eagerly and intemperately desirous of a trifle, they ought, for that very reason, sometimes to be denied it, to teach them more moderation for the future. And if by such methods they gradually learn to conquer their little humours and fancies, they learn no inconsiderable branch of true fortitude and wisdom. I cannot express this better, than in the words of Mr. Locke,‡ in his excellent treatise on the subject before us: "He that has found out the way to keep a child's spirit easy, active, and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many things which he has a mind to, and draw him to things uneasy to him, has got the true secret of education."

I have sometimes been surprised to see, how far a sense of honour and praise has carried some children of a generous temper, in a long and resolute course of self-denial. But undoubtedly the noblest principle of all is a sense of religion. Happy would it indeed be, if they were led to see, that there is but very little in this kind of gratifications and indulgences; that the world itself is but a poor empty trifle; and that the great thing a rational creature should be concerned about, is to please

* Scougal's Life of God, pag. 45.

† Baxter's Practical Works, vol. i. pag. 746.

‡ Locke on Education, § 46.

God, and get well to heaven. May divine grace teach us this important lesson for ourselves, that we may transmit it with the greater advantage to our children! Amen.

SERMON II.

Proverbs xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

It is certainly a very pleasing reflection to every faithful minister of the gospel, that the cause in which he is engaged, is the most benevolent, as well as the most religious; subserving the glory of God by promoting the happiness of mankind. It must be a great satisfaction to a man of integrity and humanity, to think that it is not his business to dazzle and confound his hearers with the artifices of speech, to give the appearances of truth to falsehood, and importance to trifles; but to teach them to weigh things in an impartial balance, and by the words of truth and soberness, to lead them into the paths of wisdom and of goodness.

This is a satisfaction which I peculiarly find this day, while I am urging you to that religious care in the education of children, which I have at large opened in the former discourse. And it is a circumstance of additional pleasure, that I am pleading the cause of the weak and the helpless; of little tender creatures, who are incapable of pleading for themselves, and know not how much their interest is concerned. Nor am I without a secret hope, that if the Divine Spirit favour us with his assistance, some who are yet unborn may have eternal reason to rejoice in the fruits of what you are now to hear. Amen.

Having already endeavoured to describe the way in which children are to be trained up; I now proceed,

Secondly, to propose some arguments to engage parents to this pious care.

And here I would entreat you distinctly to consider, that the attempt itself is pleasant;—you have great reason to hope it may be successful,—and that success is of the highest importance.

I. The attempt itself is pleasant.

I speak not merely of the pleasure arising from the consciousness of discharging present duty, and a probable view of future success; such a satisfaction may attend those actions, which are in themselves most painful and mortifying. But I refer to the entertainment immediately flowing from the employment itself, when rightly managed. This is undoubtedly one of those ways of wisdom, which are ways of pleasantness, as well as a path, which in its consequences is peace and happiness: it is a commandment, in keeping of which there is great reward.

The God of nature has wisely annexed a secret unutterable delight, to all our regular cares for the improvement of our rising offspring. We rejoice to see our tender plants flourish, to observe how the stock strengthens, and the blossoms and the leaves successively unfold. We trace with a gradually advancing pleasure, their easy smiles, the first efforts of speech on their stammering tongues, and the dawnings of reason in their feeble minds. It is a delightful office to cultivate and assist opening nature,* to lead the young strangers into a new world, and to infuse the principles of any useful kind of knowledge which their age may admit, and their circumstances require. But when we attempt to raise their thoughts to the great Father of spirits, to present them, as in the arms of faith, to Jesus the compassionate Shepherd, and teach them to inquire after him; when we endeavour to instruct them in the principles of divine truth, and form them to sentiments of prudence, integrity, and generosity; we find a pleasure superior to what any other labour for their improvement can give.

On this occasion, my friends, I persuade myself I may appeal to the repeated experience of many amongst you. Do you not find that the sweetest truths of Christianity, which are your hope and your joy in this house of your pilgrimage, are peculiarly sweet when you talk them over with your children? Do you not find that your instructions and admonitions to them return into your own bosom with a rich increase of edification and refreshment? Thus, while you are watering these domestic plantations, you are watering also yourselves; and from these holy converses with your children, you rise to more endearing communion with your heavenly Father: God by his Spirit visiting your souls in the midst of those pious cares, and giving you immediate comfort and strength, as a token of his gracious acceptance, and perhaps as a pledge of future success. This leads me to urge the *religious* education of children,

II. By the probability there is, that it will be attended with such success as to be the means of making them wise and good.

This is the argument urged by Solomon in the text, Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Being early initiated into the right way, he will pursue it with increasing pleasure; so that

* Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
——————— and plant
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
Thoms. Spring.

with regard to the prosperity of the soul, as well as of the body, his path will be like the morning light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

It is true, this assertion is to be understood with some limitation, as expressing the probability, rather than the certainty, of the success; otherwise experience would contradict it in some melancholy instances. Would to God there were none untractable under the most pious and prudent methods of education; none, who like deaf adders stop their ears against the voice of the most skilful charmers, and have been accustomed to do so from their infancy! Would to God there were none of those who appeared to set out well, and seemed eager in inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, who have forgotten the guides of their youth, and the covenant of their God, and are to this day wandering in the paths of the destroyer, if they are not already fallen in them! But do you throw by every medicine which some have used without being recovered by it; or decline every profession of which there are some who do not thrive? What remedy must you then take? what calling must you then pursue? The application is obvious. It would be folly to pretend to maintain that religious education will certainly obtain its end; but let me entreat you to consider,—that it is in its own nature a very rational method,—that it is the method which God has appointed,—and a method which in many instances has been found successful. Attend seriously to these remarks, and then judge whether prudence and conscience will not oblige you to pursue it.

1. The religious education of children is a very rational method of engaging them to walk in the way in which they should go.

There is this most evident advantage attending our early attempts of this kind, that we shall find the mind more open and disengaged, not tainted with all those corrupt principles, nor enslaved to those irregular habits, which they would probably imbibe and contract in the advance of age. Though the paper on which we would write the knowledge of God be not entirely fair, it is clear of many a foul inscription and deep blot, with which it would soon be covered. Though the garden, in which we would plant the fruits of holiness, be not free from weeds, yet many of them are but (as it were) in the invisible seed, and the rest are not grown up to that luxuriant size, which we must expect, if due cultivation be omitted or delayed.

It is a further advantage which deserves to be mentioned here, that infancy and childhood is the most impressible age; and as principles are then most easily admitted, so they are most firmly retained. The ancients, those judicious observers of human nature, as well as many modern writers, are full of this remark in their discourses on education, and illustrate it by a great many beautiful allusions, which are well known.

The new vessel takes a lasting tincture from the liquor which is first poured in.* The soft clay is easily fashioned into what form you please.† The young plant may be bent with a gentle hand; and the characters, engraved on the tender bark, grow deeper and larger with the advancing tree.‡ It will be our wisdom then to seize these golden opportunities; and so much the rather, as it is certain they will either be improved or perverted; and that, if they are not pressed into the service of religion, they will be employed as dangerous artillery against it.‖

But you will say, "With all these advantageous circumstances we cannot infuse grace into the hearts of our children; and after all our precautions, corrupt nature will prevent us, and fix a wrong bias on the mind, before we can attempt to direct it aright." A mournful, but too evident, truth! which, far from denying or suppressing, I would often declare and inculcate; and the rather now, as it greatly confirms my argument. Are the influences of a degenerate nature unavoidably so strong, and will you suffer them to be confirmed by these additional advantages? Do you apprehend, that running with the footmen, you shall be in danger of fainting? and do you for that very reason choose to contend with the horsemen? You cannot sure, in the face of so much reason and scripture, urge this as an excuse against making any attempts at all of this kind; and how then is it an apology for the neglect of those, which are (other things being equal) the most rational and easy? But the trifling plea is more evidently silenced, by observing,

2. The religious education of children is a method which God has appointed; and this greatly increases the probability of its success.

I assuredly know, (and may God more deeply engrave it on our hearts!) that with regard to your labours, as well as ours, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. But consider, I beseech you, how that increase is to be hoped for: is it in the omission, or in the use, of prescribed means? I urge it on your consciences, my friends, that religious education is an ordinance of God, which, therefore, you may reasonably hope he will honour with a blessing. And you might as justly expect, that

* Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.—*Horat. Epist.* lib. i. Ver. 2 [ver. 70].

† Flectere mollescunt arbores, nisi quum primordia cuique
Prima docent.—*Pers.* Sat. III. [ver. 52-54].

‡ Ut natura teneros mavult inflectere ramos, arbor ut aspicias quæ nova ramulos dederit, ejus ut in cortice picturæ sint, pueri ille cuidor mentis est, cito præcipi.—*Quintil. Orat.* lib. cap. 1.

‖ Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum ductus formari, nisi teneris, non possunt, ita animus quoque ad plerasque virtutes tractari potest melius.—Ibid.

§ Bates's Works, page 636.

¶ Ubi quo magis portumque ter haurit, sanus puer sacra recusat.—*Quintil. Orat.* lib. i. cap. 1.

your souls should flourish in an unnecessary absence from the table and house of the Lord, or an habitual neglect of reading and prayer, as that your children should grow up for God, while you fail in your endeavours to engage them in his service. I repeat it again, religious education is an ordinance of God. And is it a work of labour and difficulty to prove the assertion? Which of you does not know, that Christian parents are solemnly charged to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that even under the Mosaic economy, God urged it on his people in a very affecting manner? Surely you must have observed, how strictly God charges it upon the Jews to take all opportunities to this purpose, occasional, as well as stated. These words, says he, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And elsewhere, Thou shalt teach them to thy sons and thy sons' sons: plainly recommending a care of more remote, as well as immediate descendants, of grand-children as well as children. Thus when God established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, he commanded the fathers, that they should make them known unto their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children that should be born, that they should arise and declare them unto their children; that so religion might be transmitted to every rising age. You cannot be ignorant of such passages as these, which need no comment to explain them, and consequently you cannot but know, that the religious education of children is a divine institution, as well as in itself a most rational attempt: after which you will not wonder to hear,

3. That it has in fact been attended with very happy success.

We acknowledge, that the great God does not confine himself to work by this way; and that he sometimes displays his sovereignty in visibly turning out of it. We acknowledge, that he sometimes leaves those who had been, as it were, born and brought up in his family, to forsake it in a very scandalous manner; while he seems to go into the very territories of Satan, into ignorant, carnal, and profane families, and takes from thence persons, whom he erects as trophies of free, surprising, and (as Mr. Howe justly expresses it) "unaccountable grace." But you well know, that these are more rare and uncommon cases: and though some of you, my friends, are (and I hope you will never forget it,) happy instances of the singular divine goodness; yet most of you, as I apprehend, were from your childhood trained up in the knowledge of God, and are living monuments of the success which has attended the care of parents or masters in this particular. The greater part of those, who have of late been admitted to your communion, have, to my certain knowledge, mentioned it with thankfulness; and I rejoice to think how many of the rising generation amongst us (if even a child may be known by his doings) are like to increase the number, and give us an encouraging hope that they will at length be set as olive-plants around the Lord's table, as well as yours. I persuade myself it is so elsewhere, and think I may pronounce it with some confidence, that the families of God's children are, generally speaking, the nurseries of his church. Solomon, no doubt, had observed that a good education had generally been successful, or we could by no means account for the remark in the text; and a very accurate writer of our own age and nation has carried it so far as to say, "That of all the men we meet with, nine parts in ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education."*

I hope you are by this time convinced, that, humanly speaking, there is great probability, that religious education may be the effectual means of promoting serious piety in the rising age; which was the second argument by which I was to recommend it: an argument, which may be greatly strengthened by observing,

III. That the success, which we may so reasonably expect, is a matter of very high importance.

It is of evident importance—to the honour of God and the support of religion,—to the present and future happiness of your children,—and to your own comfort both in life and death. Weighty and comprehensive thoughts; which I shall briefly touch,† and to which I beg you will renew your attention.

1. The honour of God, and the interest of a Redeemer, is greatly concerned in the behaviour of your children; and consequently in your care of their education, which is likely to have so great an influence upon it.

We live in a dying world. Our fathers, where are they? Sleeping in the dust, as we must shortly be. We are sure, that in a little, a very little, while, these places must know us no more: and when we are mouldering in the house of silence, who must fill our places in the house of God? Who must rise up in our stead for the support of religion amongst those that succeed us? From whom can it be expected, but from our children? Yet how can we expect it from these, in the neglect of a method which comes recommended by so many

* Locke on Education, § 1.

† I have many things which might be said on these heads, because I have spread them more largely in a Sermon on this very subject, The Importance of the Rising Generation, which is the first of the Sermons to Young People.

advantageous circumstances? "Yes," you will perhaps be ready to say, "God will take care of his own cause, and almighty grace will do what we have not attempted, because we knew that we could not accomplish it." Almighty grace can indeed do it; and almighty power can of these stones, on which we tread, raise up children to Abraham. But show me your warrant from the word of God for expecting it, either in the one case, or in the other. You will possibly answer, "He has promised to be ever with his church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; but that one generation shall arise and declare his mighty works unto another, and that the kingdom of his Son shall continue as long as the sun and the moon endure." Blessed be his name for these encouraging promises, which shall, no doubt, be accomplished. But where has he engaged, that this kingdom shall always continue amongst *us?* Such passages as these will no more prove, that the gospel shall never be removed from Great Britain, than they would once have proved, that it should never be taken away from Pergamos or Thyatira, or any other of the Asian churches, which have so many ages ago been given up to desolation.

Now let me entreat you, for a few moments, to dwell upon that thought; What if the gospel should be lost from amongst your descendants? What if in the age of these little ones, or the next that shall succeed to theirs, the house of the Lord should be forsaken, and his table abandoned? What if the ministry should be grown into disuse, or the servants of Christ in it should have nothing to do, but to bear a fruitless testimony against an unbelieving generation, till (when their hearts are broken with so sad an office) the gospel here die with them, and religion be buried in their graves? Is it a thought easily to be supported by a true Israelite, that the ark of the Lord should thus be lost, and God should write upon us Ichabod, the sad memorials of a departed glory?

It would surely be peculiarly melancholy, that religion should die in the hands of those who were the children of the kingdom. And were not yours so? In this respect, my friends, permit me to say, that I am witness against some of you. When you have offered your children to baptism, you have delivered them into my hands, with an express declaration of your sincere desire, that they might be devoted to God; and have received them again with a solemn charge and promise to bring them up for him, if their lives should be continued. And as for those of you, who do not practise this institution, I doubt not, but many of you are equally faithful in dedicating your infant offspring to God. Is it not then reasonable to expect from both, that they should be brought up as a seed to serve him? And from whom may we hope it, if not from you? If you have experienced the power of divine grace upon your own souls, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious, methinks it should awaken a holy zeal to spread the sweet savour of his name and word wherever you come. You should labour to the utmost for the advancement of his gospel amongst all your acquaintance, and even amongst strangers; how much more in your own families, amongst those whom you have received from him, amongst those whom you have so solemnly given back to him.

2. The character of your children, and consequently your care in their education, is of the most evident importance to their present and future happiness.

I need not surely employ a great deal of time in proving the truth of the assertion. As Christians, you must undoubtedly own, that godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come. If your children, through the divine blessing on your holy care, become truly religious, they will not only be preserved from those follies and crimes, which stain the honour and ruin the substance of families, but they will secure a fair reputation; they will take the most probable method to make life truly comfortable; they will be entitled to the paternal care and blessings of God; and, to crown all, will be heirs of eternal glory with him: and what could your most prudent, faithful, tender love wish for them as a greater, or indeed as a comparable, good? On the other hand, if they prove vicious and profane, (which in so dangerous an age it is very probable they may, if they have no religious principle to secure them,) what can you expect but their infamy and misery in this world, and their eternal destruction in the next?

One would imagine, that such considerations as these should very deeply impress the heart of a parent; and if they were alone, should be sufficient to gain the cause. You, who have so tender a regard to all their temporal concerns; you, that rise early and sit up late, that you may advance their fortunes, that you may furnish them with those dubious and uncertain possessions, which may be blessings or curses, as they are improved or abused; can you bear to think, that they may be for ever poor and miserable? Surely it should cut you to the heart to look on a child and reflect, "Here is an heir of eternal misery. Alas! what am I doing for him? Preparing an estate? Contriving for his present convenience or grandeur?" Vain, wretched, preposterous care! which, to use a very plain simile, is but like employing yourselves in trimming and adorning its clothes, while the child itself were fallen into the fire, and would be in danger of being destroyed, if not immediately plucked out. Hasten to do it with an earnestness answerable to the ex-

tremity of the case, and so much the rather, as the danger is in part owing to you.

I will not now say, how far your personal mistakes in conduct may have been a snare and a temptation to your children; nor can I pretend to determine it. But I am confident of this, that they have derived from you a corrupt and degenerate nature. Through your veins the original infection, which tainted the first authors of our race, has flowed down to them. And is not this an affecting thought? and ought it not to quicken you to attempt their relief?

Dr. Tillotson sets this in a very moving light: "* When a man has by treason tainted his blood and forfeited his estate, with what grief and regret does he look on his children, and think of the injury he has done to them by his fault; and how solicitous is he before he die to petition the king for favour to his children! How carnestly does he charge his friends to be careful of them, and kind to them!" We are those traitors. Our children have derived from us a tainted blood, a forfeited inheritance. How tenderly should we pity them! How solicitously should we exert ourselves to prevent their ruin! Mr. Flavel expresses the thought still more pathetically. "† Should I bring the plague into my family, and live to see all my poor children lie dying by the walls of my house; if I had not the heart of a tiger, such a sight would melt my very soul." And surely, I may add, were there a sovereign antidote at hand, perhaps an antidote I had myself used, should I not direct them to it, and urge them to try it, I should be still more savage and criminal. The application is easy: the Lord deeply impress it on your souls, that your dear children may not die eternally of the malignant plague they have taken from you!

This is one consideration, which should certainly add a great deal of weight to the argument I am now upon. I will conclude the head with the mention of another: I mean, the peculiar advantages which you, their parents, have for addressing yourselves to them. You, who have known them from their infancy, are best acquainted with their temper, and manner of thinking; you, who are daily with them, may watch their most tender moments, the most favourable opportunities of pleading with them; your melting affection for them, will suggest the most endearing sentiments and words on such occasions: their obligations to you, and love for you, will probably dispose them to attend with the greatest pleasure to what you say, or your authority over them, your power of correction, and a sense of their dependence upon you in life, may prevent much of that opposition and contempt, which from perverse tempers, *others* might expect, especially if they were not supported by your concurrence, in their attempts to instruct and reform your children.

On the whole then, since your obligations and your encouragements to attempt the work are so peculiar, I may reasonably hope you will allow its due weight to this second consideration, that the character and conduct of your children, and consequently your care in their education, is of the highest importance to their present and future happiness. I add, once more,

3. It is of great moment to your own comfort, both in life and death.

Solomon often repeats the substance of that remark; A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is a heaviness to his mother. And the justice of it in both its branches is very apparent. Let me engage you seriously to reflect upon it, as a most awakening inducement to the discharge of the important duty I am recommending.

If you have reason to hope, that your labours are not in vain, but that your children are become truly religious; it must greatly increase your satisfaction in them, that they are dear to you, not only in the bands of the flesh, but in those of the Lord. You will not only be secure of their dutiful and grateful behaviour to you, but will have the pleasure of seeing them grow up in their different stations, to prospects of usefulness in the church, and in the world. Should Providence spare you to the advance of age, they will be a comfort and honour to your declining years. You will, as it were, enjoy a second youth in their vigour and usefulness; nay, a sense of their piety and goodness will undoubtedly be a reviving cordial to you in your dying moments. A delightful thought will it indeed be! "I am going to take my leave of the world, and my scene of service is over; but I leave those behind me, who will appear for God in my stead, and act, perhaps, with greater fidelity and zeal, for the support of religion in a degenerate age. I leave my poor children, destitute indeed of my counsel and help, perhaps in no abundant affluence of worldly enjoyments; but I leave them under the guardian care of my Father and their Father, of my God and their God. I must soon be separated from them, and the distance between us must soon be as great, as between earth and heaven, but as I leave them under the best guidance in the wilderness, so I have a joyful persuasion they will soon follow me into the celestial Canaan. Yet a little while, and I and my dear offspring shall appear before the throne of God, and I shall stand forth with transport, and say, Behold, here am I, and the children which my God has graciously given me. Then will the blessedness on which I now enter, be multiplied upon me, by the sight of every child that has a share in it. Now, Lord, sufferest thou thy

* Tillotson, vol. i. sermon liv. pag. 544.
† Flavel's Husb. spir. pag. 260.

servant to depart in peace, since thou hast directed not only mine eyes, but theirs, to thy salvation."

But if you see these dear little ones grow up for the destroyer, if you see those, whose infant days gave you so many tender pleasures, and so many fond hopes, deviating from the paths of duty and happiness, how deeply will it pierce you! You now look upon them with a soft complacency, and say, "These are they, that shall comfort us under our labours and sorrows." But alas! my friends, if *this* be the case, "These are they, that will increase your labours, and aggravate your sorrows; that will hasten upon you the infirmities of age, or crush you the faster under the weight of them, till they have brought down your hoary hairs with anguish to the grave." Little do they or you think, how much agony and distress you may endure, from what you will see and what you will fear concerning them. How many slighted admonitions, how many deluded hopes, how many anxious days, how many restless nights, will concur to make the evening of life gloomy! And at length, when God gives you a dismission from a world, which the folly and wickedness of your children has so long imbittered, how painful will the separation be; when you have a prospect of seeing them but once more, and that at the tribunal of God, where the best you can expect, (in their present circumstances,) is to rise up in judgment against them, and to bear an awful testimony, which shall draw down upon them aggravated damnation!

And let me plainly tell you, that if in these last moments, conscience should also accuse you of the neglect of duty, and testify that your own sorrow, and your children's ruin, is in part chargeable upon that, it will be a dreadful ingredient in this bitter cup, and will greatly darken, if not entirely suppress, those hopes with regard to yourselves, which alone could support you in this mournful scene. I am fully persuaded, that if you knew the weight with which these things will sit upon your mind in the immediate views of the eternal world, you would not suffer every trifling difficulty, or little care, to deter you from the discharge of those duties, which are so necessary to prevent these galling reflections.

To conclude: Let me entreat you seriously to weigh the united force of these arguments, which I have now been urging to excite your diligence in this momentous care of training up your children in the way in which they should go. Consider how pleasant the attempt is. Consider how fair a probability there is that it may prosper, as it is in itself a very rational method, as it is a method God has appointed, and a method which he has crowned with singular success. Consider how important that success is, to the honour of God and interest of religion, to the temporal and eternal happiness of your children, and finally, to your own comfort both in life and death.

On the whole I well know, and I am persuaded, Sirs, that you yourselves are convinced, that whatsoever can be opposed to such considerations as these, when laid in an impartial balance, it is altogether lighter than vanity. I do therefore seriously appeal to those convictions of your consciences, as in the sight of God: and if, from this time at least, the education of children amongst you be neglected, or regarded only as a light care, God is witness, and you yourselves are witnesses, that it is not for want of being plainly instructed in your duty, or seriously urged to the performance of it.

SERMON III.

PROVERBS XXII. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

THOSE of you who have made any observations on human life, must certainly know, that if we desire to be agreeable and useful in it, we must regard not only the quality, but the manner, of our actions; and that while we are in the pursuit of any important end, we must not only attend to those actions which do immediately refer to it, but must watch over the whole of our conduct, that we may preserve a consistency in the several parts of it. Otherwise we shall spoil the beauty and acceptance of many an honest, and perhaps, in the main, prudent, attempt; or, by a train of unthought-of consequences, shall demolish with the one hand what we are labouring to build up with the other.

This is a remark which we shall have frequent occasion to recollect; and it is of peculiar importance in the business of education. It is therefore necessary, that having before described the way in which children are to be trained up, and urged you to a diligent application to the duty, I now proceed,

Thirdly, to offer some advices for your assistance in this attempt, of leading children into, and conducting them in, this way.

These will relate—partly to the manner in which the attempt is to be made,—and partly to the precautions necessary for rendering it effectual: which are, as you see, matters of distinct consideration, though comprehended under the general head of directions.

I. As to the manner in which the attempt is to be made.

And here it is evident it should be done plainly,—seriously,—tenderly,—and patiently.

1. Children are to be instructed plainly: in the plainest things, and by the plainest words.

They are to be taught the plainest things in religion in the first place. And it is a pleasing reflection on this occasion, that according to the abundant goodness and condescension of the great God, those things which are the most necessary are the plainest. Just as in the world of nature, those kinds of food which are the most wholesome and nourishing are also the most common. We should show our grateful sense of the divine goodness in this particular by our care to imitate it; and should see to it, that when the necessities of our children require bread, we do not give them a stone, or chaff; as we should do, if we were to distract their feeble minds with a variety of human schemes and doubtful disputations. The more abstruse and mysterious truths of the gospel are gradually to be unfolded, as they are exhibited in the oracles of God, and to be taught in the language of the Spirit; according to the excellent advice of the great Dr. Owen,* "making Scripture phraseology our rule and pattern in the declaration of spiritual things." But we must not begin here. We must feed them with milk while they are babes, and reserve the strong meat for a maturer age. Take the most obvious and vital truths of Christianity. Tell them that they are creatures, and sinful creatures; that by sin they have displeased a holy God; and that they must be pardoned, and sanctified, and accepted in Christ, or must perish for ever. Show them the difference between sin and holiness, between a state of nature and of grace. Show them that they are hastening on to death and judgment, and so must enter on heaven or hell, and dwell for ever in the one or the other. Such kind of lessons will probably turn to the best account, both to them and you. I know it is a very easy thing to inflame the warm ignorant minds of children with an eager zeal for distinguishing forms, or distinguishing phrases, and to make them violent in the interest of a party, before they know any thing of common Christianity. But if we thus sow the wind, we shall probably reap the whirlwind; venting ourselves, and transfusing into them, a wrath of man, which never works, but often greatly obstructs, the righteousness of God. Blessed be God, this is not the fault of you, my friends of this congregation. I would mention it with great thankfulness, as both your happiness and mine, that, so far as I can judge, it is the sincere milk of the word that you desire. Let it be your care to draw it out for the nourishment of your children's souls, as their understandings and capacities will permit them to take it in.

And while you are teaching them the plainest things, endeavour to do it in the plainest words. It is the gracious method which God uses with us, who speaks to us of heavenly things in language, not fully expressive of the sublimity and grandeur of the subject, but rather suited to our feeble apprehensions. Thus our Lord taught his disciples, as they were able to bear it; and used easy and familiar similitudes, taken from the most obvious occurrences in life, to illustrate matters of the highest importance. A most instructive example! Such condescension should we use, in training up those committed to our care, and should examine, whether we take their understandings along with us as we go on: otherwise we are speaking in an unknown tongue, and, as the apostle expresses it, are barbarians unto them, be our language ever so graceful, elegant, or pathetic.*

Give me leave to add, for the conclusion of this head, that though it is to be taken for granted, that children in their earliest infancy are to be engaged to what is good, and to be restrained from evil, chiefly, by a view to rewards and punishments, more immediate or remote, or by some natural workings of a benevolent affection, which are by all means to be cherished and cultivated; yet, as they might grow up to greater ripeness of understanding, something further is to be attempted. It must then be our care, to set before them, in the strongest light, the beauties of holiness, and deformities of sin; and likewise to propose, in the easiest and most familiar way, the evidences of the truth of Christianity, that they may be fortified against those temptations to infidelity, with which the present age does so unhappily abound. The external evidences of it are by no means to be slighted, such as the credibility of the gospel history, the accomplishment of prophecies, the unity of design, carried on by so many different persons in distant ages and countries, its amazing and even miraculous propagation in the world; all which, with many other considerations to the same purpose, are very judiciously handled in a variety of excellent writings of our own age; of which I know not any more suited to your use, than Mr. Bennet's Discourses on the Inspiration of Scripture, which I therefore recommend to your attentive perusal; and with them Dr. Watts's Sermons on the Inward Witness to the Truth of Christianity, from its efficacious tendency to promote holiness. This appears to me the noblest evidence of all, and will, to those who have actually experienced it, be an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast.

2. Children should be instructed in a very serious manner.

There is an unhappy proneness in our degenerate nature to trifle with the things of God; and the giddiness of children is peculiarly subject to it. Great care should therefore be taken, that we do not

* Owen on the Spirit, Book ii. ch. [illegible]

* Meminisse [illegible] capitis [illegible]

encourage such a humour, nor teach them by our levity or indolence in the manner of instruction, to take the awful name of God in vain, while they are speaking of him, or to him. For this purpose we must labour with our own hearts, to work them to a deep and serious sense of the truth and importance of what we say: this will give us an unaffected solemnity in speaking, which will probably command the attention, and impress the hearts, of our children. Endeavour to preserve on your own spirit an habitual awe of the great and blessed God, the Lord of heaven and earth; that when you speak of him to those little creatures, they may evidently see the indications of the humblest veneration and reverence, and so may learn to fear him from their youth. When you speak of Christ, let your souls be bowing to him as the Son of God, through whom alone you and yours can obtain pardon and life; and let them be overflowing with love to him, for his unutterable and inconceivable grace. And when you remind them of death, judgment, and eternity, consider yourselves and them as dying creatures: think in how few months, or weeks, or days, your lips may be silent in the dust, or they may be for ever removed beyond the reach of your instructions; and plead with them in as earnest and importunate a manner, as if the salvation of their immortal souls depended on the effect of the present address. Again,

3. Children should be instructed in a very tender and affectionate manner.

We should take care to let them see, that we do not desire to terrify and amaze them, to lead them into unnecessary severities, or to deprive them of any innocent pleasures; that what we say is not dictated by an ostentation of our own wisdom and authority; but that it all proceeds from a hearty love to them, and an earnest desire of their happiness. Study therefore to address them in the most endearing language, as well as with the softest and sweetest arguments. Endeavour, according to the practice of Solomon, to find out acceptable words. And if tears should rise while you are speaking, do not suppress them. There is a language in them, which may perhaps affect beyond words. A weeping parent is both an awful and a melting sight.

Endeavour therefore to look upon your children in such a view, as may be most likely to awaken these tender sentiments. Consider them as creatures, whom you (as instruments) have brought into being, tainted with innate corruption, surrounded with snares, and, on the whole, in such apparent danger, that if not snatched as brands out of the burning, they must perish for ever. And that your hearts may be further mollified, and you may be formed to the most gentle and moving manner of address, let me entreat you to study the Scripture in this view, and to observe the condescending and endearing forms in which the blessed God speaks to us there. Observe them for yourselves, and point them out to your children. Tell them, how kindly he has demanded, how graciously he has encouraged, their services; while he says, Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; and elsewhere, I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me. Tell them, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath invited them to come to him; for he hath said, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: Him that comes unto me, I will in no wise cast out: And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Such scriptures as these should be often repeated to them, and should be early inculcated on their memory, with an attempt, as far as possible, to let them into the spirit and force of them.

Nor will it be improper sometimes to set before them how much you have done, how much you are ready to do, for them; how many anxious thoughts you entertain, how many fervent prayers you offer, on their account. Thus Lemuel's mother addressed him, What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? As if she had said, "My dear child, for whom I have borne so much, for whom I have prayed so earnestly; in what words shall I address thee, to express what my heart feels on thy account? How shall I speak my affectionate overflowing concern for thy happiness both in time and eternity?" So Solomon pleads, My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine: as if he should have said, "Think how much is comprehended in that argument, that a parent's happiness is in a great measure to be determined by thy character and conduct." And the apostle Paul lays open his heart to the Galatians in those pathetical words, My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you. Yet these were, comparatively, strangers to him. And should not you, my friends, feel, should not you express, an equal tenderness for those, who are so nearly allied to you in the bonds of nature, for those who are indeed parts of yourselves? But further,

4. Children should also be instructed patiently.

You know, when the husbandman has committed the seed to the ground, he patiently expects the fruit of his labours. So must ministers do, when instructing their people: so must parents do, when instructing their children. You must not imagine, my friends, that a plentiful harvest will spring up in a day. The growth of nature is slow, and by insensible degrees: nor are you to wonder, if advances in knowledge and grace be still slower. Be upon your guard therefore against fretfulness and impatience. Your children will forget what you

have once taught them; repeat it a second time; and if they forget it the second time, repeat it the third. It is thus that the great God deals with you; and you have daily reason to rejoice that he does. He knows the frailty and weakness of your minds, and therefore acts by a rule, which seems to be laid down with peculiar regard to the very point I am urging. Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; and line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. As if the prophet should have said, "God has treated you like little children, who must have the same short easy lesson repeated again and again." And is it not indeed thus with regard to you? Does not the patience and condescension of your heavenly Father send to you his ministers sabbath after sabbath, frequently inculcating the same things, that what you have forgot may be brought to mind again? Thus should you do by those committed to your care.

Be teaching them every sabbath: that is remarkably a good day for the purpose. Then you have leisure for it; then you have peculiar advantage to pursue the work; then you are furnished with some new matter by what you have heard in public; and I would hope, your spirits are then quickened by it; so that you can speak out of the abundance of the heart: and you may, by discoursing with them on what has been addressed to you, revive the impression on your own souls.

I add: Be teaching them every day, by occasional discourses, when you have not an opportunity of doing it by stated addresses. Drop a word for God every day, and often in a day. You will probably find your account in it, and your children theirs. A sudden glance of thought towards God in the midst of the world is often a great refreshment to the Christian; and a sudden turn to something serious and spiritual in conversation, is frequently very edifying to others. It strikes the memory and the heart, and is, perhaps, as a nail fixed in a sure place, when many a solemn admonition, and many an elaborate sermon, is lost. It is with pleasure that I frequently hear good Christians speaking of such occasional hints, which have been dropped by saints of the former generation. Those transient passages, which the pious parents might forget in a few moments, their children have distinctly remembered for many future years, and repeated for their own edification, and I might add, for mine. Let this therefore be an encouragement to you; and in this respect, in the morning sow this precious seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand, since you know not whether shall prosper, or whether both shall be alike good.

Once more, let me entreat you to repeat your pious instructions and admonitions, even though your children should grow up to years of maturity without appearing to profit by them. Say not, that you can teach them no more than they already know; or, that you can try no new methods which you have not already attempted. You see that, in our assemblies, God often brings back souls to himself, by setting home on the conscience truths which, with regard to the speculative part of them, they know as well as their teachers; and adds a divine efficacy to those institutions, which, for a long succession of years, they had attended in vain. Be not therefore weary in well-doing; but let patience in this instance have its perfect work.

Thus let your children be instructed plainly, seriously, tenderly, and patiently. I wave some other particulars, which I might have added to these, concerning the manner of instructing them, because I apprehend they will more properly fall under the second branch of these directions, where I am further to advise you,

II. As to the precautions you must use, if you desire that these attempts in the religious education of your children may be attended with success.

Here I would particularly advise,—that a prudent care be taken to keep up your authority over them, —and at the same time to engage their affections to you;—that you be solicitous to keep them out of the way of temptation;—that you confirm your admonitions by a suitable example;—that you cheerfully accept of proper assistances in this important attempt;—and that you humbly and constantly look up to God for his blessing on all.

1. If we desire to succeed in our attempts for the religious education of our children, we must take care to keep up our authority over them.

To this purpose, we must avoid, not only what is grossly vicious and criminal, (which will be more properly mentioned under a following head,) but also those little levities and follies which might make us appear contemptible to them. Whatever liberties we may take with those who are our equals in age and station, a more exact decorum is to be preserved before our children. Thus we are to reverence them, if we desire they should reverence us;* for, as Dr. Tillotson very justly observes, "There is a certain freedom of conversation, which is only proper amongst equals in age and quality, which if we use before our superiors we seem to despise them, and if we do it before our inferiors, we teach them to despise us."†

I will not insist on this hint, which your own prudence must accommodate to particular circumstances: but shall here introduce the mention of correction, which, in some cases, may be absolutely

* [illegible] † [illegible]

necessary to the support of parental authority, especially where admonitions and counsels are slighted.

You know, that the Scriptures expressly require it on proper occasions; and Solomon, in particular, enlarges on the head, and suggests some important thoughts with regard to it. Foolishness (says he) is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Nay, he speaks of it as a matter in which life is concerned, even the life of the soul: Withhold not correction from a child; for if thou beat him with the rod he shall not die: Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. And is it kindness, or cruelty, in a parent, to spare the flesh to the hazard of the soul? Parents are therefore exhorted to an early care in this respect, lest vicious habits growing inveterate should render the attempt vain or hurtful; and they are cautioned against that foolish tenderness, which would lead them to regard the tears of a child, rather than his truest and highest interest. Correct thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying: He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes. Nor can we imagine a more lively commentary on the words than the melancholy story of Eli, who, though he was a very eminent saint in a degenerate age, yet erred here, and by a fatal indulgence, brought ruin, as well as infamy, on himself and his family. He reproved the abominable wickedness of his sons; but did not make use of those severe methods, which, in such a case, the authority of a parent might have warranted, and the office of a judge did undoubtedly require. Observe the sentence which God pronounced against him for it, and which he executed upon him in a very awful manner. The Lord said unto Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all the things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. Take heed, I entreat you, as you love your children, as you love yourselves, that it may not be said of you, that yours have made themselves vile, and you have neglected to restrain them. Let mothers, in particular, take heed, that they do not, as it were, smother their children in their embraces; as a French author smartly expresses it.* And let me remind you all to be particularly cautious, that the arms of one parent be not a refuge to the children from the resentment of the other. Both should appear to act in concert, or the authority of the one will be despised, and probably the indulgence of the other abused, and the mutual affection of both endangered.

I cannot say that I enlarge on this subject with pleasure; but how could I have answered for the omission of what is so copiously and so pathetically inculcated in the sacred writings? It is indeed probable, that the rugged and servile temper of the generality of the Jewish nation, might render a severe discipline peculiarly necessary for their children; yet I fear there are few of our families where every thing of this kind can safely be neglected. But, after all, I would by no means drive matters to extremities; and therefore cannot persuade myself to dismiss the head without a caution or two. Take heed,—that your corrections be not too frequent,—or too severe—and that they be not given in an unbecoming manner.

If your corrections be too frequent, it will probably spoil much of the success. Your children, like iron, will harden under repeated strokes; and that ingenuous shame will be gradually worn off, which adds the greatest sting to what they suffer from a parent's hand. And there will be this further inconvenience attending it, that there will not be a due difference made between great and small faults. The laws of Draco the Athenian were justly rejected, because they punished all crimes alike, and made the stealing of an apple capital, as well as the murder of a citizen. You, on the contrary, should let your children see, that you know how to distinguish between indiscretion and wickedness; and should yourselves appear most displeased, when you think God is so.

Nor should your corrections at any time be too severe. It is very prettily said by Dr. Tillotson on this occasion, "that whips are not the cords of a man." They should be used in a family, only (as the sword in the republic) as the last remedy, when all others have been tried in vain; and then should be so used, as that we may appear to imitate the compassion of our heavenly Father, who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

Which leads me to add, that we should be greatly cautious, that correction be not inflicted in an unbecoming manner: and it always is so, when it is given in a passion. A parent's correcting his child should be regarded as an act of domestic justice, which therefore should be administered with a due solemnity and decorum; and to behave otherwise on the occasion, is almost as great an indecency, as for a judge to pass sentence in a rage. It is injurious to ourselves, as it tends to spoil our own temper; for peevishness and passion will grow upon us, by being indulged towards those who dare not oppose them. And it is on many accounts in-

* Superville, Serm. vol. iii. p. 374.

jurious to our children. Solomon intimates, that correction and instruction should be joined, when he says, The rod and reproof give wisdom. But what room is there for the still voice of wisdom to be heard in a storm of fury? If your children see that you act calmly and mildly; if they read parental tenderness in your heart, through an awful frown on your brow; if they perceive that correction is your strange work, a violence which you offer to yourselves from a principle of duty to God and affection to them; they must be obdurate indeed, if they do not receive it with reverence and love; for this is both a venerable and an amiable character. But if once they imagine that you chastise them merely to vent your passion, and gratify your resentments, they will secretly despise, and perhaps hate, you for it. In that instance at least, they will look upon you as their enemies, and may, by a continued course of such severities, contract an aversion, not only to you, but to all that you recommend to them. Thus you may lose your authority and your influence, by the very method you take to support it, and may turn a wholesome though bitter medicine into poison. But I hope and trust that your humanity and your prudence will concur to prevent so fatal an abuse.

2. If you desire success in your attempts for the education of your children, you must be careful to secure their affection to you.

Our Lord observes, that if any man love him, he will keep his word; and the assertion is applicable to the present case: the more your children love you, the more will they regard your instructions and admonitions. God has indeed made it their duty to love you, and the most indispensable laws of gratitude require it; yet since so many children are evidently wanting in filial affection, it is certain that all this may not secure it in yours, unless you add a tender obliging behaviour to all the other benefits you have conferred upon them. I observed, under a former head, that you should address them in an affectionate manner when discoursing on religious subjects; but now I add, that you should carry the temper through life, and be daily endeavouring to render yourselves amiable to them. The apostle cautions parents, that they should not provoke their children to wrath, if they would bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. On the contrary, you should put on the kindest looks; you should use the most endearing and condescending language; you should overlook many little failings, and express a high complacency in what is really regular and laudable in their behaviour. And though you must sometimes overrule their desires, when impatiently eager, yet far from delighting generally to cross them, you should rather study their inclinations, that you may surprise them with unexpected favours. Thus will they learn quietly to refer themselves to your care, and will more easily submit to mortification and denial, when it is not made necessary by clamorous and impetuous demands. Oh the whole, you should endeavour to behave so, as that your children may love your company, and of choice be much in it; which will preserve them from innumerable snares, and may furnish you with many opportunities of forming their temper and behaviour, by imperceptible degrees, to what may be decent, amiable, and excellent.*

If you manage these things with prudence, you need not fear that such condescensions, as I have now recommended, will impair your authority: far from that, they will rather establish it. The superiority of your parental character may be maintained in the midst of these indulgences; and when it is thus attempered, it is most like to produce that mixture of reverence and love, by which the obedience of a child is to be distinguished from that of a slave.

3. You must be solicitous to keep your children out of the way of temptation, if you would see the success of your care in their education.

If you are not on your guard here, you will probably throw down what you have built, and build up that which you have been endeavouring to destroy. An early care must be taken, to keep them from the occasions, and the very appearances, of evil. We should not venture their infant steps on the brink of a precipice, on which grown persons, who know how to adjust the poise of their bodies, may walk without extreme danger. More hazardous might it be, to allow them to trifle with temptations, and boldly venture to the utmost limits of that which is lawful. An early tenderness of conscience may be a great preservative; and the excess of strictness, (though no excess be desirable,) may prove much safer than an excess of liberty.

Bad company is undoubtedly one of the most formidable and pernicious entanglements. By forming friendships with persons of a vicious character, many a hopeful youth has learnt their ways, and found a fatal snare to his soul. You should be very watchful to prevent their contracting such dangerous friendships; and where you discover any thing of that kind, should endeavour, by all gentle and endearing methods, to draw them off from them; but if they still persist, you must resolve to cut the knot you cannot untie, and let your children know, that they must either renounce their associates or their parents. One resolute step of this kind might have prevented the ruin of multitudes, who have fallen a sacrifice to the importunities of wicked companions, and the weak indulgence of imprudent parents, who have contented

* In parentibus vero quam plurimum esse educationis oplaverim. Quintil. lib. supra.

themselves with blaming what they ought strenuously to have redressed.

All bad company is, in this respect, formidable; but that is most evidently so, which is to be found at home. Great care ought therefore to be taken, that you admit none into your families, who may debauch the tender minds of your children by pernicious opinions, or by vicious practices.* This is a caution which should be particularly remembered in the case of servants. Take heed you do not bring into your families such as may diffuse infection through the souls of your dear offspring. It is a thousand times better to put up with some inconveniences and disadvantages, when you have reason to believe a servant fears God, and will, from a principle of conscience, be faithful in watching over your children, and in seconding your religious care in their education; than to prefer such, as while they are, perhaps, managing your temporal affairs something better, may pervert your children to the service of the devil. I fear, some parents little think how much secret mischief these base creatures are doing. And it is very possible, that if some of you recollect what you may have observed amongst the companions of your childhood, you may find instances of this nature, which riper years have not since given you opportunity to discover. See to it, therefore, that you be diligently on your guard here.

Again: If you send your children to places of education, be greatly cautious in your choice of them. Dearly will you purchase the greatest advantages for learning, at the expense of those of a religious nature. And I will turn out of my way to add, that schoolmasters and tutors will have a dreadful account to give, if they are not faithfully and tenderly solicitous for the souls of those committed to their care. The Lord pardon our many defects here, and quicken us to greater diligence and zeal!—But to return:

Give me leave only to add, that it is of the highest importance, if you would not have all your labour in the education of your children lost, that you should be greatly cautious with regard to their settlement in the world. Apprenticeships and marriages, into irreligious families, have been the known sources of innumerable evils. They who have exposed the souls of their children to apparent danger, for the sake of some secular advantages, have often lived to see them drawn aside to practices ruinous to their temporal, as well as their eternal, interests. Thus their own iniquity hath remarkably corrected them: and I heartily pray, that the God of this world may never be permitted thus to blind your eyes; but that you, my friends, may learn from the calamities of other families, that wholesome lesson, which, if you neglect it, others may perhaps hereafter learn from the ruin of yours.

4. See to it, that you confirm your admonitions by a suitable example, if you desire on the whole that they should prove useful to your children.

A consciousness of the irregularity of your own behaviour, in any remarkable instances which may fall under their observation, will probably abate much of that force and authority with which we might otherwise address them.† When we know they may justly retort upon us, at least in their minds, those words of the apostle, Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? surely a sense of guilt and of shame must either entirely silence us, or at least impair that freedom and confidence, with which we might otherwise have exhorted or rebuked.

Or had we so much composure and assurance, as to put on all the forms of innocence and virtue, could we expect regard, when our actions contradicted our discourses, or hope they should reverence instructions, which their teachers themselves appear to despise? It is in the general true, that there is a silent, but powerful, oratory in example, beyond the force of the most elegant and expressive words; and the example of parents has often a peculiar weight with their children;‡ which seems to be alluded to in that exhortation of St. Paul, Be ye followers (or imitators) of God, as dear children. So that on the whole, as a very celebrated writer well expresses it,§ "To give children good instruction, and a bad example, is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand, and lead them in the way to hell." We should therefore most heartily concur in David's resolution, as ever we hope our families should be religious and happy: I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

5. Cheerfully accept of all proper assistances in the education of your children, if you desire it may succeed well.

It will be your wisdom to accept of the assistance, which may be offered, either from books, or friends.

Books may in this respect be very useful to you; the book of God above all: both to furnish you with materials for this great work, and to instruct you in the manner of performing it. Other writings may be subservient to this purpose. Wise and pious treatises on the subject of education may be read with great pleasure and advantage; and you may receive singular assistance from those catechisms, and prayers, and songs for children,

* Nil dictu fœdum, visuque hæc limina tangat,
Intra quæ puer est.—*Juv.* Sat. xiv. v. 44, 45

† Unde tibi frontem libertatemque parentis,
Cum facies ipsora sera?—*Juv.* Sat. xiv. v. 50, 51

‡ ——Vetigalia magna
Corrumpunt vitiorum exempla domestica, magnæ
Cum subeunt animos auctoribus.—*Juv.* Sat. xiv. v. 51, &c.

§ Tillotson, vol. i. p. 531

with which most of your families are now furnished, through the condescension of one valuable friend* in writing them, and the generosity of another in bestowing them upon us. I hope you will express your thankfulness to both, by a diligent care to use them: and I persuade myself, that you and yours may abundantly find your account in them; for while the language is so plain and easy, that even an infant may understand it, you will often find, not only a propriety, but a strength and sublimity, in the sentiments, which may be improving to persons of advanced capacities. There is much of that milk, by which strong men may be entertained and nourished.

I add, that in this important work, you should gladly embrace the assistance of pious and prudent friends. I can by no means approve that Lacedemonian law, which gave every citizen the power of correcting his neighbour's children, and made it infamous for the parent to complain of it: yet we must all allow, that considering the great importance of education, a concern for the happiness of families and the public, will require a mutual watchfulness over each other in this respect; nor is there any imaginable reason to exclude *this* from the number of those heads, on which we are to admonish one another; and to consider each other, to provoke unto good works.

Nothing seems more evident than this; and one would suppose, that persons, who are acquainted with human nature, should suspect, that self-love might work under this form, and that they might be a little blinded by a partial affection to their offspring. Such a reflection might engage them, at least patiently, or rather thankfully, to hear the sentiments, and receive the admonitions, of their friends on this head. But instead of this, there is in many people a kind of parental pride, (if I may be allowed the expression,) which seldom fails to exert itself on such an occasion. They are so confident in their own way, and do so magisterially despise the opinion of others, that one would almost imagine they took it for granted, that, with every child, nature had given to the parent a certain stock of infallible wisdom for the management of it: or that, if they thought otherwise, they rather chose their children should be ruined by their own conduct, than saved by any foreign advice. If this arrogance only rendered the parents ridiculous, one should not need to be greatly concerned about it; especially as their high complacency in themselves would make them easy, whatever others might think or say of them: but when we consider the unhappy consequences it may produce, with regard to the temper and conduct of the rising generation, it will appear a very serious evil, well worthy a particular mention, and a particular care to guard against it.

As for the assistance of ministers in this work of education, I persuade myself you will be so wise as thankfully to embrace it, both in public and private; and let me urge you to improve it to the utmost. Accustom your children to an early constancy and seriousness in attending divine ordinances, and be often yourselves inquiring, and give us leave sometimes to inquire, how they advance in acquaintance with religion, and in love to it. And more particularly let them attend on our catechetical lectures, which are peculiarly intended for their service.

I bless God, I have seen the happy effects of this exercise, both in the places where I was educated whilst a child,† and in those where I was formerly fixed; and as I am now introducing it amongst you, with an intent to continue it as long as I am capable of public service, I promise myself your most hearty concurrence in it. I will not at large insist on the advantages which may attend it. You easily see, that it will be an engagement to the children to learn those excellent summaries of divine truth, when their progress in them is so often examined. By repeating it themselves, and hearing it rehearsed by others, it will be more deeply fixed upon their memories. The exposition of it in a plain and familiar manner, may much improve their understandings in the doctrines and duties of religion: and I will add, you that are parents may, by attending on these occasions, possibly learn something as to the way of opening and explaining things, which you may successfully practise at home. In consequence of all, we may hope that, by the divine blessing, some good impressions may be made on the minds of children. And when they find a minister willing to take pains to instruct them, when they hear him seriously and tenderly pleading with them, and pleading with God for them, it may much engage their affections to him, and so promote his usefulness amongst them, in other ordinances, and in future years. And give me leave to say, upon this head, that as no wise and good minister will think it beneath him to desire the affection of the children of his congregation, so it is the duty of parents to cherish in their offspring sentiments of respect and love to all the faithful ministers of Christ, and especially towards those who statedly labour amongst them. Whatever mistakes you may discover in our conduct, or whatever deficiencies in our public ministrations, you should study to conceal them from the notice of your chil-

* Dr. Isaac Watts.

† Kingston and St. Albans. On the mention of which, I cannot forbear [illegible] my serious thanks to my reverend and worthy friends, Mr. Meyrick and Mr. Clark, for the many excellent admonitions they gave me there, in public and private, when under their instruction, now in the years of childhood. As I would always retain a grateful remembrance of it, I cannot but pray that the like care may be as much the practice, as it is the duty, of their successors in every denomination.

dren; lest they should grow up in a contempt of those whose services might otherwise be highly advantageous to them.

6. Lastly, Be earnest in prayer to God for his blessing on your attempts in the education of your children, if you desire to see them successful.

This I would leave with you as my last advice; and though I have had frequent occasion to hint at it before, I would now more particularly urge it on your attentive regard. God is the author of every good and every perfect gift; it is he that has formed the mind and the tongue, and that teaches man knowledge and address. On him therefore must you fix your dependence, to teach you so to conceive of divine things, and so to express your conceptions of them, as may be most suited to the capacities, the dispositions, and the circumstances of your children; and to him you must look to teach them to profit by all, by his almighty grace to open their ear unto discipline, and to bow their heart unto understanding.

A heathen poet could teach the Romans, in a form of public and solemn devotion, to look up to heaven for influences from thence, to form their youth to the love and practice of virtue.* Surely you, my friends, are under much greater obligations to do it, and that in a Christian manner; earnestly entreating the God of grace to send down on your rising offspring the effusions of that blessed Spirit, which was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is deposited in his compassionate hand. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, you are daily living on those supplies; let it be your constant errand at the throne of grace to plead for your children there. Wrestle with God in secret for the life of their souls, and for those regenerating influences on which it depends; and in those family devotions, which I hope you dare not neglect, let the little ones, from their earliest infancy, have a share in your remembrance. You may humbly hope, that He by whose encouragement and command you pray, will not suffer these supplications to be like water spilt upon the ground. And, in the nature of things, it may tend to make serious impressions on the minds of your children, to hear their own case mentioned in prayer; and may dispose them with greater regard to attend on what you say to them, when they find you so frequently, so solemnly, and so tenderly, pleading with God for them.

Doubt not that every faithful minister of Christ will most heartily concur with you, in so great and necessary a request. May God return to our united addresses an answer of peace! May he pour out his Spirit on our seed, and his blessing on our offspring, that they may grow up before him as willows by the water-courses; that they may be to their parents for a comfort, to the church for a support, and to our God for a name and a praise! Amen.

* Di, bonos mores dextâ juventæ
Date.— *Hor. Carm. Sæc.* [illegible]

SERMON IV

Proverbs xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

In treating on this subject of Education, I have all along endeavoured, according to my usual manner, to make my discourses as practical as I could. While I was describing and recommending the way, and offering my advices with regard to the manner of conducting children into it, most of what I said under those generals was an application to you. I have therefore left myself the less to do here; yet I was not willing to conclude my discourses on a subject, which it is probable I shall never so largely resume, without,

Fourthly, A particular address to my hearers, according to your different relations and characters in life.

This I promised as my fourth and last general, and I enter on it without further preface; humbly begging that God, who has so intimate an access to all our hearts, would enable me to speak in the most awakening and edifying manner; and that he would, by his blessed Spirit, apply it to your consciences, that it may be as a nail fastened in a sure place; that hearing and knowing these things for yourselves, you may hear and know them for your good.

I would here particularly address myself,—first, to parents, then to children, and, in the last place, to those young persons who are grown up to years of maturity, but not yet fixed in families of their own.

I. Let me address my discourse to those of you that are parents; whether you have been negligent of the duties I have now been urging, or through grace have been careful in the discharge of them.

1. To those who have been grossly negligent in this important care.

I have here one advantage not common to every subject; I mean, that the guilty will immediately know themselves. When we apply ourselves in general to unconverted sinners, ignorance of the nature of true religion, a neglect of conversing with your own souls, or the insinuating prejudices of self-love, may disguise the true state of the case, and teach people to speak peace to themselves under the most awful denunciations of wrath and vengeance. But here, one would imagine, that the

recollection of a few moments might be sufficient to determine the case; because the question relates to past fact, and that not merely to one particular action, but to a long train and succession of labours and attempts.

Now let your consciences witness, whether I am guilty of a breach of charity, when I take it for granted, that there are some amongst you, who have been, and are, very negligent of the duty I have now been enforcing? You have probably contented yourselves with teaching your children to read, and setting them to learn, like parrots, a prayer, and perhaps, too, a catechism and a creed. But I appeal to your consciences, have you from the very day of their birth to this time, ever spent one hour in seriously instructing them in the knowledge of God, and endeavouring to form them to his fear and service; in setting before them the misery of their natural condition, and urging them to apply to Christ for life and salvation; in representing the solemnities of death, and judgment, and the eternal world, and urging an immediate and diligent preparation for them? Where is the time, where the place, that can witness, that you have been pouring out your souls before God on their account, and wrestling with him for their lives, as knowing they must perish for ever, without the righteousness of his Son, and the grace of his Spirit? Where, or when, have you thus prayed with them, or for them? What sermon have you heard, what scripture have you read, with this thought, "This will I carry to my children, and communicate to them as the food of their souls?" I fear there are several of you that have been so far from doing it, that you have hardly ever seriously thought of it as a thing to be done.

And I would ask, Why have you not thought of it, and why have you not done it? Are these creatures that you have produced, like the other animals of your houses or your field, mere animated systems of flesh and blood, made to take a turn in life for a few days and months, and then to sink into everlasting forgetfulness? Or are they rational and immortal creatures, that must exist for ever in heaven or in hell? This is not a matter of doubt with you; and yet you behave as if the very contrary to what you believe were evident, certain truth. In short, it is the most barbarous part you act, and more like that of an enemy than a parent.

It is not that you are insensible of the workings of parental tenderness. No, far from that, it may sometimes rise to a weak and criminal dotage; yet I repeat it again, you are acting a hostile and barbarous part. You are greatly solicitous for their temporal happiness. For this you labour and watch; for this you deny yourselves many an enjoyment, and subject yourselves to many an uneasy circumstance: but, alas! Sirs, where is the real friendship of all this, while the precious soul is neglected! Your children are born with a corrupted nature, perverted by sinful examples, ignorant of God, in a state of growing enmity to him, and, in consequence of all, exposed to his wrath and curse, and in the way to everlasting ruin; in the mean time it is your great care, that they may pass through this precarious, momentary life, in ease and pleasure, perhaps in abundance and grandeur; that is, in such circumstances, as will probably lull them into a forgetfulness of their danger, till there be no more hope. How cruel a kindness!

It brings to my mind the account which an ancient writer* gives of the old Carthaginians, which I can never recollect without great emotion. He is speaking of that diabolical custom which so long prevailed amongst them, of offering their children to a detestable idol, which was formed in such a manner, that an infant put into his hands, which were stretched out to receive it, would immediately fall into a gulf of fire.† He adds a circumstance, which one cannot mention without horror; that the mothers, who with their own hands presented the little innocents, thought it an unfortunate omen that the victim should be offered weeping; and therefore used a great many fond artifices to divert it, that soothed by the kisses and caresses of a parent, it might smile in the dreadful moment in which it was to be given up to the idol.‡ Pardon me, my friends; such is your parental care and love, such your concern for the present ease and prosperity of your children, while their souls are neglected: a fond solicitude, that they may pass smiling into the hands of the destroyer!

You know, with what just severity God reckons with the Israelites for their abominable wickedness, in taking his sons and his daughters, (for so he calls the children of his professing people,) and sacrificing them to be devoured: and can you suppose he will take no notice of the unnatural neglect of yours. Not to endeavour to save, is to destroy; and is it a little guilt, when an immortal soul is in question! You probably remember those terrible words in Ezekiel; (may they be deeply inscribed on the hearts of all whom they concern!) Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel, therefore hear thou the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me:—and if thou speakest not to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. If ever you read this passage with attention, you must own it is exceedingly awful, and must be ready to say, "The Lord be merciful to ministers, they have a solemn account to give." Indeed they have.

* Minutius Felix.

† Diodor. Sic. lib. xx. cap. 14. Lucret. Princip. Lactant. lib. i. cap. 7. Porphyrius et omnibus compendiis vagatum ac tritum locus communis. *Mount. Mel. Octav.* [illegible] page 57. *Terlull. Apol.* cap. ix.

and we thank you, if you ever bestow a compassionate thought and prayer upon us. But permit me to remind you, that though it be our case, it is not ours alone; you have likewise your share in it. Your children are much more immediately committed to your care, than you and they are committed to ours: and, by all parity of reason, if they perish in their iniquities, while you neglect to give them warning, their blood will be required at your hand.

And when God comes to make inquisition for that blood, how will you be able to endure it? That awful day will open upon you, and the tribunal of God, in all its terrors, will stand unveiled before you. Give me leave to direct your eyes to it in this distant prospect, while there is yet room to mitigate those terrors. If you go on in this cruel negligence of the souls of your children, how will you dare to meet them at that judgment-seat? How will you be able to answer the great Father of spirits, when expostulating with you on account of his offspring, as well as yours, who have been betrayed and ruined by your neglect? "Inhuman creatures, (may he justly say,) to whom should I have committed the care of them, rather than to you? Did they not, by my appointment, derive their being from you? Did I not implant in your hearts the natural affections of parents towards them? And to increase the obligation, did they not pass through the tender scenes of infancy and childhood in your arms, and under your eye? If you had no compassion for their perishing souls, if you would exert no efforts for their deliverance and salvation, from whom could those compassions, those efforts, have been expected? But wherein did they appear? Behold the book of my remembrance, the records of thy life, thrown open before thee: where is the memorial of one hour spent in holy instruction, or in fervent prayer with them, or for them? Can I approve, can I acquit, you on such a review? Or shall I not rather visit for these things? and shall not my soul be avenged for such a conduct as this?

And your children,—will they be silent on the occasion? Did Adam, in the distress and amazement of his soul, when in the presence of his judge, accuse Eve, his wife, so lately taken from his side, and committed to his protection, and still, no doubt, appearing lovely in the midst of sorrow? And will your children in that terrible day spare you? You may rather expect they will labour to the utmost to aggravate a crime which costs them so dear, that so they may, if possible, alleviate their own guilt, or if not, indulge their revenge. "O God," may they perhaps then cry out, in the most piercing accents of indignation and despair, "thou art righteous in the sentence thou passest upon us, and we justly die for our own iniquity. We have destroyed ourselves. But wilt thou not remember that our ruin is in part chargeable here? Had these our parents been faithful to thee, and to us, it had perhaps been prevented. Had our infancy been formed by religious instruction, we might not have grown up to wickedness; we might not, in the advance of life, have despised thy word, and trampled on thy Son; but might this day have been owned by thee as thy children, and have risen to that inheritance of light and glory, which we now behold at this unapproachable distance. Oh! cursed be the fathers that begat us; cursed the womb that bare us; cursed the paps that gave us suck! Remember us, O Lord, whilst thou art judging them; and let us have this one wretched comfort, in the midst of all our agonies, that it is not with impunity that they have betrayed our souls!"

This is indeed shocking and diabolical language; and for that very reason, it is so much the more probable on so dreadful an occasion. And give me leave to ask you one question, my friends, and I will conclude this head. If your children were thus crying out against you in the bitterness of their souls, could you attempt to silence them, by reminding them of the care which you took of their temporal affairs, or of the riches and grandeur in which you left them on earth? Nay, could you have the heart so much as to mention such a trifle? And if you could not, then, in the name of God, Sirs, how do you satisfy yourselves to confine all your thoughts and labours to that which, by your own confession, will neither secure your children from everlasting destruction, nor give them one moment's relief in the review, when they are falling into it?

I will make no apology for the plainness and earnestness which I have used. Eternal interests are at stake, and the whole tenor of Scripture supports me in what I say. I had rather you should be alarmed with hearing these things from me now, than tormented with hearing them in another manner from your children, and from God, at last. If you please to take proper measures for preventing the danger, I have told you the way at large: if you do not, I hope I may say, "I am, in this respect, clear from your blood, and the blood of yours, who may perish by your means: look you to it."

But it is high time that I proceed in my address, and apply myself,

2. To those parents who have been careful to discharge the duty we have so copiously described and enforced.

I cannot suppose that any of us would pretend to maintain that in this, or any other branch of duty, we have acted up to the utmost extent and perfection of our rule. I hope, a humble sense of the deficiencies of all the best of our services, is frequently leading us to the believing views of a better

righteousness than our own, in which alone we can dare to appear before a holy God, and answer the demands of his perfect law. Nevertheless, it is surely allowable to rejoice in the testimony of our conscience, with regard to the regularity of our own behaviour, so far as it is conformable to reason and Scripture; and it is an important duty, thankfully to own those influences of sanctifying and strengthening grace, by which we are what we are.

It is with great pleasure I recollect the reason I have to believe, that many of you, Christians, who hear me this day, are, in the main, conscientiously practising these duties; and that some of you were doing it long before I was capable of exhorting and directing you. Acknowledge the singular goodness of God, by which you have been excited to them, and furnished for them.

More especially have you reason to adore it, if through grace you can say, with regard to the present success, what you may certainly say as to the future recompence, that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. Let God have the glory of his own work. I persuade myself, you understand the gospel too well, to ascribe it to the prudence of your own conduct, to the strength of your reasoning, or to the warmth and tenderness of your address. Whatever of these advantages you have possessed, were derived from God; and your very care for your offspring, is, (as the apostle expresses it in a like case,) the earnest care which God has put into your hearts. But it was not this care, or these advantages, alone, that produced so happy an effect. In vain had your doctrines from day to day dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew, in the most gentle and insinuating manner; in vain had the precious seed of the word been sown with unwearied diligence, and watered with tears too; had not God commanded the operations of his blessed Spirit to come down, as a more efficacious rain, as more fruitful showers, to water their hearts. O be not insensible of the favour! Your own souls might to this very day, have been a barren wilderness, a land of drought, a habitation of devils; and behold, not only they, but your families too, are like a field, like a garden, which the Lord has blessed. God might have cut you off many years ago, for your neglect of his covenant, or your breaches of it; and behold, he is establishing it, not only with you, but your seed after you, for an everlasting covenant. Methinks your hearts should overflow with gratitude and holy joy, while you dwell on such reflections as these. This should add a relish to all the pleasure you find in conversing with your children: this should quicken you to further diligence in cultivating those graces, which you have the satisfaction to see already implanted: this should reconcile you to all the afflictions with which Providence may exercise either you or them: this should support you in the views of a separation, either by your own death, or by theirs; since you have so comfortable a hope, that if they are removed they will go to a heavenly Father, and that if they are left behind you, they will be safe and happy under his care, till you meet in a better world, where you will be for ever to each other a mutual glory and joy.

But I cannot congratulate you on such an occasion, without the danger of adding affliction to the afflicted parents, whose circumstances, alas! are far different from yours. I fear, my friends, that there are some amongst you, who look round you, and look forwards, with far different prospects; some who are, with bleeding hearts, borrowing the complaint, which we who are ministers of the gospel so frequently breathe forth, We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought. "O (may you perhaps add) that it were only in vain! Those dear children, which we early devoted to God in baptism, which we endeavoured to educate in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, the children of our hopes, the children of our prayers, are unfruitful under all our cultivation; or, it may be, visibly turned aside from the good ways in which they were trained up; as if they had known them only to reject and affront them: so that, we have reason to fear, that all we have already done, as it is an aggravation of their guilt, will be a proportionable aggravation of their ruin."

It is indeed a very pitiable case. We owe you our compassions, and we owe you our prayers; but permit us to intermix our consolations and our admonitions. You have at least delivered your own souls; and as you participate in the sorrows of faithful ministers, you may share in their comforts too; and say with them, Though the objects of our compassionate care be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious, for our work is with the Lord, and our reward with our God. Go on therefore in the midst of all your discouragements, and, in this respect, be not weary in well-doing. Take heed of such a despair, as would cut the sinews of future endeavours. If your child were labouring under any bodily distemper, you would be very unwilling that the physicians should quite give him over, and try no further medicines: you would follow them, and say, "Can nothing more be done? Is there not the least glimmering of hope?" Alas! my friends, a child given up by a pious parent, is, to a believing eye, a much more melancholy sight, than a patient given over by the physicians. Excuse me then, if I follow you with the question, "Can nothing more be done? Is there not the least glimmering of hope?" Who told you, that the sentence of condemnation is sealed, while you are sure it is not executed? Is the danger extreme? Let your efforts be so much the more zealous, your admonitions so much the

more frequent and serious, your prayers so much the more earnest and importunate. And on the whole, (to allude to the words of David, on a much lower occasion,) who can tell whether God will be gracious to you, that the child may live? And the sad apprehensions which you now entertain, may only serve to increase the joy with which you shall then say, This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

II. I would address myself to children: To you, the dear lambs of the flock, whom I look upon as no contemptible part of my charge. I have been speaking for you a great while, and now give me leave to speak to you; and pray do you endeavour, for a few minutes, to mind every word that I say.

You see, it is your parents' duty to bring you up for God. The great God of heaven and earth has been pleased to give his express command, that you should be trained up in the way in which you should go, even in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is the wonderful goodness of God to give such a charge; and methinks you should be affected with it, and should be inquiring what you should do in return.

Now there are three things, which I would ask of every one of you, in return for this gracious notice which the great God has taken of you children; and I am sure, if you love your own souls, you will not deny me any of them.—Be willing to learn the things of God;—pray for them that teach you;—and see to it, you do not learn them in vain. Listen diligently, that you may understand and remember each of these.

1. Be willing to learn the things of God.

The things of God are very delightful, and they are very useful; and, whatever you may think of it, your life depends on your acquaintance with them. So Christ himself says, This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. Therefore you, children, should not think much of the labour of learning these things. Oh! far from that, you should be every day upon your knees, begging God, that you may be taught to know him, and to know Christ. God has done a great deal more for you, than he has for many others. You might have been born in a place, where you would never have seen a Bible in all your lives; where you would never have heard of the name of Christ, where you might never have been instructed in the nature of duty and sin, nor have been told of the world beyond the grave; and so would probably have fallen into hell, before you had known there was such a place. And the great God has ordained matters so, that you are born under the light of the gospel, and have such plain and excellent instructions, that you may know more of divine things in your infancy, than the wise men amongst the heathens did, when they were old and grey-headed, and had spent all their lives in study. And will you be so ungrateful, as not to be willing to learn, when such provision is made for your instruction? God forbid! Shall God give you his word, and your parents and ministers employ their time, and their pains, to teach you the meaning of it, and will you refuse to attend to it? That were foolish and wicked indeed. I hope much better things of you. This is my first advice: be willing to learn. I add,

2. Pray for those that are to teach you.

I would hope you, little creatures, dare not live without prayer. I hope God, who sees in secret, sees many of you on your knees every morning and every evening, asking a blessing from him as your heavenly Father. Now let me entreat you, that at such times you would pray for those that instruct you in divine things; pray that God would bless them for it, and pray that he would help them in it. In praying thus for us, you do indeed pray for yourselves. There is a gracious promise to the people of God: "And they shall be all taught of God:" pray that it may be fulfilled. Pray, that God would teach us to teach you: else we should attempt it to very little purpose. Pray for your parents, and pray for your ministers.

Pray for your parents: That God would help them to instruct you in such a manner as they have now been directed: that they may do it plainly, so that you may be able to understand what they say: and seriously, that you may be brought to a holy awe of God; and tenderly, that you may be engaged to love God and his word, and Christ and his ways: and pray that your parents may be stirred up to do it frequently, to give you line upon line, and precept upon precept, that you may be put in mind of what you are so ready to forget.

And let me desire you, my dear charge, when you pray for your parents, to pray for your minister too. I declare it again, in the most public manner, it is my earnest desire that children would pray for me. And I verily believe every faithful minister of Christ would join with me in such a request. We do not, we dare not, despise the prayers of one of these little ones. Far from that, I am persuaded it would greatly revive and encourage us, and we should hope that God had some singular mercy in store for us and his people, if we were sure the children of the congregation were every day praying for a blessing on our labours.

3. Take heed that you do not learn in vain.

The great truths which you are taught from the word of God are not intended merely to fill your heads with notions, but to make your hearts and lives more holy. You know the way to your father's house, every step of it, but that would never carry you home, if you would not go in it. No more will it signify to know the way to heaven, unless you

walk in it. If you know these things, says the Lord Jesus Christ himself, happy are ye if ye do them. And I may add, that if ye do them not, it had been happier for you if you had never known them. Dear children, consider it; it is but a little while, and you must die: and when those active bodies of yours are become cold, mouldering clay, the great God of heaven and earth will call your souls to his judgment-seat. As sure as you are now in his house, you will shortly, very shortly, be standing before his awful throne. Then he will examine to what purpose you have heard so many religious instructions, so many good lessons. Then he will examine, whether you have feared him, and loved him, and served him, and received the Lord Jesus into your hearts, as your Saviour and your King; whether you have chosen sin or holiness for your way, earth or heaven for your portion. And if it be found that you have lived without thought and without prayer, without any regard to the eye of God always upon you, and the word of God always before you, it will be a most lamentable case. You will have reason to wish you had never heard of these things at all; for he has said, The servant which knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Even while I am speaking to you, death is coming on; perhaps his scythe may cut you down while you are but coming up as flowers. I speak to you thus plainly and earnestly, because I do not know but you may be in eternity before another Lord's day. O pray earnestly that God would give you his grace to fit you for glory; and that all you learn may be so blessed, that you may be made wise to salvation by it. The Lord grant that it may.

And I have one thing to tell you for your encouragement, and then I have done with you for this time. How young soever you are, and how broken soever your prayers may be, the great and glorious Lord of angels and men will be willing to hear what you say. You may be sure to be welcome to the throne of grace. The Lord Jesus Christ, when he was upon earth, was very angry with those who would have hindered little children from coming to him. He said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. And Christ is as compassionate now as ever he was. Go to him, and you may humbly hope he will, as it were, take you up in his arms, and bless you. He has said it, and I hope you will never forget it; I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me. O that I were but as sure that every child in this assembly would go and ask a blessing from Christ, as I am that our dear Lord is willing to bestow it! But to draw to a conclusion.

III. I shall address myself to those young persons who are grown up to years of maturity, under the advantages of a religious education, and are not yet fixed in families of their own.

I hope that many of you have been sensible of the value of those opportunities you have enjoyed, and by divine grace have been enabled to improve them well; yet I must add, that I fear there are others amongst you who have unhappily neglected and abused them. I must apply myself distinctly to each of you.

1. To those young persons, who have neglected and abused the advantages of a religious education.

I confess, there are hardly any to whom I speak with so little pleasure, because I have seldom less reason to hope I shall succeed. What shall I say to you? What can I say, that you have not often heard, and often despised? One is almost tempted, in such a circumstance, to turn reasonings and expostulations into upbraidings; and even to adopt those too passionate words of Moses, "Hear now, ye rebels, you that have grown up in the knowledge, and yet in the contempt, of divine things; you that have disappointed the hopes, and slighted the admonitions, of your pious parents, and so have broken their spirits, and, it may be, their hearts too, and have brought down their hoary hairs with sorrow to the grave. One way or another you have perhaps silenced them. But is it a small thing to you, that you have thus wearied men, and will you attempt to weary your God also? Can you dare to hope, that you shall at last carry those proud thoughtless heads triumphant over all the terrors of his word?" You imagine it a very happy circumstance that you have got loose from those mortifying lessons, and uneasy restraints, you were once under. But really, when one seriously considers whither these liberties lead you, and where they will probably end, a just resentment of your ingratitude is almost disarmed, and indignation is converted into pity.

Alas! sinners, the way of all transgressors is hard; but yours is peculiarly so. You, whom I am now addressing, are in the morning of your days, and it is not to be supposed that the impressions of a good education are yet entirely effaced. What future years may do I know not; but hitherto, I persuade myself, you have frequently your reflections and your convictions: convictions, which have force enough to torment you, though not to reform you; to plant thorns in the paths of sin, though not to reduce you to those of duty. But if you feel nothing of this remorse and anxiety, such a dead calm is then more dreadful than the fiercest storm and tumult of thought: a sad indication that your course in wickedness has been exceeding swift; indeed, so swift, that it is probable it may not be long. Oh that it might immediately be stopped by divine grace, rather than by the vengeance you have so much reason to fear.

At least be engaged to pause in it for a few moments, and let reason and conscience be permitted to speak. How is it that you make yourselves, I will not say entirely, but tolerably, easy? Is it by the disbelief of Christianity? Do you secretly suspect, that the gospel is but a cunningly devised fable? Yet even that suspicion is not enough. Let me rather ask, "Are you so confident it is so, that you will venture to stake even the life of your souls upon its falsehood?" If you were come to such a confidence, yet it is amazing to me how, even on the principles of natural religion alone, persons in your circumstances can make themselves easy. Can any of the libertines of the present age, that believe a God, imagine that he is altogether such a one as themselves? Can they flatter themselves so far as to hope, that they, in the ways of negligence, profaneness, and debauchery, are likely to meet with a more favourable treatment from him, than those pious parents whose principles they deride? or that this loose and irregular course will end better, than that life of prayer and self-denial, of faith and love, of spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, which they discerned in them? Few are so abandoned, even of common sense, as to think this.

But these are more distant concerns. I bless God, this kind of infidelity is not in fashion here. You assent to the gospel as true, and therefore must know, that God, who observes and records your conduct now, will bring you into judgment for it another day. And if you go on thus, how will you stand in that judgment? What will you plead? On what will you repose the confidence of your souls, that will not prove a broken reed, which will go up into your hand, and pierce you deep, in proportion to the stress you lay upon it? While you behave like a generation of vipers, think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father. Think not to plead a relation to the religious parents, whose God and whose ways you have forsaken. Think not to plead an early dedication to him in the baptismal covenant, which you have broken, despised, and in fact renounced. Think not to plead that external profession, which you have so shamefully contradicted, and even by wearing it, dishonoured. You will see the weakness of such pleas as these, and will not dare to trifle with that awful tribunal, so far as to mention them there. And when you are yourselves thus silent and confounded, who will appear as an advocate in your favour? Your parents were often presenting their supplications and intercessions for you before the throne of grace, but there will be no room to present them before the throne of justice: nor will they have any inclination to do it. All the springs of natural fondness will be dried up; they will no longer regard you as their children, when they see you in the accursed number of the enemies of their God.

And when you are thus disowned by your parents, and disowned by God, whither will you cause your shame and your terror to go? You, who have had so many privileges, and so many opportunities, perhaps I may add, so many fond presumptuous hopes too, how will you bear to see multitudes coming from carnal and profane families, to share with your parents in the inheritance of glory from which you are excluded? You, who were the children of the kingdom; whose remorse therefore must be the more cutting; whose condemnation therefore must be the more weighty! Observe in how strong and lively a view our Lord has represented this awful thought, in words which, though immediately addressed to the unbelieving Jews, are remarkably applicable to you: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, (your pious ancestors,) in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out: and many shall come from the north, and the south, and the east, and the west, and shall sit down with them in the kingdom of God; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness.

But through the divine forbearance you are not yet shut out. There is still hope even for you, if you will now return to the God of your fathers, from whom, by these aggravated transgressions, you have so deeply revolted. Let me then once more tenderly entreat you, and solemnly charge you, by the consolations of the living, and by the memory of the pious dead, by your present comforts, by your future hopes, by the nearly-approaching solemnities of death and judgment, by the mercies of God, and by the blood of a Redeemer, that you consider, and show yourselves men; that you set yourselves, as it were, attentively to read over the characters inscribed on your memories and understandings in the course of a religious education; that you hearken to the voice of conscience repeating those admonitions, and to the voice of the blessed God, as speaking in his word to confirm them; and finally, that you apply to him in a most importunate manner, for those victorious influences of his Spirit, which are able to mollify and transform these hearts of stone, and to raise even you, from so low a depth of degeneracy and danger, to the character and happiness of the genuine children of Abraham. God forbid, that I should sin against your souls, and my own, in ceasing to pray that it may be so! And now,

2. I shall conclude all, with an address to those young persons, who have been, through grace, engaged to a becoming improvement of the religious education they have enjoyed.

I have the pleasure of being well assured, that

there are many such amongst you: many who are now the joy of ministers and parents, and the hope of the church for succeeding years. Let me entreat you, my dear brethren and friends, that you daily acknowledge the divine goodness, in favouring you with such advantages; and, what is still more valuable, in giving you a heart to prize and to improve them.

Think how different your circumstances might have been. Providence might have cast your lot in some distant age or country, where the true God had been unknown, where your early steps had been guided to the groves and temples of detestable idols, and you might possibly have been taught to consecrate lust or murder by the name of devotion. Or you might have been educated in popish darkness, where the Scripture would have been to you as a sealed book, and you would have seen Christianity polluted with idolatrous rites, on some accounts more inexcusable than those of the heathen, and adulterated with the most absurd and pernicious errors. There the mistaken piety of your parents might have proved a dangerous snare, whilst it had infused a blind, and perhaps a cruel, zeal, and a proud furious opposition to all the methods of better information.

Nay, even here, in a protestant country, is it not too evident, there are many families in which had you been born and educated, you had sat as in darkness and the shadow of death, though in the land of light and the valley of vision? Your infant tongue had been formed to the language of hell, and exercised in curses and oaths rather than in prayer. You had early been taught to deride every appearance of serious godliness; and all the irregular propensities of nature had been strengthened by examples of wickedness, which might have been sufficient to corrupt innocence itself. When you consider the wide difference between these circumstances and your own, surely whatever your portion of worldly possessions may be, you have reason to lift up your hands to heaven with wonder and gratitude, and to say, The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage.

Nor is this all: There are many around you who have shared in such advantages as these, and have sinfully abused them, to the dishonour of God, to the grief of their parents, and to their own danger, and perhaps their ruin. And why are not you in that wretched number? or who maketh thee to differ from them? Why are not your hearts barred against the entrance of a Redeemer, but because the Lord has opened them? Why were not all the good instructions which have been given to you, like seed sown upon a rock, but because God gave the increase? Adore the riches of this distinguishing grace.

And let me earnestly exhort you, that you be careful still further to improve it. Give me leave to say, that these fair openings of early seriousness do naturally raise a very high expectation of eminent advances in religion. Let it be your humble and diligent care, that these expectations be answered; that your goodness may not be like the morning cloud, or the early dew, which soon goeth away; but rather like the dawning light, which shines brighter and brighter till the perfect day.

Whilst Providence continues these holy parents to whom you have been so highly indebted, let it be your constant care, by all the most cheerful returns of duty and gratitude, to express your regards to them, and your sense of so great an obligation. And I will add, let it be your care to hand down to future ages those important advantages you have received from them.

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. It is highly probable that in a few years numbers of you will be conducted into new relations; and we please ourselves with the hope, that you will carry religion and happiness into rising families. Let not those hopes be disappointed. When God fixes you in houses of your own, let it be your first concern to erect there such domestic altars, as those at which you have worshipped with such holy pleasure, and sensible tokens of divine acceptance. Let the sacred treasure of divine knowledge, which has been deposited with you, be faithfully delivered down to your descendants; that they, in their turn, may arise with the same pious zeal, to transmit it to another generation, that shall be born of them.

And may divine grace, that inexhaustible spring of the most valuable blessings, sweetly flow on to add efficacy to all, that real vital religion may be the glory and joy of every succeeding age; till this earth (which is but a place of education for the children of God, during their minority) shall pass away to make room for a far nobler scene and state of existence; where pious parents and their religious offspring shall for ever enjoy the most delightful society, inhabiting the palace of our heavenly Father, and surrounding the throne of our glorified Redeemer! Amen.

SERMONS

TO YOUNG PERSONS.

DEDICATION.

To the Young Persons belonging to the Dissenting Congregations at Hinckley, Harborough, and Kibworth in Leicestershire, and at Ashley, and Northampton.

My dear Brethren and Friends,

At length, after a long and unexpected delay, I offer to your perusal a few sermons which I promised the public some years ago; all which some or other of you heard, and in which you are all concerned.

It is not material to tell you on what account I have laid by some, which I had transcribed for your service, and which you probably expected to have seen with these. I have substituted in their room such, as I thought might, by the divine blessing, be most useful to you.

I hope you will peruse them with candour; and the rather, considering they were prepared for the press chiefly in some broken moments, while I was on journeys, or in some fragments of time at home, often taken from my sleep; as the stated duties of my calling require an attendance, which will not allow of any long interruption. You would readily excuse what defects you may discover in them, if you knew that tender concern for your present and future happiness, by which every sermon, and every page, has been dictated. They have often been mingled with prayers and with tears; and my heart is so full of affection to you, that it is with great difficulty that I forbear enlarging, more than the proper limits of such an address will admit.

As for you, my Leicestershire friends, amongst whom my ministry was opened, and the first years of it were delightfully spent, I cannot forget, and I hope you have not forgotten, that intimate and pleasing friendship with which we were once almost daily conversing; the sweet counsel we have often taken together in private, as well as the pleasure with which we have gone to the house of God in company. All these sermons, but the second and fifth of them, were first drawn up for your service, and preached to you; and much of that tenderness for you, which gave birth to them, has been rising afresh in my mind while I have been taking this review of them. I hope they were not then like water unprofitably spilt on the ground, and that the perusal of them may revive impressions made by the first hearing. Intermediate years have introduced new scenes; and some of us who were then in the morning of life, are now risen up to the meridian of it. Providence has conducted many of you into new relations; and it is my pleasure to observe, in how honourable and useful a manner several of you are filling them up with their proper duties.

While you are yourselves instances of the happy consequences which attend a religious education, I hope you will be singularly careful, that your descendants may share in the like advantages; and I shall heartily rejoice, if these sermons, or those I have formerly published, may be of any assistance to you in those pious cares. God has put an early period to the lives of some, who, when I was amongst you, were the growing hopes of the respective congregations to which they belonged. Several of them have died while these sermons were transcribing. May the thought quicken you in the improvement of so uncertain a life; and may divine grace render some things, peculiarly intended for the use of those who are now beyond the reach of such an address, serviceable to others, into whose hands they may fall!

I greatly rejoice in the goodness of God to you, in setting over you such able and faithful shepherds, as those worthy ministers of Christ, under whose care you now are; and I heartily pray, that you and they may long be spared, as comforts to each other, and as blessings to the church. Though I am providentially separated from you, may I still hear that you walk worthy of the Lord; and may every advancing year and revolving day of life, ripen us more for that happiness, which we hope ere long to share with each other, in the house of our heavenly Father!

If any of you, who were once my care and my hope, have now forsaken the ways and the God of your fathers, and turned aside to the paths of licentiousness and folly, I now repeat the admonitions which I have formerly given you, that these things will, to you above all others, be bitterness in the end. And I entreat you, that if you have any little regard still remaining, for one to whom some of you have professed not a little, you would at least attentively peruse the sixth of these discourses, as containing reflections, which must, sooner or later, pierce your hearts with penitential remorse, or everlasting despair. O that divine grace might concur with it to prevent your ruin, and might give me to see you

as wise, as religious, and as happy, as those excellent parents once wished you, whose eyes are now closed in the dust; whose precepts and examples, charges and tears, you seem long since to have forgotten!

As for you, my dear friends, here at home, I have the pleasure of conversing so often with you, that it is the less necessary now to address you at large. Yet it is but justice to you thus publicly to declare, that, amidst all that goodness and mercy which has followed me all my days, there is no providence which I more gratefully own, than that which brought me hither; nor does any thing contribute more to make my ministry here comfortable, than the spirit of seriousness which discovers itself in many young persons amongst us. O that it were as universal, as in some it is amiable and exemplary! Permit me to remind you, that, as your remarkable importunity was the consideration, which turned the scales for my coming hither, after they had long hovered in uncertainty, so you are under some peculiar obligations to study the ease and comfort of my life, which you can never so effectually secure, as by the holy regularity of your own. Our aged friends are dropping away apace; nay, the graves have swallowed up many, very many, of your own age, who, but a few months ago, promised long and extensive usefulness here. It is you that are to comfort me under these sorrows. I can solemnly say, that I had much rather be numbered amongst them, than live to see the glory of practical religion lost in this society, while it is under my care. Remember that, under God, you are its support; and remember, that the high hopes you have given me, would make a disappointment sit so much the heavier upon my heart.

But I will not conclude with any thing so uncomfortable, as the mention of a disappointment from you; but rather with recommending you, and those to whom I have formerly stood in the like relation, to the care of Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to the influence of that gracious Spirit, who can cause you to grow in knowledge and piety like the grass, and like willows by the water-courses. A generous friend* is intending some of you a present of that course of sermons, which I am now preaching on the power and grace of Christ, and the evidences of his glorious gospel; and it much sweetens the labour of preparing them for the press, to reflect, that they are in part intended for your service. I hope you will not forget to pray for all that appear concerned for your spiritual edification, and eternal happiness, and more especially for

Your most affectionate and faithful friend and servant,

Northampton, December 30th, 1734. P. DODDRIDGE.

SERMON V.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RISING GENERATION.

PSALM xxii. 30, 31.

A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness to a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

IT is a very beautiful saying of an ancient Jewish writer,† which has its parallel amongst some of the finest of the heathen poets,‡ that "as of the green leaves on a thick tree, some fall, and others grow; so of the generations of flesh and blood, one cometh to an end, and another is born." In this respect the resemblance is obvious; but there is another, in which it will not always so evidently hold. We perceive not any remarkable difference between the leaves of one year and of another: they which open at the return of the spring, are commonly as large and fair as those which the preceding winter had destroyed. But it has been matter of long lamentation, that the children of men are continually sinking into deeper and deeper degeneracy. Solomon denies not that the former days were better than the present, when he cautions against too curious an inquiry into the reasons why such an alteration was permitted: and those who know little else of the most celebrated writers of antiquity, can quote their complaints on this melancholy occasion. They can tell you that Homer§ observed, "that children are seldom better, but frequently worse, than their parents;" and they often repeat that lively and comprehensive acknowledgment of Horace: ‖ "Our fathers, who fell short of the virtues of their ancestors, have produced us a generation worse than themselves; and our children will be yet more degenerate than we."

These complaints and forebodings have been borrowed by every age since they were published, and are to this day borrowed by us, as what we imagine more applicable to ourselves than to those who wrote them, or to any who have already cited them. I will not say there is universal cause for such an application: but I am sure the face of affairs in many families, and may I not add, in many churches

* Wm. Coward, Esq. † Eccles. xiv. 18.

‡ Homer. Iliad. 2. ver. 146—149. & ver. 463—467. Mus apud Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi.

§ Hesiod. Op. et Dier. lib. [illegible]

‖ Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiorem.
Horat. lib. iii. od. vi. ver. 46, &c.

too, is abundantly sufficient not only to excuse, but to vindicate it.

In the midst of this mournful survey, the heart of every pious Israelite will tremble for the ark of the Lord, and he will be ready to say, perhaps with an excess of solicitude and of anguish, "What will the end of these things be? Surely God will utterly abandon those who so basely desert him in contempt of the clearest revelation of his gospel, and the most engaging or awakening calls of his providence. The very memory of religion will at length be lost; and when the Son of man cometh he will not find faith on the earth."

Now there seems to be something in the very sound of the text which may relieve our minds under these gloomy apprehensions. A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation: they shall come and declare his name to a third succession; a people who shall be born of them. Here is an evident promise or prediction, that the knowledge and the fear of God should be propagated from one age and generation to another: and this must be an agreeable assurance, whatever the particular occasion were on which it was introduced. Were this psalm to be considered only as relating to the calamities of David, and the wonderful deliverance which God wrought out for him, the words before us might be improved for our own consolation on the justest principles of analogy; for if a temporal salvation granted to him were to make so deep and so lasting an impression on distant nations, and on future ages, how reasonably might the like effects be expected from that infinitely more important and extensive salvation, which is exhibited to us in the everlasting gospel?

But after all, the application of this passage of scripture to the purposes for which I have alleged it, does not depend on so long a train of consequences; for if we attentively peruse this psalm, and diligently survey the distress and glory which are described in the several parts of it, we must be obliged to confess, that a greater than David is here. It contains a most lively and sublime prophecy of the sufferings of the Messiah, and the exaltation with which they were to be rewarded;* and particularly mentions the calling of the Gentiles in his church, and the propagation of his religion to future ages.† All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; all they who are fat upon the earth, i. e. (by a usual Hebraism) persons of eminent rank and in plentiful circumstances,‡ shall eat and worship, i. e. they shall pay their public homage to him, and enter themselves solemnly into his covenant, as the Jewish votaries did by eating of the sacrifices which were offered to him: and, on the other hand, those that go down to the dust, i. e. who are in the most indigent circumstances, shall bow before him,§ even he that cannot keep alive his own soul,‖ who is so poor that he wants the necessaries of life; as if it had been said, there shall be a universal submission to him, in which the greatest and meanest shall concur. And the text assures us, that his triumphs shall be as lasting, as extensive: A future seed shall serve him; they shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation; i. e. being brought to the knowledge and the profession of the true religion, they shall be owned by God as his people: and it shall be their pious care, to declare this glorious display of his righteousness¶ to a people who shall be born of them, that he has done this; that it is the hand of God which has wrought out this great salvation. And though there are not many generations mentioned here, yet other scriptures assure us, that the kingdom of the Messiah is to be of perpetual duration, and consequently that such promises as these are to be taken in their utmost extent. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth: his name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that the words of the text are a prophecy, that the kingdom of Christ shall be perpetual, and extend itself to the latest generations, as well as the remotest climates: and, through the divine goodness, we must acknowledge, that this day is this scripture in part fulfilled among us. We dwell in a country which, with regard to Judea, lay at the ends of the earth, and which was long overrun with barbarity and idolatry; yet we are now instructed in the knowledge of the God of Israel, and are this day assembled for his worship; so that at the distance of more than two thousand years from the publication of this prediction, we are the living witnesses of its truth; being ourselves a seed who profess to serve the Lord, and accounted to him for a generation.

I hope it is the concern of many of us, that the concluding words may be fulfilled in those who come after us; that his gospel righteousness may so be declared to them, that they likewise might be engaged to serve the Lord, not only in the external

* See particularly, ver. 7, 14, 16, 18, 22, et seq. † Ver. 27—31.

‡ See Psal. lxxxvii. 31. Isa. x. 16. Psal. xvii. 10. and compare Psal. xlv. 12. lxxii. 10, 11. Isa. lx. 3, 5, 10, 13. Rev. xxi. 24. all which texts speak of the submission of princes and great men to Christ.

§ Compare Isa. xxvi. 5. xxix. 4. 18. l. 8. lvii. 8.

‖ So the Hebrew נפשו חיה (Gen. xix. 20. Mic. vi. 7.) is rendered by the Greek translator, and several others. Compare also Psal. xxii. 29. and the parallel passage, Isa. xxvi. 19. Ezek. xviii. 27. Dan. xii. 2. Thus also Buchanan paraphrases on the words:

Hortet illi populus in hymnis
Quo membra lesos artibus fungamur
Ungente vita vix trahit.

It is certain the phrase here translated "keep alive the soul" is often used for the preservation of the animal life. Gen. xxx. 30. 1 Kings xx. 31. Ezek. xiii. 19. Yet the ransom which was purchased at so expensive a rate at the siege of Jerusalem, is said to "recover or restore the soul," Lam. i. 11.

¶ Compare Rom. iii. 25, 26.

forms of the true religion, but with the affections of the heart, and the obedience of the life.

That this concern may be more deep, more active, and more universal, it will be the business of my present discourse, to represent to you at large the importance of the rising generation. And here I would aim, not merely at the demonstration of a speculative truth, which may leave your minds as cold and as irregular as it found them; but I would labour, by the divine assistance, to possess you with such a sense of the case, as may have a powerful influence on your temper and behaviour; that so our meditations on this excellent promise may, through the concurrence of God, be the means of its more complete accomplishment.

I am now particularly concerned, that you, my younger brethren, may be impressed with what I say: I shall therefore address myself directly to you, and endeavour to show how important and desirable it is, that you be early tinctured with a sense of religion, and heartily engaged in the service of God.

May the Spirit of God, in the mean time, so speak to your hearts, as that life and energy might be added to those convictions which, I am confident, your reason will not be able to oppose!

Now I would entreat you, on this occasion, seriously to consider the importance of your character and behaviour, with regard both to yourselves and others.

I. Nothing can be of greater importance, with regard to yourselves, than your being early engaged in the service of God.

It is a consideration, which equally concerns you, and others of a more advanced age, that religion is, generally speaking, the surest way we can take to be happy in this world, and, through the merits and righteousness of a Redeemer, the only way to glory in another; so that, as the apostle expresses it, godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Its tendency to promote our present comfort and happiness, will abundantly appear from the influence it has on our external circumstances, and on the temper of our minds. As to the former of these, I might enlarge on its beneficial effects, with regard to health and reputation, estate and friendship; and as to the latter, nothing is more obvious than that it tends to secure the tranquillity and the pleasure of the soul, as it either suppresses or moderates, those turbulent passions which throw it into anguish and confusion, while it gives abundant exercise to those which are most sweet and delightful. Such is the immediate blessedness of the man who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments. And whosoever reflects on the evidence with which each of these particulars is attended, must acknowledge, that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

To complete the argument, it is to be considered, that these pleasant and peaceful paths lead up to the paradise of God; for invariable truth and goodness has engaged, that to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, he will render eternal life.

On the other hand, if you go on in the neglect of God and religion, it is very possible you may be undone for this world, as thousands have been, by debauchery and folly: or, under some restraints of common prudence, which may secure you from that, if you do not violently overbear the voice of conscience, it will often disquiet and torment you by its remonstrances and expostulations; till in a little time death will remove you to the seats of horror, where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For God has solemnly declared, that he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil; when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the gospel.

Are not the youngest of you concerned in such declarations as these? And if you are, let conscience say, whether they are to be despised? It evidently appears the question is this: Shall you spend your days upon earth like rational creatures, in the noblest enjoyment of God and of yourselves, till you rise to the glories and pleasures of the heavenly world? or shall you live like idiots and like brutes, in the amusements of a vain imagination, and the indulgence of the meanest appetites, till you sink for ever under all the shame and remorse of a polluted guilty mind, and the almighty vengeance of an incensed God? And can you be so stupid as to imagine this question will bear a debate, or that any of the little interests of time and sense are to be regarded, while these things are forgotten? Surely I may say, with the utmost propriety, as Moses to the children of Israel, I have this day been setting before you life and death, a blessing and a curse, choose which shall be your portion; but make the choice as those that remember, it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.

"It is true," may you perhaps reply in your own minds, "these are solid arguments to prove, that religion is to be attended to, sooner or later; but it will not appear from them that it is peculiarly the concern of the rising generation." I answer, (as you have often heard me at large,) If it is to be regarded at all it should be regarded immediately; because all the futurity you presume upon is utterly precarious. The uncertainty of human life, and our entire dependence on that sacred Spirit, who is

perfectly free in all his operations, concur to demonstrate, beyond all possibility of contradiction, the madness of delay; and the ruin of thousands bears testimony to it. I might add, that there are many peculiar advantages of early piety which render it vastly preferable to a late repentance, even supposing it were as certain as it is dubious: but I shall not enter into the enumeration of them now, since I intend them for the subject of a distinct discourse.* What I have already said may be sufficient to convince you, if you allow yourselves to reflect, that your own present and future happiness is apparently concerned in the case before us. I add,

II. That it is of great importance to the happiness of others, that you of the rising generation be early tinctured with a sense of religion, or, in the language of the text, be a seed who shall serve the Lord.

And here I would show at large,—that the happiness of all who converse with you may be considerably influenced by your character and behaviour;—that the comfort of your pious parents and ministers is peculiarly concerned in it;—and that the propagation of religion to them who are yet unborn, does, under God, most evidently depend upon you.

1. The happiness of all who converse with you will be considerably influenced by your character and behaviour.

They who have any sense of religion themselves will be tenderly concerned for your happiness. They will rejoice to see you going on in those ways which must certainly lead to it; and they will be heartily grieved to see you choosing your own misery, and rejecting the counsel of God against yourselves. And others of a humane and generous temper, though destitute of the principles of true piety, will be solicitous for the honour, the comfort, and the usefulness of your lives.

But besides this pleasure or uneasiness which will redound to such persons in consequence of these friendly and benevolent sentiments, you ought to consider, that all who converse with you may find their happiness increased or diminished, by your regard to religion, or your neglect of it, as your behaviour to them will be influenced by it.

If you be early delivered into the mould of the gospel, you will quickly learn that you were not born for yourselves. The mercies of God, and the example of a Redeemer, will teach you to exert yourselves to the utmost for the service of mankind, and to do good to all as you have opportunity. And in how many instances may your pious and charitable cares be effectual for the benefit of your fellow-creatures! In the series of life how many in the depths of poverty may be relieved by your liberality! How many in perplexed and intricate circumstances may be guided aright by your prudent counsel! How many weeping eyes may be dried, and how many mourning hearts revived, by your tender sympathy and friendly condolence! And if there be already in your natural temper a tendency towards such expressions of humanity, how happily may it be directed and enlivened, when divine and evangelical motives are brought in to its assistance!

But further, your Christian charity will teach you to be, above all things, solicitous for the spiritual and eternal happiness of those about you. And who can say, how much you may promote it! How many more aged Christians may be excited to shake off their indolence, and quicken their pace when they observe your ardency and zeal! And how happily might your piety tend to awaken, and reclaim those, who are going on in the paths of the destroyer: how amiable would the graces of Christianity appear, as exemplified in you, amidst all the insnaring allurements of childhood and youth! And how affecting might it be to other young people, to hear religion recommended to them, not only by their parents and ministers, but by their brethren and companions!

Thus useful might you be in your earliest years, and as you were advancing in age and experience, your usefulness might be daily increasing: and if God should spare you to the decline of life, you might bring forth much nobler fruits in old age, than you could have done, if your entrance on a religious life had been deferred to that unseasonable time.

Thus may the whole period of your life be filled up with eminent service. And I will add, that your beneficial influence may extend far beyond the circle of your personal converse: you may be blessings to your country, indeed to the whole world, by drawing down the favour of God upon it, in part, as a crown of your piety, and an answer to your prayers. But,

On the contrary, if you neglect religion, you will deprive the world of all those benefits, which it may otherwise expect from you. If you are naturally covetous, you will probably indulge that unworthy temper, so as to withhold relief from those to whom it is most justly due: or if you be of a liberal disposition, your generosity will degenerate into prodigality; or perhaps you will squander away so much of your estates in vanity and debauchery, as to throw yourselves out of a capacity of assisting those, whom you most sincerely pity, and would gladly relieve. And as to the eternal happiness of others, it is not to be imagined that you will have

* Mr. Jennings's excellent sermon on this subject, amongst his other discourses to young people, has prevented the publication of the sermon here referred to. I hope my young friends will furnish themselves with those condescending and useful pieces, if there be any of them that have not yet done it.

any regard to it while you are negligent of your own.

Nor is this the worst: for, as hardly any are mere ciphers in life, it is much to be feared, that instead of blessings you may prove mischiefs to the world. The licentiousness to which corrupt nature will prompt you, may lead you by unthought-of consequences, to injure and defraud, as well as to grieve and torment, others. And where your behaviour is most friendly, it may be most pernicious. Instead of restoring and reclaiming the souls of your companions, you may pervert and destroy them by sinful discourses and impious examples. Thus you may draw down the vengeance of God on the places where you live, and provoke him to send some public calamity, as a punishment, for that universal degeneracy which you have abetted. So that (to close the melancholy scene) at the bar of God, and in the seats of torment, you may meet with multitudes of unhappy creatures, who will cry out on you, as the fatal cause of their ruin in this world, and their condemnation in that.

By such a variety of arguments does it appear, that the happiness of those you converse with will be considerably influenced by your temper and conduct. And are you so utterly lost to all sentiments of honour and goodness, as to be unconcerned at such a consideration as this? Again,

2. The comfort and happiness of your religious parents does, in a great measure, depend on your seriousness and piety.

What I have just been saying on the former heads, will evidently prove the truth of this observation. Your pious parents have a generous concern for the happiness of others, and this will engage them earnestly to wish, that you may be blessings, and not curses, to the world about you. And their peculiar affection for you must tenderly interest them in a case, on which your happiness, both in time and eternity, depends.

If they see you under the influences of early piety, unknown pleasure will arise in their minds: they will rejoice in it, not merely as it will be a security to them of a respectful and grateful treatment from you; but as it will, through grace, secure to you, their dear offspring, the entertainments of a religious life, and the prospects of a glorious immortality.

These reflections will give them inexpressible pleasure in a variety of circumstances. Their daily converse with you will be more agreeable to them than it could otherwise be, when they discern the lively impressions of religion upon your spirits, and perceive that you have a relish for those truths and promises of the gospel, which are their joy and song in the house of their pilgrimage. It will sometimes add a sweetness to the social exercises of devotion, to think that your souls are engaged with theirs, and regaled with the same sublime and transporting entertainments. And when they have reason to apprehend that you are retired for the duties of the closet, it will cheer their hearts to think, "Now is my child with his heavenly Father. Now has he separated himself from those vain amusements, which most of the same age pursue, that he may converse with God and his own soul, and be prepared for the business and the pleasures of heaven. And I hope, God is smiling upon him, and teaching him, by happy experience, that those pious labours are not in vain."

With such consolations will their hearts be supported in all the occurrences, which Providence may allot, either to you or them. If they meet with prosperity in their worldly affairs, and have a prospect of leaving you in plentiful circumstances, it will be a satisfaction to them to think, that they shall not consign their estates to those who will meanly hoard up the income of them, or throw it away in foolish and hurtful lusts; but to persons who will consider themselves as the stewards of God, and will endeavour to use what he has given to them for the honour of their Lord, and the good of mankind. Or, if they can give you but little, this thought will relieve them, that they commend you to the care of a Guardian and a Father, who is able abundantly to supply your necessities, and who has engaged, by the promises of his covenant, that those who fear him shall want no good thing. They will have the pleasure to think, that, how low soever your outward condition may be, you will be rich in grace, and in the entertainments of religion now, and in the glories of the heavenly inheritance at last. When they are themselves sinking under the decays of nature, their vigour and cheerfulness will be renewed in yours: or should yours be impaired by an afflictive providence, they will have the satisfaction of believing, that those afflictions proceed from a divine love, and shall at length turn to your advantage. It will revive their hearts in their dying moments to think, that when they are sleeping in the dust, you will stand up in their places, and support the interest of God in the world, with a fidelity and zeal perhaps superior to theirs. Or if an afflictive stroke should take you away before them, they will not mourn over your grave as those that have no hope. Faith will teach them to mingle praises with their tears, while it assures them, that though dead to them, you are living with God in glory: that you are preferred to an attendance on his throne above, where they may hope shortly to meet you on the most advantageous terms.

This is but a faint and imperfect description of the satisfaction which your parents would find in your early piety. And it follows from hence, as a necessary consequence, that if they see you grow

up in the neglect of religion, it will pierce their hearts with proportionable sorrow.

It is possible that you may arrive at such a daring degree of wickedness, as to treat them with negligence and contempt, or perhaps to answer all their melting expostulations with insults and rage. Such ungrateful and rebellious monsters we have heard of; and would to God that every parent in this assembly could say that he had only heard of them! But should you preserve some sense of humanity and decency; nay, should you behave towards them in the most dutiful and obliging manner, yet they must still mourn over you; and even your tenderness and complaisance to them would sometimes come in to add a more sensible anguish to their affliction. It would cut them to the heart to think that such dear, and in other respects amiable, children, were still the enemies of God, and the heirs of destruction. When they heard the vengeance of God denounced against sinners, and read the awful threatenings of his word, they would tremble to think that those terrible thunders were levelled against you. How little could they rejoice in that health or plenty which they saw you were abusing to your aggravated ruin! And how would they be terrified, when any distemper seized you, lest it should be the messenger to bear you away to eternal misery! If they were themselves dying, how mournfully must they take their leave of you, in an apprehension of seeing you no more till the day of accounts, and seeing you then in ignominy and horror at the left hand of the Judge! Or if they saw you removed by an early death, to what hopeless sorrows would they be abandoned! With what unknown agonies would they adopt that pathetic lamentation of David, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!

By such a variety of considerations does it appear, that the comfort and happiness of your pious parents does very much depend upon your temper and behaviour. And the argument is confirmed by the repeated testimony of the wisest of men, under the influences of the divine Spirit. He tells us again and again, that a wise son maketh a glad father; that whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father; and that the father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. On the other hand, he tells us, that a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. And though the tenderness of her sex may make the mother peculiarly sensible of the affliction, yet it is not confined to her; for he tells us elsewhere, that a foolish son is a grief to his father, as well as bitterness to her that bare him; yea, a foolish son is the calamity of his father. And once more, he that begetteth a fool does it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool has no joy; for the wickedness of his son impairs his relish for the other enjoyments of life.

Such a multitude of passages to the same purpose, seem intended to teach us the importance, as well as the certainty, of the argument. And it is more than hinted at in those remarkable words, My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.* As if he had said, make a serious pause, and diligently weigh the importance of that thought, that thy piety will be an inexpressible joy to me, thy father. And then, as if that were not enough, it is immediately added, Yea, my reins also shall rejoice (shall feel unutterable pleasure diffusing itself through all the secret recesses of my soul) when thy lips speak right things, which may manifest a heart under the influence of prudence and of religion.

And let me entreat you, my friends, to reflect for a few moments on the weight of the argument, that you may judge whether it will not bear all the stress which Solomon lays upon it. The happiness of your parents is in question; and can you slight that? Consider how much you owe to your parents, as they were the instruments of your being, and have been, under God, the principal support of it. Think of the tenderness with which they watched around your cradles, and of the many kind offices which they performed for you in your helpless infancy; which parental tenderness made delightful to them, when hardly any thing else could have made them tolerable. Think how liberally they have long contributed towards the supply of your wants; and in how many instances they have denied themselves that they might gratify you. Think how they have rejoiced with you in your joys, and mourned with you in your sorrows; how they have been terrified at your real dangers, and perhaps often disquieted with those timorous apprehensions which fondness rather than reason has suggested to them. And under the impression of such reflections, say, whether it may not reasonably be expected that you should have a most affectionate regard to their repose and comfort, and think with horror of becoming their grief and their torment.

I may add, that as the parents of some amongst you are declining under the infirmities of age, and on that account the objects of a respectful compassion to all, they should be so especially to you who are their children; for it may be, these infirmities have been hastened upon them by an excess of tenderness and concern for you. And will you add afflictions to the afflicted, and bring down with sorrow to the grave those venerable hoary heads, which you have perhaps made gray before their time! Surely you must abhor the thought, or God and man must abhor you.

* Prov. xxiii. 15. See the like emphatical form of speech, ver. 24, 25.

But I would not entertain so harsh a suspicion. I charitably hope, that you are not only impressed with this consideration, but will likewise be somewhat concerned, when you hear,

3. That the comfort and happiness of faithful ministers will be greatly affected by the character of the rising generation.

St. John assures the elect lady, that he rejoiced greatly when he found her children walking in the truth; and a variety of arguments concur to prove, that no pious minister can be indifferent in the case before us.

If we have any thing of humanity and generosity in our tempers, we must be concerned for your seriousness, on account of that influence which it has on the happiness of all about you, and particularly on that of your Christian parents. Many of them are the ornaments and glory of our assemblies, and the most dear and intimate of our friends; we are obliged therefore to take part with them in their sorrows and their joys, with relation to you their children. It must sensibly afflict us to see, that while their wisdom and their piety might command the reverence and the love of all that know them, enemies should arise up against them out of their own houses, and even the children of their bowels should prove their tormentors. Those dear children, from whom they fondly promised themselves the delight and support of their declining years. And when they come and tell us the tender story, when they freely open to us their sorrows and their fears on your account, and earnestly beg our prayers for you, that whatever they suffer, you may not be for ever undone, we are hardly able to stand it; but nature, as well as religion, teaches us to echo back their sighs, and to return their tears.

Thus we are concerned for the rising generation, as we sympathize with those whose happiness is apparently affected by it: but besides this, you may easily apprehend, that much of the comfort of our lives does immediately depend upon it. And this will be peculiarly obvious with regard to those of us who are in our younger years, and are entering on the work of God amongst you.*

Should God spare us to future years, we must expect to survive many of our aged friends; and when your parents are gone, whither must we look for the comfort of our remaining days, but to you their children? And must it not wound us to the heart, to see a generation of vipers rising up, instead of those pious friends, with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God in company? Can we easily bear to see the temples and altars of God forsaken, or to see them attended only by wretched hypocrites, who bear the form of godliness, while they are strangers and enemies to the power of it? Must we lose the pleasure of addressing you in public, as true Christians, on the most comfortable and joyful subjects of discourse; and be obliged continually to speak to you in thunders, as those who have no right to the consolations of the gospel? Or must we never have the satisfaction of conversing with you in private, as our brethren in the Lord, and our companions in the way to heaven?

Well might it grieve us to be thus left alone in the midst of a degenerate world; especially when we reflect, that the cause of God was sinking in the time of our administration, and serious religion was lost amongst us, whilst the cultivation of it was committed to our care. Shall we not be suspected of unfaithfulness to God, and to you, if it die in our hands? That were dreadful indeed. May the divine grace preserve us from that guilt! And I trust, my brethren, that it will preserve us; and, in dependence upon that, I plainly tell you, that while God continues us in a capacity of doing it, we will honestly warn you, we will seriously expostulate with you, we will earnestly pray for you; and if it be all in vain, we will appeal to an omniscient God, that your destruction is not chargeable upon us, but upon yourselves.

But in the mean time, it would be dreadful to reflect, that while we are thus endeavouring to deliver our own souls, we are in effect heaping aggravated damnation on yours; while every attempt is resisted by you, and so brings you under a greater load of guilt. You may indeed be insensible of the load now, but we foresee the day when you will sink under it. And here is the accent of our sorrow: in such views as these we fear, that when the ministers of former generations shall appear before their Judge with a train of happy souls, which have been conducted to heaven by their means, it must be our melancholy part to stand out as witnesses against our hearers, that we have stretched out our hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people. Oh, how shall we be able to advance this dreadful testimony against the children of our dearest friends, against those whom we tenderly loved, and whose salvation we would have purchased with any thing but our own! Yet this is our prospect with regard to you; and we may leave it to you to judge, whether it must not sadden our souls.

Now pardon me, my friends, if I tell you, that we may reasonably expect, that an argument of this nature should not be despised. I hope it is no breach of modesty to say, that we have not deserved so ill at your hands, as that our joy, or our distress, should be indifferent to you. In all the common affairs of life we would cheerfully serve you to the utmost of our power, and therefore at least reasonably expect to stand on a level with the

* This was the case of the author when this sermon was preached at Kilworth, May 18, 1724.

rest of your friends in like circumstances. And our character as ministers, if we be careful to answer it, gives us some peculiar claim to your regard. For you we give up many more splendid prospects in life, which, in other employments, we might possibly have secured; for you we lay out our time and our strength, in study, in prayer, and in preaching. We bear you upon our hearts in our public ministrations, and our private retirements; (and God is witness with what sincerity;) nor would we refuse those laborious services which, in human probability, might hasten upon us the infirmities of age, and the approach of death, if they might be the happy means of your conversion and salvation. And is this the reward of all our friendly care? to weaken our hands, to grieve our souls, and to behave in such a manner, that the more tenderly we love you, the more deeply we must be afflicted by you?

Many of you treat us with a great deal of humanity and decency; with the appearances of affection and esteem. You are ready to serve us in the common offices of friendship, and would express your resentment if you saw us injured, in actions, or in words. We thankfully acknowledge your goodness in such instances as these; but permit us to ask you, why you will not be so kind and so grateful to us, as to take care of your own souls, when nothing could oblige us more than such a care, and nothing can afflict us more than the neglect of them? Let me conclude this head with those pathetic words of the apostle, If there be any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye our joy. And let me entreat you to consider, once more,

4. That the propagation of religion to future generations does, under God, chiefly depend upon you.

For this reason the pious Israelites are represented as resolving to declare the wonderful works of God unto their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children that should be born; that they might arise, and, in their turn, declare them unto their children, and so the entail might be carried on to the remotest ages.

Now, my brethren, it is evident, that the propagation of religion to succeeding generations does, humanly speaking, depend on you and others, who, with you, are entering upon life. If you are under the influences of serious godliness, you will carry them with you to the end of your days: and when God calls you into families of your own, it will be your desire that you and your houses may serve him. Family prayer and family instruction will be maintained; you will be teaching your children to know the Lord, and exhorting them to serve him, and praying for a blessing on those endeavours: and who knows what a remarkable blessing may attend them? Your children, under the impression of such an education, may be eminent for religion as you have been. They may be equally diligent in the care of their posterity, and God may favour them with equal success; and so there may be thousands of your remote descendants, who never saw you, nor perhaps heard of your name, who yet, under God, may owe their religion and their happiness to you. The prospect of it may now afford you sensible pleasure; and it is highly probable, that when they meet you in the regions of the invisible world, such an important obligation may engage them to treat you with peculiar respect and affection; as surely all other obligations will appear trifling, when compared with this.

On the other hand, if you neglect religion yourselves, it cannot be thought you will be much concerned to transmit it to others. You would hardly be at the pains to give them good instructions; supposing you much more capable of doing it than you can expect to be: or if you do attempt it, those instructions will be like to have little effect, when they are contradicted by the daily language of your example. Nay, it is possible you may arrive at such a height of wickedness, as directly to oppose practical godliness, and breed up your children in the contempt of it; which is often to be seen, even in this Christian country. And what do you think will become of such children as these? If you have been so wicked, notwithstanding all the restraints of a serious education, what will they be, who miss of the advantages you enjoyed, and must be exposed to numberless temptations from which you were free? Shall these be a seed to serve the Lord? Shall these be accounted to him for a generation? It might almost as well be expected, that a race of men should spring up in a desert, where no human creature ever appeared before them, as that true Christianity should be propagated in the world by the children of such an education.

And have you, after all, so utter an indifference to the honour of that Redeemer, into whose religion you were baptized, and whose name you bear, as that you could be contented it should be lost in the world? Was it for this, that the Son of God descended from heaven that he might publish the gospel covenant, and expired on the cross that he might establish it? Was it for this, that the pious labours of our ancestors have transmitted this religion to us through so many succeeding ages; and so many martyrs have sealed it by their sufferings, and their blood? Was it for this, that our sacred liberties have been so courageously asserted by the best of men, and almost miraculously defended by the hand of God? for this, that the precious entail should be cut off by us, and this invaluable treasure, the charge and the glory of so many former generations, should perish in our hands? that the name of Christianity should, for the future, be lost

in the world; or, which is altogether as bad, that it should sink into an empty name, and a lifeless circle of unmeaning forms? Yet, humanly speaking, this must be the consequence, if you, and others of the rising generation, will not heartily engage in the interests of it.

Such a variety of arguments concur to prove the great importance of the rising generation. They are so plain and so weighty, that I cannot but think, that you, my brethren, to whom I have particularly applied them, are in your consciences convinced, that they are not to be disputed.

How that conviction should work, I have not time largely to show you; but if it be seriously and deeply impressed on your minds, you cannot long be at a loss for proper directions, among so many pious friends, and excellent books; especially if you consult the Scripture, and seek for the teachings of the blessed Spirit. To these assistances I heartily recommend you, and omitting many other reflections which would naturally arise, shall conclude my discourse with one which I shall immediately address to another part of my auditory.

REFLECTION.

How solicitous should we be in our endeavours for the religious improvement of the rising generation, since its character appears of so great importance!

We have all our concern in the thought, but I would peculiarly recommend it to those of you who are parents and masters, or have the education of youth under any other capacities: imagine not, my friends, that it is an inconsiderable charge which is lodged in your hands. Providence has intrusted to you the hopes and the fears, the joys and the sorrows, of many hearts, and of many families; future generations will have reason to applaud or detest your memory, as your present duty is regarded or neglected; and, which is infinitely more, the Father of the spirits of all flesh will require a strict account of those precious souls which he committed to your care.

It is not for me, at this time, to direct you at large as to the particulars of your duty with regard to them.* In the general, you will easily apprehend that some methods are to be taken to inform their minds with divine knowledge, and to impress them with an affecting sense of what they know. And if you find the work attended with great difficulty, I hope it will engage you thankfully to accept of the assistances of ministers, and other Christian friends, and earnestly to implore those communications of the Spirit, which are absolutely necessary to make them effectual.

* Something of this kind I have attempted in the "Sermons on the Religious Education of Children;" though I have there considered it under some distinct heads which occur here, though in a different manner, and in a different view.

And if God have any mercy in store for so sinful a nation as ours, we may humbly hope, that, in answer to our united supplications, he will revive his work amongst us in the midst of the years: and, according to the tenor of his promises, will pour out his Spirit on our seed, and his blessing on our offspring; so that they may spring up before him as the grass, and as willows by the water-courses: and calling themselves by the name of Jacob, and subscribing with their hands unto the Lord, may be acknowledged by him as a generation of his people. Amen.

SERMON VI.

CHRIST FORMED IN THE SOUL, THE ONLY FOUNDATION OF HOPE FOR ETERNITY.

GAL. iv. 19.

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.

IT was the unhappy case of Agrippa, that though *almost*, he was *only* almost, persuaded to be a Christian; and I fear it is now the case of many, and particularly of many young persons, who have enjoyed the advantages of a religious education. I believe it is difficult to find any amongst them, who have not been brought under some serious impressions betimes. With regard to the internal operations of the blessed Spirit, as well as external means, the morning of life is generally to them, in a peculiar sense, the day of their visitation; and they often seem to know it, and in some measure to improve it: but in too many instances, we find their goodness as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, which soon passeth away. The blossoms open fair and beautiful, and give a very agreeable prospect of the plentiful fruits of holiness in life; but too often, when storms of temptation and corruption arise, the goodly appearance is laid in ruins; the blossoms do, as it were, fall to the ground, and leave the tree blasted and naked; or at best only covered over with leaves of an external profession, which, however green and flourishing they may for the present be, will not at least secure it from being cut down and cast into the burning. Though they for a while had escaped the pollutions of the world through lust, they are afterwards entangled and subdued, and the consequence is, they prove a scandal to religion, and a discouragement to others, till, in the end, they bring aggravated destruction on themselves; so that on the whole, as the apostle most justly observes, it had been better for them not to have known the

way of righteousness, than thus, after they have known it, to turn aside from the holy commandment.

This may be in a great measure owing to the mutability of human nature in general, and particularly to the levity and inconstancy of youth, in conjunction with the force of those temptations of life which continually surround and press upon them. Yet I apprehend this is not all, but that it is, in part, to be charged on something defective, even in their best days; on their resting in something short of real religion, and a true saving change. Solomon had seen reason to say, There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death: and I believe every considerate person will be ready to own, that in order to prevent so fatal a delusion, and all the train of mischiefs which may follow upon it, great care should be taken in stating this important question; "What is the true and solid basis, on which we may securely ground our eternal hopes?" It is a question of the highest importance, and the most universal concern, both to the aged and the young; so that I trust I need not offer any apology for complying with the request of a pious and judicious friend, who recommended this subject to our consideration, at this time and on this occasion.

In prosecution of this design, I have made choice of these words of the apostle, which I have now been reading, and which may, without offering any violence to them, be very fairly and naturally accommodated to the present purpose.

It is plain from many passages in this epistle, that the great apostle, who had planted the Christian church among the Galatians, had reason to fear that many, who were by profession its members, were not sufficiently established in their holy faith. It is probable that he himself had an opportunity of making but a short stay amongst them: and partly through their own negligence and prejudices, and partly through the artful attempts of false teachers in the absence of St. Paul, they appear to have fallen into a set of notions, and a conduct, which tended not only to impair the glory, but to subvert the very foundation, of the gospel, and with it the foundation of their own eternal hopes. Of this the apostle does, in a very awful manner, admonish them. He tells them, in the very beginning of his epistle, that he marvelled that they were so soon removed from him that called them, (and from the principles he had taught them,) into another gospel. And afterwards he useth these very free and emphatical words: O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched or enchanted you, that you should not obey the truth? Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, (having professed to embrace the gospel, and shown the appearances of some common zeal for it,) can you now hope to be made perfect by the flesh, or by the ritual and carnal observances of the Mosaic institution? Is it thus that you disgrace all you have done, and all you have borne for Christ? Have you then suffered so many things in vain? On the whole, he tells them, he was ready to apprehend that all the agreeable hopes he had once entertained concerning them would be buried in everlasting disappointment, and that it would appear he had bestowed on them labour in vain. Thus did he stand in doubt of them; and that doubt pierced his heart with the most tender concern, and brought upon him, as it were, a second time, those pangs of soul which he had felt on their account, when he saw them in all the ignorance and wickedness of their Gentile state. He was hardly more solicitous then, that they might be turned from dumb idols to the living God, than he was now, that they might give convincing evidences that Christ was formed in them, *i. e.* that they had cordially received and digested the gospel, and that their hearts were delivered into the mould of it; which it did not appear they were, while they were thus making void the grace of God, and the righteousness of faith, by adhering to the foolish and pernicious doctrine of the necessity of seeking their justification, in part at least, by the observations of the Mosaic law.

This seems to be the most natural sense of the words of the text, where such a latitude of expression is used, as the apostle elsewhere seems to study, on purpose to render his writings universally edifying and useful to them, whose particular circumstances in life are widely different from those of the persons to whom they were originally addressed.

As to the introductory words, "My little children," we cannot imagine they refer to the age of those to whom the apostle wrote. The evident design of them is, to express that kind of parental tenderness which he entertained for them, like that which a mother hath for an infant with which she travails in birth. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you."

It would be easy to multiply observations from the words. I might especially take occasion to show,—that it is possible, those that once seemed very hopeful, and still maintain an external profession, may appear, after all, in such dangerous circumstances, that judicious ministers, and other Christian friends, may be thrown into a great deal of perplexity and agony on their account; and that the great thing necessary to establish their safety, and the comfort of those concerned for them, is, that the Lord Jesus Christ be formed in them.

That I may more particularly illustrate and improve the text, and take in what is most important in these remarks, I will,

I. Consider several things on which men are

ready to build a false confidence, which will bring them into danger, and their judicious friends into perplexity upon their account.

II. I will endeavour to show you what is the only solid foundation of their own hopes, and the joys of others with regard to them; which is here expressed by Christ formed in them. And then,

III. I shall conclude with some more particular improvement, in proper inferences from the whole.

These are plainly matters of universal importance; but as I am now peculiarly addressing myself to young persons, I shall endeavour to fix on those thoughts which may be most remarkably suitable to them; for I am much more concerned that my discourse may be useful, than that it may be critically regular and exact. I hope there are many amongst you, who are experimentally acquainted with the vitals of Christianity, and have received from above an incorruptible seed. There are others, to whom I must say with the apostle to these Galatians, I stand in doubt of you; and to such I hope I can apply myself in the language of the text, My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you. Pardon me, if in this instance I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. I would endeavour, with the sincerest and tenderest affection, and with such freedom as the importance of the case requires, to guard you against those sandy foundations, which will bury you and your hopes deep in eternal ruins; and to direct you to the rock of ages, on which they who build shall never be ashamed.

I therefore entreat your serious attention, and would humbly ask, both for myself and you, the teachings of that blessed Spirit, whose peculiar office it is, in the most efficacious manner, to show us our danger and our remedy; to aid the labouring minds of ministers, and to cause them to see with satisfaction the travail of their souls, while he gives to their hearers a new birth and immortal life, by forming Christ in them.

I. I am to caution you against several things on which young persons are peculiarly prone to build a false and precarious confidence.

And here let me particularly entreat you, as you love your souls, and value your eternal hopes,—that you trust not to the privileges of your birth,—or the rectitude of your speculations in matters of religion,—or the purity and frequency of your forms of worship,—or the warmth of your passions,—or the morality of your conduct; for none of these apart, nor even all of them united, can, according to the tenor of the gospel, be sufficient for your security and happiness.

1. Trust not to the privileges of your birth and education as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

You are, many of you, the seed of God's servants, perhaps for several succeeding generations. You may be ready to plead, that you were born in his house, that you were early devoted to him in baptism, and have been brought up in the most regular and conscientious manner; you have been surrounded with holy instructions and correspondent examples from your infancy; and repeated fervent prayers, both in the family and in secret, have been sent up to heaven on your account. These are indeed signal advantages, and you may justly rejoice in them; for in these respects you are the children of the kingdom: but rejoice with trembling, for our Lord hath told us, that it is more than a possible case, that the children of the kingdom may be cast out, and have their portion in outer darkness. The peculiar regard shown to the seed of Abraham may perhaps be abused by some of you, as an encouragement to those presumptuous hopes. But remember, that Ishmael was the son of Abraham, and Esau of Isaac; and yet neither the one nor the other inherited the blessing of his father. Remember that beautiful but dreadful parable, which presents a wretched creature in hell, that could cry, Father Abraham, and yet in vain added, have mercy upon me, and send me one drop of water to cool my tongue. Once more, remember those emphatical words of the Baptist, so expressly levelled against this arrogant presumption: Think not (says he) to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham: as if he should have said, "The promises made to those who are the children of Abraham, respect not merely them who are lineally descended from him, but those who are the heirs of his piety and his faith; for if God were to turn these stones into men, and to form them by his grace to a holy character and temper, such, though descended from no human parents at all, would, in the sense of the promise, be children of Abraham." And it were more reasonable to expect such a transmutation, than that God should acknowledge a generation of vipers as his people, because they were derived from holy ancestors. On the contrary, God directly assures us, that if the son of the most religious father forsake the way of virtue and holiness, and prove as the degenerate plant of a strange vine, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. And surely herein the ways of the Lord are apparently equal; for it is most evident, that a long descent from God's people is a reproach and condemnation, rather than an honour, to those who abandon that good old way in which their ancestors have trod, and, as it were, cut off that entail of piety which has been the care and the glory of preceding generations.

2. Trust not to the regularity of your sentiments, in matters of religion, as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

So various are the workings of men's hearts, and the devices of Satan, that, if I mistake not, there are some that place their confidence in the strictness, and others in the latitude, of their religious opinions; but the one, and the other, will appear equally vain, when considered in the view now before us.

Some may possibly persuade themselves, that their condition is secure, because their sentiments are orthodox. They live perhaps in the midst of the unbelieving and profane, and see daily contempt and derision thrown upon the blessed gospel, or its most glorious peculiarities; but through the influence of a good education, or from some other principle short of true piety, they may nevertheless not only hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints, but even contend earnestly for it: nay, they are, perhaps, learned in the controversies of the times; and can indeed pronounce concerning them in a very rational and accurate manner.

If this, my friends, be the case with any of you, I congratulate you on the happiness of a well-informed judgment, but must caution you against mistaking it for a sanctified heart. The mystery of faith, as the apostle himself assures us, is to be held with a good conscience; and in vain do you profess to retain the one, while you make shipwreck of the other. As precious a treasure as the knowledge of the truth is, if you go no further than mere speculation, it will be to you "but as a talent of gold to a man sinking in the sea, which only serves to plunge him so much the deeper in ruin." *

There are others who err in the contrary extreme. Orthodox notions are their banter, rather than their confidence. They pride themselves in having broke the shackles in which others are confined, and in seeing through the mist in which multitudes have been perplexed. They are sensible, that many things which divide the world, are merely controversies about words; and are not much concerned about others in which there is a real difference, because they are well aware, that the fundamentals of religion lie in a very little room. They are confident of the innocency of error, and the safety of an honest mind under those mistakes which have been branded with the severest names. A wicked life is, in their esteem, the only dangerous heresy; and morality the only thing that is worth contending about; charmed with their own wisdom and happiness in this freedom of thought, they look down with pity on persons under the influence of a contracted education and narrow sentiments, and possibly mingle their pity with a great deal of scorn, not to say indignation. But they are indeed themselves the objects of much juster pity, if, whilst they glory in their freedom, they are the servants of corruption. It is certain, that the most generous speculations will no more save men of unregenerate hearts, and unholy lives, than the most rigid and severe set of notions. For notions and speculations are in their nature so far short of real goodness, that if there be nothing more than these, it matters but little what they are. Yet one cannot forbear observing a peculiar and most absurd inconsistency in the conduct of those, who think so highly of themselves, because they are possessed of this one speculation, that speculation in general is a trifle, and morality is all; as if the whole of morality consisted in bearing this testimony in its favour. I wish such a character were not almost as common, as it is for men to be bigots in defence of catholicism, and uncharitable in pleading the cause of charity. If this be the case with any of you, out of your own mouth must you be condemned; and we may justly apply to you, in the midst of your self-applauses, those awful words of our Lord; If ye were, in this respect, blind, ye would comparatively have no sin; whereas now you have no cloak, or excuse, for your sin.

3. Trust not in the external forms of devotion, as the foundation of your great hopes for eternity.

You are, it may be, joined to a society, which not only wears the Christian name, but separates itself from many other professors, under the apprehension, at least, of a more pure and Scriptural worship. You, perhaps, so much approve and esteem this worship, as to be diligent and constant in attending on the public exercises of it, not only in its stated returns, but on occasional opportunities. You fill your places here from time to time, not merely in obedience to the commands of your parents and governors, but by your own voluntary choice. And, it may be, to these you add the forms of family devotion morning and evening, and, possibly, a few moments of daily retirement for reading and prayer. What can such religious persons have to fear? Nay, rather, my brethren, what can you have to hope, if, while you draw near to God with your mouths and your lips, you remove your hearts far from him? If while you come before him, as his people come, and present yourselves in the posture of humble worshippers, your heart be going after your covetousness? God hath for ever confounded such vain presumption, by declaring, that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to him; and that his shall certainly be so, that turns away his ear from hearing the law, i. e. that refuses obedience to it. The servant that knew his Lord's will, and did it not, became justly liable to be beaten with many stripes; and it is not to be wondered, if, in this sense, judgment begin at the house of God, and seize first on those who affront and profane his ordinances, by making them to supersede the very things which they were originally appointed on purpose to promote.

* Dr. Bates's Works, p. 948.

4. Trust not to the warmth of your passions in matters of religion, as the foundation of your most important hopes.

Some of you, to whom I now speak, have perhaps experienced very bitter agonies of conscience. You have been roused from the sleep of carnal security, as by an earthquake, which has shook the very centre of your soul; the flames of hell have seemed, as it were, to flash in your faces; and all these mingled horrors have compelled you to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone! oh, what shall I do to be saved?" And yet, to allude to the story of Elijah, the Lord hath not been in the earthquake, or in the fire. Consider to what purpose the inquiry after salvation hath been made, and with what resolution it hath been pursued; otherwise you may be fatally deceived. The murderers of Stephen were cut to the heart by his preaching; and we are sure that, if the most deep and terrifying convictions could have secured a man's salvation, the traitor Judas would have been safe, who undoubtedly felt the most violent convulsions of soul, before he proceeded to that dreadful extremity, which sealed him up under everlasting despair.

But you may have been impressed with the sweeter and the noble passions; you have not only trembled at the thunder of the law, but rejoiced in the message of gospel-grace: the news of a Redeemer has been welcome to your souls, and the feet of those messengers beautiful, that have come to publish peace in his name. You have, perhaps, been melted into tears of pleasure and tenderness, when you have heard the representation of his dying love; and when the precious promises, established by it, have been unfolded, and the prospects of eternal glory displayed, your minds have been elevated and transported; so that you have hung, almost with a trembling eagerness, on the lips of the speaker. I readily acknowledge, that such as these are frequently the workings of the blessed Spirit of God, upon the souls of his chosen people; and when found in a due connexion with the great effects they are designed to produce, are highly to be esteemed and rejoiced in. But remember, I entreat you, that every tear of tenderness, and every sally of joy, doth not arise from so divine a spring. You might weep at a mournful scene in a well-wrought tragedy, as you have done at the story of a Redeemer's sufferings; you might find yourselves transported with a fine poetical description of a Pagan elysium, or a Mahometan paradise, just as you have been with the views of a heavenly Canaan, which gospel ordinances have presented. Mere self-love might be the foundation of such a joy in the tidings of pardon and happiness, without the least degree of renewing and sanctifying grace; as it probably was in those hearers, represented by the stony ground, who immediately received the word with joy, but had no root, and so endured but for a while.

But, perhaps, you will say, you are confident it is not merely self-love in you, for you have often found your mind impressed with a grateful sense of the divine goodness; so that, when you own it before God in prayer, or converse with his saints on the copious and delightful subject, your souls flow forth in love to your great Benefactor, and you look up to him in the most thankful acknowledgments of his favours. If it be a gratitude that captivates the soul into a willing obedience, and engages you to yield yourselves living sacrifices to God, then is Christ formed in your souls, and you are not the persons to whom I would give the alarm: on the contrary, I would rather confirm your hopes, and rejoice with you in them. But if your gratitude does not rise to this; if it rest only in some tender emotion of mind, or some transient, external expression of that emotion, I must faithfully tell you, that I fear it is only a nobler degree of that natural instinct which causeth the ox to know his owner, and the ass his master's crib. To find your spirit in this manner impressed does indeed plainly prove that the day of your visitation is not entirely past; it proves you have not sinned yourselves into utter insensibility of soul; nay, it may possibly at length, through the communications of sanctifying grace, lead you on to real religion, and to eminent attainments in it: but at present it falls far short. I have often told you, (and one can hardly repeat it too often, or insist too earnestly upon it,) that there is a very wide difference between a good state and a good frame: and that religion is not seated either in the understanding or in the passions, but principally in the will; which in this disjointed state of human nature, is far from being always in a due harmony with either. So that, on the whole, those illuminations, or those affections, on which you are apt to lay so great a stress, are, perhaps, at best, but the preparatory workings of the Spirit upon your minds, which, if they are not improved aright, may leave you more hard, and more miserable, than they found you.

5. Trust not to the morality of your behaviour, as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

Morality is certainly a very excellent thing, and it were scandalous indeed for any professing Christian to pour contempt upon it. Wherever this is wanting, pretences to faith and Christian experience are not only vain, but insolent and detestable. He that committeth sin, is of the devil; and only he that doth righteousness is righteous: nor hath the grace of God ever savingly appeared to that man, through whatever uncommon scenes of thought he may have passed, who is not effectually taught by it to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,

and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. But it will by no means follow from thence, that wherever there is a sober and virtuous conduct, such a soul is passed from death to life. If the whole of the gospel be wrapt up in the rules of morality, then is Christ dead in vain; or, at least, it is in vain that the notices of his death are published to us. Beware, I entreat you, of so pernicious an error. I think myself obliged more earnestly to caution you against it, because, while the devil is attempting, on the one hand, to engage some, under the specious pretences of an evangelical spirit, to turn the grace of God into wantonness, he seems to be insnaring others, by extolling the virtue which he hates, in order to lead them into a neglect of Christ, and his righteousness, and all the peculiarities of the gospel scheme of salvation; so that it is difficult on the whole to say, which of these devices is most destructive to the souls of men.

From my heart I rejoice to think, there are so many amongst you, my young friends, whose character in life is fair and unblemished. You escape the grosser pollutions of the world; you abhor brutal intemperance; you scorn the mean artifices of deceit, and renounce the hidden things of dishonesty; you honour your parents and subordinate governors; you treat the ministers of Christ with respect and esteem; you are affable and courteous in your behaviour to all: and, on this account, we behold you and love you; we hope, and conclude, you are not far from the kingdom of heaven. But, alas! if things rest here, you will never enter into it. All these things had the young man in the gospel observed from his youth; and many of you have seen, in a very large and beautiful representation, how lovely a youth was then perishing in sin.* He lacked one thing; and the lack of that was the ruin of his soul, as it will be of yours, if you are destitute of it.

I know, that they are especially in danger of being deceived here, who converse frequently with persons of an abandoned character; or who are themselves reformed from some gross irregularities, to which they were once addicted. Comparing themselves with others, or with themselves in a more licentious and corrupt state, they pronounce a favourable sentence, and conclude they are safe and happy: but let me entreat you, my friends, that you would rather compare your hearts and lives with that perfect law of God, which cannot be repealed; weigh yourselves in that balance, and see whether you are not found wanting there. Review even the upright conduct of these days of your reformation, and then say, whether there be such a redundancy of merit in them, as will not only answer present demands, but atone for your past offences too. You will soon be confounded on such a review; you will soon acknowledge, on an impartial examination, that the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself upon, and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in; that neither you, nor any living, can be justified by the works of the law.

I will conclude this head with observing, that the instance of the blessed apostle St. Paul serves to illustrate and confirm our discourse, in each of the particulars I have now mentioned. Had the privileges of birth and education been a sufficient security, Paul had been secure before his conversion to Christianity; for he was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin; (which had not, like the rest, revolted from the house of David;) and by his mother's side, as well as his father's, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. If the exactest regularity in religious notions, or the strictest formality in the externals of worship, could have secured a man, Paul had been secure; for he was, as touching the law, a Pharisee; he lived according to the rigour of that sect, and, both with respect to doctrines and ceremonies, was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers. If a transport of passion in the cause of God could have secured a man, Paul had been secure; for, concerning zeal, or with regard to that, he persecuted the church, and wasted it beyond measure. And, lastly, if morality of behaviour could have done it, Paul had been secure; for, touching the righteousness which is by the law, he was blameless. In these things, he was once so weak, and so wretched, as to place a great deal of confidence; but when he was illuminated, and called by divine grace, he assures us, that what things were gain unto him before, those he counted loss for Christ, *i. e.* he most entirely renounced all dependence upon them. Yea doubtless, says he, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Which naturally leads me to the second general, where,

II. I am to consider, what will be a solid foundation for hope and joy when all these precarious dependences fail.

This is, with the utmost propriety, expressed in the text, by Christ formed in the soul; which is exactly parallel to that phrase in Colossians, Christ in you, the hope of glory, which is there mentioned as an epitome of the gospel, the riches of the glory of the mystery preached among the Gentiles. When Paul could see that the Galatians were brought to this, the pangs of his labouring mind would be ended, and joy and exultance would succeed; which is plainly intimated in the words of the text. And when you, my dear charge, are brought to it, parents and ministers may rejoice over you, and you will have an everlasting spring of hope and joy, a solid foundation, on which to build for eternity.

* Dr Watts's Serm. Vol. I. Ser. V. VI.

Permit me, therefore, a little more particularly to explain it to you; and let me entreat you to turn your thoughts inward, that you may judge whether you have been experimentally acquainted with the temper and change which I shall now describe, as signified by this remarkable expression in the text, Christ formed in you.

Now, I think, it implies these three things:—That some apprehensions of Christ have taken hold of the heart;—that the man is brought to an explicit choice of him, and deliberately enters into covenant with him: and that, in consequence of both these, something of the temper and spirit of Christ is by divine grace wrought in his soul. I will touch on each of these; but my time will not allow me to manage them in so copious and particular a manner as they well deserve.

1. To have Christ formed in the soul, supposes that some serious apprehensions of Christ have taken hold of the heart.

It evidently implies that the external revelation of him hath not only been admitted as a speculative truth, but attended to as a matter of the highest concern. Previous to the forming of Christ in the soul, there must be a conviction that we are naturally without Christ, and that in consequence of this we are in a most unhappy condition. And this conviction must strike deep upon the heart; for till the evil of sin be felt, what can make the news of a Saviour welcome? since, as he himself has declared, the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. The man in whose heart Christ is formed, has seen himself condemned by God's righteous law; has seen himself equally unable to answer its demands, or to bear up under the execution of its penalties. And feeling this to be no light matter, but the very life of his soul, he has then been engaged with the greatest seriousness and earnestness to cry out, Woe is me, for I am undone! O what shall I do to be saved? I before told you, there may be these convictions and awakenings where Christ is never formed in the soul; and I now add, that the degree of them may be various, according to the various tempers and circumstances of different persons: but it is most evident that something of this kind must make way for the Redeemer's entrance, who comes to seek and to save that which was lost, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to give rest to the weary and heavy-laden. And I the rather insist on this, because I am fully persuaded, that slight thoughts of sin, and of the misery of our natural estate by it, have been the principal cause of all the infidelity of the present age, and are daily ruining a multitude of souls.

2. The formation of Christ in the soul does further imply, an explicit choice of him, and a deliberate entering into covenant with him.

When such a soul hears of a Redeemer, and of the way of salvation by him, exhibited in Scripture, it cordially approves the scheme, as entirely worthy of its divine author; and though corrupt nature raises up a thousand proud thoughts, in a vain and ungrateful rebellion against it, yet they are, by Almighty grace, subdued and brought into captivity. The man really sees such a suitableness and such an amiableness in the blessed Jesus, under the character in which the gospel reveals him, that he judges him to be the pearl of great price; and as God has laid him as the foundation-stone, he is, in that view, inconceivably precious to him. Far from contenting himself with applauding this plan, as regular, beautiful, and magnificent in general, the true believer is solicitous that he may have his own share in this edifice of mercy; and that, coming to Christ as a living stone, he may himself be one of those who shall on him be built up for a habitation of God through the Spirit. When he considers the Lord Jesus represented as standing at the door and knocking, it is with pleasure that he hears his voice, and opens to him, and, as Zaccheus did, receives him joyfully. He regards him as a nail fastened in a sure place, on which he can joyfully fix all his eternal hopes, infinitely important as he sees them to be. And while he thus anchors his soul on the righteousness, the atonement, and the intercession of a Redeemer, he humbly bows to his authority, as his Lord and his God. It is his desire to seat him on the throne of his heart, and, as it were, to put into his hand the sceptre and the sword, that all the powers of nature may be governed, and all the corruptions of it destroyed, by him. In a word, as he knows that Christ was given for a covenant to the people, he deliberately sets his seal to that covenant, thereby devoting himself to Christ, and, through him, to the Father. Such are his views, his purposes, and his engagements; and by divine grace he is enabled to be faithful to them. Which leads me to add,

3. When Christ is formed in any soul, something of the temper and character of the blessed Jesus is by divine grace wrought there.

I might with ease multiply scriptures in proof of the absolute necessity of this; but it is so obvious, that you must yourselves know, how expressly it is required. You know, how plainly St. Paul has told us, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and where this Spirit resides, Christ dwells in the heart. The same mind, or temper, is in such a one, as was also in Christ Jesus; and as he professeth to abide in him, it is his care so to walk, as Christ also walked. On which account the true Christian is said to have put on Christ, in allusion to the Hebrew phrase, of being clothed with any temper or affection, that greatly prevails or governs in the soul.*

* Thus we read of being clothed with righteousness, Job xxix. 14.

It is a very pleasing, as well as useful, employment, to trace the lineaments of the temper and conduct of Christ in his people. Our Lord is in a peculiar sense the Son of God; but his people are, through him, taken into the same relation: for they have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, though perhaps they were once subjected to it, but they have received the Spirit of adoption; and because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying Abba, Father. By this Spirit a filial temper is wrought in their souls, by which their obedience to their heavenly Father is so animated, as to be most honourable and grateful to him, as well as most easy and delightful to themselves. Under the influences of this Spirit, the Christian desires it may be his character now, as he trusts it will be his happiness at last, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; to follow that Jesus, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He is indeed deeply sensible, that it is impossible for him, as his Lord did, to fulfil all righteousness; and therefore, when he hath done all, he calls himself an unprofitable servant. Yet he seeth so much of the internal beauties of holiness, so much lustre and glory in the image of God, as drawn on the soul of man, that it is the great concern of his heart, and labour of his life, to pursue it. Nor would he only abstain from grosser enormities, and practise those virtues which are most honourable amongst men, and attended with the greatest secular advantage; but he would, in every respect, maintain a conscience void of offence, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. He hath so affectionate a sense of the riches of the divine grace, displayed through a Redeemer, in adopting so unworthy a creature as himself to the dignity and privileges of a son of God, that he often cries out, in raptures of holy gratitude and joy, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Inspired with this noble principle, he searches his Father's will impartially; and when he hath discovered it, he obeyeth it cheerfully, and it is his meat and his drink to perform it. He loves the Lord his God above all, and loves his fellow-creatures for his sake as well as their own, and entertains the highest veneration and affection for those who most heartily resemble his Father and their Father, his God and their God. It is his prayer, and his endeavour, that he may go about doing good, and be useful to all as he hath opportunity; that he may pass through the world with a holy moderation, and superiority of soul, to the things which are seen and are temporal; thankfully owning every mercy as proceeding from God's paternal love and care, and serenely submitting to every affliction, as the cup which his Father puts into his hand. In a word, he desires, that in all the varieties of life he may still be intent on the views of an everlasting inheritance; humbly looking and longing for that blessed hope, yet willing patiently to wait his Father's time: having this constant expectation, and reviving assurance, that whether he live, he shall live unto the Lord, or whether he die, he shall die unto the Lord; so that whether he live or die, he shall be the Lord's.

This is the Christian;—this is the man in whom Christ is formed; or, rather, these are some faint lineaments of his character: and I will venture to say, that he who cannot discern something in it, even as thus imperfectly described, which is vastly superior to that morality and decency of behaviour, which arises merely from prudential views, or from the sweetness and gentleness of a man's natural temper, is sunk below the boasted religion of nature, and must take refuge in the wretched principles of Atheism, if he would pretend to form any thing of a consistent scheme. But now,

III. I must conclude with hinting at some reflections and inferences, which my time will not allow me to handle at large.

1. How important is it, that ministers should lead young persons into such views as these!

Our great and important business in life is to promote the eternal happiness of our hearers, and to lay a solid foundation of hope and joy in their souls. We have seen now what it is, and other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Here then let all our labours centre. It is the good old way, in which our fathers in the ministry went, and in which they prospered. Let us follow their steps, and exert our most vigorous efforts here. Modern refinements may amuse us in our closets, but they will never feed the souls of our hearers, nor spread the triumphs of a gospel, which was the power of God to the salvation of thousands, before they were ever dreamt of. I hope, God is my witness, that I am heartily concerned for the interest of virtue: (if by that be meant the advancement of practical religion;) but I never expected to see it promoted by the most philosophical speculations concerning its nature, or the finest harangues on its innate beauties, when the name and peculiar doctrines of Christ are thrown off, as unfashionable encumbrances of a discourse. Experienced Christians, who have tasted the bread of life, will not contentedly be put off with such chaff: and if we imagine that the younger part of our auditors may be trained up to a relish for it, we may, perhaps, succeed in the attempt: but I much fear, that success will be the calamity of the church, and the destruction of souls.*

Psal. cxxxii. 9. With humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. With zeal, Isa. lix. 17. With cursing, Psal. cix. 18. With shame, Psal. cxxxi. 18. &c.

* The author has taken a great deal of freedom on this head, as the discourse was delivered before several candidates for the ministry, to whom it had some peculiar concern.

2. We may learn from hence, what are the most valuable proofs of parental affection.

Certainly, there is no reason to esteem, as such, that fond indulgence which suffers ill habits to grow up in the young mind, and fears its present disturbance more than its future ruin: no, nor yet the more prudent care of providing plentiful and agreeable accommodations, for the subsistence and delight of your infant offspring, as they advance to maturity and settlement in life. These things indeed are not to be neglected; but wretched are the children, and I will add, the parents too, where this is the principal labour. Would you express a wise and religious tenderness, for which your children shall have reason to thank you in their dying moments, and to meet you with joy in the interviews of the eternal world? Do your utmost that Christ be formed in their souls; and let them plainly see, that you even travail in birth again, till this happy work be accomplished. But this leads me to add,

3. What need is there of the work of the divine Spirit on the heart, in order to the laying this great foundation!

The language of the text, which speaks of Christ formed in us, naturally leads our thoughts to some agent, by whom the work is done; and when you consider what kind of a work it is, I appeal to your own consciences, whether it is to be thought merely a human production? Were it only a name, a ceremony, a speculation, or a passion, it would not be worth a moment's dispute, whether you or we should have the glory of it. But as it is nothing less than the transformation of a corrupt and degenerate creature into the holy image of the Son of God, it were impiety for either to arrogate it to ourselves.

Let us therefore on the whole learn our duty and our wisdom. Let the matter be brought to a serious and immediate review, and let us judge ourselves by the character described, as those that expect very shortly to be judged of the Lord. If, on the examination, any of you have reason to conclude that you are strangers to it, remember that the invincible battery of the word of God demolishes all the towering hopes you may have raised on any other foundation. Let conscience then say, whether any amusement, or any business in life, be so important, as to be attended to, even for one single day, in neglect of this great concern, on which all the happiness of an immortal soul is suspended. If nothing be indeed found of greater moment, apply yourselves seriously to this, and omit no proper and rational method of securing it. Consider the ways by which Christ uses to enter into a soul, and wait upon him in those ways. Reflect seriously on your present condition, constantly attend the instructions of his word, and the other solemnities of his worship, and choose to converse intimately with those, in whom you have reason to think he is already formed. But in all remember, that the success depends upon a divine cooperation, and therefore go frequently into the presence of God by prayer; go into it this day, or if possible this hour, and importunately entreat the regenerating and sanctifying influences of his Spirit, which, when you earnestly desire them, the gospel gives you such ample encouragement to expect. But if you have reason to hope, that you have already received them, learn to what the praise should be ascribed; and let it animate you to pray, that through further communications from the throne of grace, you may be made continually more and more like to your Redeemer, till you are prepared for that world, where you shall shine forth in his complete resemblance, and shall find it your complete and eternal felicity. Amen.

SERMON VII.

A DISSUASIVE FROM KEEPING BAD COMPANY.

PROV. iv. 14, 15.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

IF we have any regard to the judgment of the wisest of men, illuminated and directed by the influences of the divine Spirit, we must certainly own, that ill company is a very dangerous snare, and that young persons should be frequently and earnestly cautioned against it. The excellent collection of moral and religious precepts contained in this book of Proverbs, was especially intended to give subtilty or prudence to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion. As the sacred author well knew, that he should plead the cause of wisdom and piety in vain, while the voice of dissolute companions was heard, and their conversation pursued, he begins his addresses to youth with repeated cautions on this head: My son, says he, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. As he proceeds in his discourse, the address grows more lively and earnest: and I am sure every attentive hearer will soon discover a peculiar energy in the words of the text. This faithful and compassionate counsellor doth not content himself with dissuading his young reader from joining with notorious offenders in their crimes, but even from going in the way with them, or with any other evil men, nay, from entering upon it, or even approaching it, so much as to pass by it, if there were not a necessity of doing it. Enter not into the paths of sinners, and go not in the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it,

and pass away. As if he should have said, "Shun the very place where such wretches assemble, as you would if it were infected with the most malignant and dangerous disease: and if you have unwarily taken any steps towards it, stop short, and direct your course another way."

Such lessons did Solomon teach; and such had he himself learnt from David his father. That pious prince, in the very entrance on the book of Psalms, describes the good man as one that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; and he elsewhere speaks of the citizen of Zion, as one in whose eye a vile person, far from being chosen as an intimate companion, is contemned, while he honours them that fear the Lord. Thus he delineates the holy and happy man; and he had a pleasing consciousness that this character was his own: he therefore appeals to God as a witness to it, that he had not himself sat with vain persons, and was determined that he would not go in with dissemblers: nay, that he was so far from seeking and delighting in their company, that he hated the congregation of evil-doers, and would not sit with the wicked: he resolutely drove them away from him, as one who knew their society would be extremely injurious to the purpose he had formed of devoting himself to a religious course: Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God.

The sacred writers of the New Testament recommend to us, that we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; that we should not be unequally yoked in any kind of intimate friendship with unbelievers; and that if any do not obey the word, we should note such a one, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Considering such passages of Scripture, as well as the reason of the thing, I think it proper at this time to pursue this subject at large. I well know, that I may succeed in this particular address, and yet leave you strangers to a saving change, and far from the kingdom of God; but if I cannot prevail upon you to refrain from and discard the company of sinners, I fear other admonitions will turn to very little account. In the further prosecution of the subject I will,

I. Briefly tell you, what I intend by that bad company which I would caution you against, and how far I would urge you to avoid it.

II. Offer some considerations to deter you from it; and then,

III. Conclude with a few obvious inferences.

I. I am briefly to show you what I would now caution you against.

And here, surely, I need not be large in telling you what I mean by bad company. It is, in general, "the conversation of those, who are apparently destitute of the fear of God;" and so it takes in, not only persons of the most dissolute and abandoned characters, but those vain and worthless creatures who manifest a neglect of religion, though free from gross and scandalous immoralities. So that what I have to say will be applicable to all sinful companions whatever; but the more notorious their vices are, the more evident will be the force of each of these arguments, by which I shall now endeavour to fortify you against their society.

Neither shall I use many words in telling you how far you are to avoid such company; for to be sure you cannot imagine that I am endeavouring to dissuade you from a necessary commerce with them in the common affairs of life, and the business of your calling; since then, as the apostle expresses it, you must needs go out of the world, considering the state of religion and morality in it. Nor would I lead you to a neglect of any offices of humanity and civility to them; for such a behaviour, instead of adorning the gospel, would greatly prejudice their minds against it. Least of all, would I hinder you from applying yourselves to them by serious admonitions, in order to convince them of their sin and danger, and to engage them to repentance and reformation. In these views the blessed Jesus himself conversed freely with persons of the most infamous characters, though he were perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and in that sense separate from sinners. The folly I would caution you against is, "choosing irreligious persons for your intimate friends, and delighting to spend your vacant hours in vain conversation with them." My design does not require further explanation; the great difficulty I apprehend is, what I shall meet with while I am attempting,

II. To fortify you against the danger of such companions, and to engage you cautiously to avoid them.

When I call this the most difficult part of my work, it is not because I am at a loss for arguments, or apprehend those arguments to be either weak or obscure. A variety of considerations immediately present themselves to my mind, so plain, and yet so important, that I am confident, were the matter to be weighed in an equal balance, a few moments would be sufficient to produce a rational conviction of what I am to prove. But oh! who can answer for the effect of such a conviction? When I consider the unaccountable enchantment which there seems to be in such company as I am warning you against; and reflect on the instances in which I have seen young persons of sense and education, who once appeared to promise remarkably well, at length entangled, and some of them ruined by it; I dare not presume on the success I might otherwise expect. Nevertheless, I know that the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than

any two-edged sword; and I know, that if it be guided by the hand of the blessed Spirit, it will be effectual to divide you from your most delightful carnal associates; since it can separate things as near to each other, as the joints and the marrow, and can lay open the heart to so clear a view, as that it shall seem to have discerned even its thoughts and intentions.

It is this encourages me to make the attempt, and I hope the difficulty and importance of the case will not only excuse my handling it at large, but will also engage all, who have any regard to the happiness of the rising generation, to lift up their hearts to God, that he may assist and succeed me in pleading this weighty cause, in which the interests of time and eternity are so apparently concerned.

Give me leave then to bespeak the most serious attention of all that hear me, and especially of the younger part of my audience, while I urge on your consciences such considerations as these: Seriously reflect on the many unhappy consequences which will attend your going in the way of sinners:—think on those entertainments and pleasures which you give up for the sake of their society:—and consider how little advantage you can expect from thence, to counterbalance the pleasures you resign and the evils you incur by it.

1. Let me entreat you seriously to reflect on the many unhappy consequences which will attend your entering into the path of the wicked, and going in the way of evil men.

You probably will by this means quickly wear out all serious impressions;—you will be exposed to numberless temptations to sin and folly,—and thrown out of the way of amendment and reformation;—and thus will be led into a great many temporal inconveniences, till at last you perish with your sinful companions, and have your eternal portion amongst them in hell.

(1.) By this means you will be in the ready way to lose all sense of religion, and outgrow the impressions of a serious education, if Providence have favoured you with it.

If your hearts are not harder than the nether mill-stone, some such impressions were surely made in your younger years; and I believe few that have been trained up in religious families have entirely escaped them. If these are duly improved, they will end in conversion and glory; but if they are resisted, they lead to greater obstinacy in sin, and throw the soul still further from the kingdom of God. Now what can be more evident than the tendency of vain and carnal conversation to quench the blessed Spirit of God, and hinder the mind from falling in with his preparatory work upon it.

I am persuaded that if they, who are under some prevailing sense of divine things, consider how difficult they often find it to preserve those impressions on their spirits, in the company of some who appear, on the whole, to be serious people, even they will be afraid frequently to venture into the company of the sensual and profane. As Mr. Bolton finely expresses it,* "Throw a blazing firebrand into snow or rain, and its brightness and heat will quickly be extinguished; so, let the liveliest Christian plunge himself into carnal company, and he will soon find the warmth of his zeal abated, and the tenderness of his conscience prejudiced." Now, if it be so detrimental to those who have deliberately devoted themselves to the service of God, and have had some experience of the goodness of his ways, judge how much more dangerous it must be to him who has only some feeble desires, and as yet undetermined purposes, in favour of it. Young people are extremely rash and credulous; and when you see your favourite companions neglecting serious godliness, and perhaps deriding it, it is a thousand to one that you will not have courage to oppose them: you will probably, at first, be silent; and then you will grow ashamed of your former tenderness; till at last, seduced by the craftiness of them that lie in wait to deceive, you may secretly censure religion as an unnecessary and burthensome thing, if you are not transported so far as openly to revile it, and join in the senseless and impious cry against those that appear to be influenced by it.

Again, when you have been used to the pleasures of such company, and, perhaps, of that unbridled luxury which they may be ready to lead you into, you will, no doubt, lose your relish for all the entertainments of devotion. The hours you spend in the exercises of it in public, or in the family, will grow tedious, and almost insupportable to you; and you will rejoice when the dull work is over, that you may return to your beloved companions again. Thus will all regard to religion be gradually worn out of your mind, and this seems to be the argument suggested by St. Paul, to dissuade the Corinthians from being unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what communion hath light with darkness? This alone would be a very considerable evil; but it is far from being all you have to fear, for I add,

(2.) By frequenting ill company, you lay yourselves open to many temptations, and probably will be drawn into a great deal of guilt.

You know, there is a strong force in example. "We are all," says Mr. Locke, "a kind of chameleons, that take a tincture from that which is near us."† So that, if you converse with wicked people, you will probably become like them yourselves. It is an argument, which Solomon urges against

* Directions for walking with God. † Locke's Works, vol. iii.

forming any peculiar intimacy with those that are passionate; and it is equally applicable to many other cases: Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Alas, sinners, you are too apt to be led into guilt by your own corrupt hearts, even when you have the fairest advantages against it, amidst the wisest instructions, and the holiest examples. How forcibly then will the temptation assault you, when you see others, and those your most intimate friends, yield to it without any appearance of remorse! and when, it may be, you hear them pleading in favour of the compliance, and endeavouring to persuade you to join them in the practice, as what they have themselves found delightful and advantageous!

It is no small evil for an immortal creature, who was sent into the world to serve God, and to secure a happy immortality, to live in vain, and to trifle away hour after hour in mere idleness and impertinence. Yet this is the least sin that bad company leads a man into. Unhappy as this is, would to God that it always rested here! the world would at least be more peaceful, and your damnation, sinners, would be less intolerable. But daily observation undeniably proves, that by evil examples, and wicked companions, people generally learn gluttony and drunkenness, swearing and uncleanness. It engages them in foolish quarrels, in which they blaspheme the name of God, and injure their neighbour; and it habituates them to such extravagant ways of living, as they are forced to support by secret dishonesty, and very often by open robbery. Thus they gradually fall into those scandalous enormities, which at first they could not have thought of without horror. This fatal effect is plainly hinted at in Proverbs, where the wretch that abandoned himself to the society of sinners, is represented as acknowledging, that he was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly; *i. e.* he was so hardened in his various crimes, as not to be ashamed to commit, or at least to avow, them in the most public manner.

(3.) By frequenting sinful company, you will throw yourselves out of the way of repentance and reformation.

I before observed, that you will by this means contract a disrelish for the exercises of devotion; and this will probably be attended with the neglect of those ordinances, which God hath appointed as the great means of our conversion and edification. And when these are neglected, how can you expect that God should pursue you with uncommon interpositions of his grace? that when his word is despised, and his house forsaken, he should seize you as it were by violence, amongst your dissolute companions, and convert you in your midnight revels? Your pious friends may indeed have some opportunities in private of expostulating with you; but it will require a great deal of resolution to attempt it; and when they do, they must take it as a peculiar favour, if you give them a patient hearing, and do not affront and revile them for their charitable endeavour of delivering your souls from the pit of destruction, and plucking you as brands out of everlasting burnings.

But if we should allow, that their importunity, or any other consideration, should sometimes bring you within the hearing of an awakening, practical sermon, and some serious impression should be made upon your minds by it, it is very probable all these convictions will wear off, as soon as you return to your wicked companions again. One gay, licentious hour amongst them may undo the labour of many days and weeks, and presently teach you to laugh at yourselves for the former alarm, as if every fear had been vain, and every purpose of reformation needless. And thus your hearts will be like tempered steel, which gathers strength from every blow of the hammer, to make a more vigorous resistance to the next; and you will harden to all the most mollifying methods of Providence and of grace, till at length you provoke the blessed Spirit, so often resisted, entirely to withdraw, and so you be sealed up under final impenitency. Thus the poor foolish creature I mentioned before, who was so fond of the society of sinners, is represented as reflecting too late, that all the wisest and kindest endeavours of his friends for his reformation, had been utterly ineffectual. How, says he, have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me. Thus incorrigibly disobedient will you be, if you enter into the path of sinners, and go on in the way of evil men. In consequence of this,

(4.) You will undoubtedly find yourselves exposed to a great deal of present inconvenience and calamity, with regard to your temporal affairs.

Now, methinks, this consideration should at least have its weight with you, whose guilt it is, and whose ruin it too probably may be, to look only at those things which are seen, and are temporal. I before observed, that by frequenting ill company, you will be under strong temptations to idleness. And thus you will, in all probability, waste your substance, and shorten your days; and in the mean time lay a foundation for many diseases, which may give you an utter disrelish for all the comforts and entertainments of life, when you stand in the greatest need of them. I add, that it is not at all unlikely, that the foolish quarrels, into which it may lead you, may be attended with cost or pain, and perhaps with both. And as for your reputation, which to a generous spirit is one of the dearest of

all temporal enjoyments, I must plainly tell you, that if you determine to take no care in the choice of your company, you must necessarily give it up. For if, almost by a miracle, you should be kept from running with your sinful associates into the same excess of riot and folly; yet the very circumstance of taking pleasure in such sort of companions will be enough to overthrow it, in the judgment of wise and considerate people.

Such arguments as these does Solomon use, when cautioning his young readers against so dangerous an entanglement. He pleads the many temporal inconveniences and evils which attend it, and many of which I have just been mentioning. He observes, that it tends to impoverish them: he that follows after vain persons, shall have poverty enough: that however it may seem the cement of friendship, it often proves the occasion of enmity and contention; for who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine with the partners of their midnight debaucheries. How much the health is impaired by it, is evidently suggested, when he represents the poor creature as mourning at last, when his flesh and his body are consumed; and to add no more, he expressly tells us, that sinners, by these kinds of confederacies, lay snares for their own blood, and lurk privily for their own lives; which he useth as an argument against complying with their proposals, when they seem most advantageous. And accordingly, we see that most of those unhappy creatures, who are the victims of public justice, and fall by the hand of the executioner, declare with their dying breath, that wicked company was the occasion of their ruin.

(5.) If you choose the society of sinners, you will probably perish with them, and have their company in hell, as you have had it upon earth.

The probability of this dreadful consequence is but too apparent from what I have said under the former heads of this discourse. If you lose those religious impressions which were early made, if you are drawn into a great deal of sin, and thrown out of the way of repentance and reformation, what can the end of these things be? or what can you reasonably expect, but that God should execute upon you all the fierceness of his wrath? And to cut off your vain, presumptuous hopes, and awaken you to that sense of danger, which is so absolutely necessary for your deliverance, he has expressly threatened it; and that not only in general with respect to all sinners, but particularly to such as are fond of wicked company. And it is worth your while to observe, in what language he threatens it: A companion of fools shall be destroyed. So that what Solomon says of one sort of sinful companions is justly applicable to the rest: Their house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Now let me entreat you to dwell upon this thought, till you feel something of the weight and the terror of it. Be sometimes asking yourselves, "How can we dwell with the devouring fire? How can we lie down in everlasting burnings?" How can you endure those torments yourselves? And in what temper, and with what reflections, will you meet the partners of your guilt and folly there? And in what manner will you converse together? Alas, my friends, in those seats of horror and despair, all that rendered your intercourse on earth delightful, will be come to an eternal period. There will be no opportunities for you and them to gratify your sensual desires together; no delicious food, no intoxicating liquors, no gay tales, no cheerful songs; but instead of these, blackness of darkness for evermore; weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the worm that never dies, and the fire that cannot be quenched.

Will it then be any relief to you, to look back on those days, which you shared in luxury, and in sin? Will your friendship still continue? And will you be endeavouring, by tender condolences, and by obliging offices, to mollify and alleviate the miseries of each other? Alas, sinners, hell is not the seat of friendship, but of everlasting enmity and rage. All the wretched inhabitants will live in perpetual discord, and mutual abhorrence. And no doubt your keenest resentments will burn against those, who have been your partners in sin; as your aggravated damnation will be in part owing to them. And on the same principles, will their indignations rise against you. And thus you will lie for ever, continually exercising all the enlarged capacities of your minds, to increase the torments of each other. And perhaps it is the only instance, in which your desires and your attempts will be effectual. Oh! sirs, when I think of the air and form of some wicked creatures, when transported with passion, when I observe how venomous their speeches, and extravagantly furious all their actions are, methinks I see the most lively emblem of the society below: but alas, how much more dreadful must it be, to stand exposed to the rage and revenge of a damned spirit! yet this is like to be your lot; and if it be, the most delightful of your companions in sin will probably prove your fiercest tormentors.

There is reason to apprehend, that these, and such as these, will be the miserable consequences of wicked company with regard to yourselves. And I might now infer from hence, that your frequenting it must be very grievous and injurious to others. I might plead against it at large, from the alarms and sorrows to which your parents and ministers will be exposed by your pursuing it, and the mischievous influence it may have on the circumstances and

characters of your own domestics, if ever you appear at the heads of families, as well as of others, with whom you are concerned. Solomon urges one of these considerations, when he says, A companion of riotous men shameth his father. Here would be a large field of argument; but I wave it at present, lest my discourse should swell beyond due bounds, as well as to avoid the repetition of what I was laying before you on a former occasion.*

Nevertheless, I hope you are abundantly convinced, by what has been already said, that the pernicious and dangerous consequences are many and great: let me entreat you further to consider,

2. How much nobler entertainment and pleasure you give up for a converse, which is like to prove so fatal to you.

I would fain persuade you, if already entangled, to burst these bands asunder, and to cast away these cords from you, which will otherwise bind you as victims to eternal wrath. And to engage you to it, I would say, as the wise man doth, Forsake the foolish, and live. It is not only necessary to preserve your life, but you may likewise be assured, it would most happily improve it, and bring you to another kind of life than what you have yet known, in comparison of which your present way of life is but a wild distempered dream. The father of lies may, perhaps, have persuaded your weak and unexperienced minds, that there is no such thing as pleasure to be found out of this enchanted circle which he has drawn about you: but did you know wherein true self-enjoyment consists, I might have declined all those awful arguments which I have so largely been urging upon your consciences. Oh, my friends, could I but this day be so happy as to persuade you to break the chain, and to abandon these insnaring companions, not merely from prudential, but religious, considerations, I should presently lead you into a new world. Instead of being the associates of the idle, the intemperate, and the profane, you would then converse with those who are indeed the excellent of the earth, and would be able to say, with David, I am a companion of them that fear thee, O Lord, and of them that keep thy precepts. And is that a contemptible thought? What think you, if an angel were to descend from heaven to make his abode on earth, or the Lord Jesus Christ himself were to appear again in the infirmities of human flesh; with whom would that angel, or that Redeemer, choose an intimate friendship, and as frequent converse? Your own consciences tell you, that if he were ever found amongst you, it would only be as a physician visits an hospital, to cure others, not to delight himself. And why should you esteem that society unworthy your regard, which you are sure the Lord Jesus Christ would prefer? It is because you imagine it gloomy and melancholy: but that imagination proceeds from ignorance and mistake. Were you to be with them, when they are discoursing together of the things of God, (as, through the divine goodness, many of us have been,) you might frequently discern in their countenances such marks of sweet serenity and composure, and sometimes of elevated hope, and sublime, angelic joy, as would be an ocular demonstration of the pleasure which a serious and regular mind may find in such converse. And to this you might be admitted, if, by forbearing to enter into the ways of sinners, you discovered the marks of a teachable disposition. For, as Solomon declares, the ear that heareth the reproof of life, i. e. that reproof which tends to preserve life, and to make it happy, abideth among the wise; and, as he chooseth their company, he will readily be admitted to it.

I might add, that on this supposition, you would also know what it is to be good company to yourselves. Reflection, which is now your torment, would become your pleasure. The review of a well-ordered mind, of a prudent and religious conduct, would delight you more than the most agreeable prospects, or harmonious music; and instead of holding your happiness, as you now do, in a servile dependence on the presence, nay, I may add, on the humour, of others, even of such as are least to be depended upon, you would have it treasured up in your own breast, and, like the good man described in Scripture, would be satisfied from yourselves.

Nay, which is still infinitely more, you might humbly hope, through the righteousness and grace of the Redeemer, that the blessed God, the eternal and inexhaustible source of happiness, would lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and bid you welcome into his gracious presence. This is an argument which St. Paul urges, in the view in which I now mention it, when, dissuading the Corinthians from forming any intimate alliance with sinners, he pleads, that God hath said, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. And God forbid, that you should ever arrive at such a degree of impious madness, as to question whether the favour and friendship of the majesty of heaven be preferable to the converse of a vain, sinful worm. O that he would grant you the visit of one hour, of one moment; and you would need nothing further to teach you to say, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire but thee; none that I desire in comparison with thee; how much less in opposition to thee!

Once more, if you are companions of the saints

* See Serm. V.

now, you may enjoy the reviving hope, that you will shortly meet them in the presence of God above, and for ever converse together, with the greatest ardour of mutual affection, as well as the noblest improvement, both in capacity, temper, and circumstances. Nor will you there only meet your pious friends, with whom on earth you took sweet counsel together, and perhaps went to the house of God in company; but you will form many new acquaintances with the most excellent and glorious of created beings; you will come to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; nay, you will dwell for ever with God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. But surely you cannot expect a favourable reception into that blessed world, or any of the preparatory felicities I have been describing, if you resolutely adhere to foolish and wicked companions now. David would not have presumed to pray, as he doth, Gather not my soul with sinners, if he could not have said, as in the preceding words, I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked. And if you think to reconcile such companions with such enjoyments and hopes, you delude yourselves with inconsistent dreams, in direct opposition to the voice of reason, as well as of Scripture. Give me leave, once more, to entreat you to consider,

3. How little advantage you can receive from such society, to counterbalance the damage you sustain, and the happiness you forfeit for it.

I am sure it ought to be something very grand and important, for which you grieve your friends, and provoke God; for which you cut yourselves off from the most valuable enjoyments in this world and a better, and at length plunge yourselves into everlasting destruction. And now show us, I entreat you, the worthy prize; tell us what those friends are, whose company you purchase at so dear a rate; and what important offices they can do for you, to make you amends for all you must lose, and for all you must suffer, on their account? Poor wretches! the most they can do, is to administer something that may gratify your appetite, or amuse your imagination, for a few transient moments. A relishing meal, a cheerful cup, a thoughtless, noisy burst of laughter, are some of the best things they can procure for you. And are these so great? Surely, if it were reasonable in any case, it is peculiarly so in this, to say of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth and luxury, What doth it? It is but a poor entertainment while it lasts, which Solomon elegantly compares to the useless momentary blaze of a few crackling thorns under a pot: and there is a mixture of uneasiness often attending it from a view of the consequences, which will often force itself on the mind; so that even in laughter the heart is sorrowful. But if the satisfaction it gave were ever so transporting, or ever so complete, yet still it would be very contemptible, because its duration is so short. Death is continually advancing towards you, which will very shortly separate you from your chosen companions; and if the most beloved of them were waiting round your bed, they could by no means deliver you from the grave, or moderate the agonies which were bringing you thither. Even before your trembling souls are dislodged from your bodies, your relish for their converse will be entirely spoiled; so that you would think yourselves barbarously insulted by them, if, in the midst of your anguish and distress, they should offer you those entertainments which you once so fondly pursued together, and which were the cement of your precarious and short-lived friendship. Judge then, whether those things are so highly valuable, which, in the near views of eternity, you would behold with horror, rather than with pleasure; and whether your most rational felicity in both worlds is to be sacrificed to such vanities as these.

I firmly believe, that, upon such reflections as these, you must be compelled, even to your own condemnation, to confess that, as Solomon declares, He that followeth vain persons, is void of understanding. And if you are convinced of it, then let me entreat you, my dear unhappy friends, who are entangled in this fatal snare, that, in the strength of divine grace, you would immediately attempt an escape. It will indeed require resolution; but, remember, it will amply reward it: and therefore determine upon it this day, that you will go no more to their assemblies of vanity and of sin, and when they would entice you, consent not to them; but rather tell them plainly and seriously, that you know, and consider, that your souls are at stake; and tell them, you avoid their company now, because you dread it in hell. And who knows, but such a serious and lively admonition from those who were once their brethren in iniquity, may do more to awaken them, than many addresses from the pulpit? Who knows, but it may effectually reclaim them, and be a means of forming them to such characters, as may make their friendship as safe and as honourable, as ever it was dangerous and infamous? At least, you will have delivered your own soul, and may comfortably hope, that your life will be given you for a prey. With this solemn charge, as in the name and presence of God, I dismiss you from this head, and proceed,

III. To those reflections and inferences, with which I shall conclude the discourse.

1. If so many evils and dangers attend the pursuit of wicked company, how careful should parents

and guardians be, to keep young people out of the way of it!

You see, from all I have been saying, how necessary this care is, if you desire they should be happy in this world, or in the next. It is a dreadful charge that is brought against Eli, and a dreadful doom is pronounced upon him for it; that his sons made themselves vile, and that he restrained them not. And therefore, as you love your own souls, and those of yours, endeavour, with all possible resolution, to avoid being culpable yourselves on this account.

And here I would observe, that your care must begin very early, and that it must take a great compass. You should endeavour betimes to lay in an antidote against the future poison, by labouring to the utmost to possess their infant minds with a sense of the divine presence, a desire of pleasing God, and a dread of offending him. You should endeavour to inspire them with an abhorrence of sin, and a love to the ways and people of God. Endeavour to find out suitable company for them, and to make your own company as delightful to them as you can. Indulge them in such diversions as duty and prudence will admit; for too rigorous a restraint from these things, makes them eager to pursue them, wherever they are to be found. And if you see they begin to form an acquaintance with such as you think likely to insnare and corrupt them, first gently warn them of it, and endeavour, by the easiest methods, to draw them off. If those will not do, reason with them more largely on the head; lay before them the various dangers they will be exposed to, and show them the instances of those who have been injured and ruined by such company: instances, which, it is to be feared, you will always have near at hand. And if all this be not enough, interpose with the authority God has given you; absolutely forbid them the place and company, and let them see by your after-conduct, that you are in good earnest in the prohibition. At the same time, endeavour to recommend religion to them in the most amiable light, that they may be convinced it carries its entertainment along with it, so that there is no need of seeking pleasure in the paths of the destroyer. I know this is a matter of difficulty, and requires a great deal of prudence and steadiness to conduct it aright; but I am persuaded, if parents and masters were careful in this respect, few would be ruined till they came to be at their own disposal, and the destruction of multitudes would be entirely prevented. May God graciously give you wisdom to know your duty, and faithfulness to perform it!

2. If wicked company be so pernicious, as we have heard, then how cautious should you be in the choice of a companion for life, if you are in such circumstances as to have that choice before you.

It is evident, that, as all bad company is dangerous, so the nearer it is to us, and the more frequent the opportunities of conversing with it, the greater mischief will it probably do us. Those who are in the conjugal relation, should make it their great business and care, to assist and animate each other in the ways of God; and such is the prevalency of our sinful nature, and so many the snares and temptations of life, that, with all possible advantages, our progress will be too slow, and too frequently interrupted. What then could you expect, if you had those, not only in your houses, but in your arms too, from whom you would hardly ever hear a serious word; and who would perhaps be unwilling to give you the hearing, if you should attempt any such discourse: nay, might possibly revile or banter you for it, and by their impious language and wicked example, might greatly deaden religious sentiments in your own heart, and either prevent or frustrate your endeavours for communicating them to those under your care? When Christians of one sex or the other, choose such a companion for life, they seem to lie under great difficulties, and will be in imminent danger, either, on the one hand, of failing in a due affection and regard, or on the other, of being perverted and insnared by that very affection, which both the duties of the relation, and the comfort of life, so evidently require. If any of you have taken this hazardous step, I have nothing to do but to advise you, to be daily looking up to God for that extraordinary prudence which your circumstances require. But this is such a situation that I cannot forbear praying, that, as for those of you who are yet single, no considerations of beauty, wit, temper, or fortune, may ever prevail upon you to bow your necks to so unequal a yoke.

3. How much reason have you to be thankful, if God has delivered you from the snares of wicked company, and given you a relish for such as is good.

Think how easily you might have been entangled and undone. Think how many, in other respects, at least your equals in wisdom and capacity, are in this instance making a foolish choice; and bless the Lord, who has given you counsel. It is his mercy that gives you serious and useful friends, and gives you a heart to value them. By their converse you may gain many advantages directly opposite to the evils I have been describing. Be humbled, that you have improved these advantages no better; and pray for the aids of divine grace, that for the future they may be more diligently regarded. And if Providence ever lead you into the company of carnal sinners, which the most pious and resolute cannot wholly avoid, labour that they may be something the better for you, and you not the worse for them; and consider all the irregulari-

ties you observe in them, as further motives of thankfulness to God, for making a difference betwixt them and you, and giving you company so much more amiable than theirs. Once more,

4. Let young persons of a regular character take great heed that they do not, by insensible degrees, become dangerous companions to each other.

That social turn of mind which is natural to men, and especially to young persons, may perhaps lead you to form yourselves into little societies, particularly at this season of the year, to spend your evenings together. But let me entreat you to be cautious how you spend them. If your games and your cups take up your hours, till you intrench on the night, and perhaps the morning too, you will, to be sure, quickly corrupt each other, and soon degenerate into a club of rakes and debauchees. Farewell then to prayer, and every other religious exercise in secret. Farewell to all my pleasing hopes of you, and to those hopes which your pious parents have entertained. You will then become examples and instances of all the evils I have so largely been describing. Plead not, that these things are lawful in themselves; so are most of those, in a certain degree, which by their abuse prove the destruction of men's souls and bodies. If you meet, let it be for rational and Christian conversation; and let prayer and other devotions have their frequent place amongst you. And if you say or think that a mixture of these will spoil the company, it is high time for you to stop your career, and call yourselves to an account; for it seems by such a thought, that you are lovers of pleasure, much more than lovers of God. Some of these things may appear to have a tincture of severity; but consider, whether (in present circumstances*) I could have proved myself faithful to you, and to Him in whose name I speak, if I had omitted the caution I have now been giving you. I shall only add, that, had I loved you less tenderly, I had perhaps warned you more coldly, of this dangerous and deadly snare. May God render the admonition as successful as I am sure it is seasonable and necessary!

SERMON VIII.

RELIGIOUS YOUTH INVITED TO EARLY COMMUNION.

Isa. xliv. 3—5.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

On the first hearing of these words, you will easily apprehend that they afford abundance of very proper matter for a discourse to young people; but you may perhaps be surprised when I tell you, that I shall take occasion from them to address religious youth, with a large invitation to an early attendance on the table of the Lord.

This is a surprise which I do not at all affect to give; for to press in a scripture to serve a purpose foreign to its original design, and to turn a mere allusion into an argument, is, in its degree, to handle the word of God deceitfully, and is indeed an injury to it, rather than an honour. So that I much fear, that by thus attempting to make every thing of the Scripture, we shall at length come to make nothing of it; for those seemingly distant extremes approach nearer to each other than some seem to be aware.

But I hope, my friends, you have learned to judge of the pertinency of Scripture to any purpose in hand, not merely by the first sound of the words, but by an attentive view of its sense and connexion; and when the words I have been reading are diligently examined, they may appear more suitable to my design than you at first apprehended.

Though God had before been reproving Israel with great severity, and setting their sins in order before them, he intimates purposes of grace and mercy, which he yet entertained toward them, unworthy as they were. And in order to prepare them for further favours, he promises, in the words of the text, to pour out upon them an abundant effusion of the blessed Spirit. Now we well know, by a multitude of scriptures, which I must not particularly enumerate, that it was to be in the latter day, *i. e.* the gospel times, that this glorious promise was most eminently to be fulfilled.

The blessed effects which were to attend its accomplishment, are described in great variety and elegance of language. They are represented by the refreshment which water gives to him that is thirsty, and which plentiful floods of it afford to the dry ground, when scorched with the summer's heat. Accordingly, it is said that they, and their offspring too, should flourish in religion, like the grass when thus abundantly refreshed, or like willows by the water courses, the verdure of which is so delightful, and the growth so speedy, that no more proper emblem could have been chosen. Thus should the souls of the children flourish, through the divine blessing, on the instructions of pious parents, and

* N. B. The substance of this sermon was first preached at Hertford, December 25, 1748, and afterwards at Northampton above a dozen years.

other methods appointed by God for their religious improvement. And in the next words the prophet uses still greater plainness of speech, to let us know that their number should be considerable, and their resolutions for God firm and determinate. One and another, this man and that, should come and own his relation to God, should publicly enter himself into the engagements of his covenant, and put in a humble claim to the important blessing it was intended to convey. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

Some very celebrated translators and critics understand the words, which we render, "Subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," in a sense a little different from that which our English version has given them. They would rather render them, "Another shall write upon his hand, I am the Lord's;"* and they suppose it refers to a custom which formerly prevailed in the East, of stamping the name of the general on the soldier,† or that of the master on the slave.‡ As this name was sometimes borne on the forehead, so at other times on the hand; and it is certain that several Scriptures, which may easily be recollected, are to be explained as alluding to this.§ Now from hence it seems to have grown into a custom amongst some idolatrous nations, when solemnly devoting themselves to the service of any deity, to be initiated into it by receiving some marks in their flesh, which might never wear out.‖ This interpretation the original will certainly bear; and it here makes a very strong and beautiful sense, since every true Christian has a sacred and an indelible character upon him, which shall never be erased. But if we retain our own version, it will come to nearly the same, and evidently refers to a practice which was sometimes used among the Jews, and which is indeed exceeding natural, of obliging themselves to the service of God, by setting their hand to some written articles emphatically expressing such a resolution. So that you see it must imply, that they who were, by the influences of divine grace, brought to a serious sense of religion, should, in a public and solemn manner, express their subjection to God, and their readiness to enter into covenant with him; and whatever rites should by him be appointed as the tokens of such a resolution, the text must intimate a cheerful compliance with them. For it would be most unreasonable to imagine that any, of such a character, and in such circumstances, would prefer any form invented by themselves, or dictated merely by human prudence, to the express ordinance and institution of God. Now, forasmuch as it is evident, that, under the Christian dispensation, the Lord's supper is appointed to such purposes, the text must imply an attendance upon it; and when we see young Christians presenting themselves at this holy solemnity, and joining themselves to God and his church in it, we may properly say, they subscribe with their hand to the Lord, and surname themselves by the name of Israel; just as we may say, in the Old-Testament phrase, that incense is offered, and a pure offering, when holy souls are pouring out their prayers and supplications before the throne of grace, though odours and victims no longer accompany their devotions.

I have surely said enough, and perhaps more than enough, to account for my choosing these words to introduce the discourse I have in view; in which I am to press those young persons, whose hearts God has touched by his sanctifying grace, to subscribe, as it were, with their hand, by entering themselves early into Christian communion, and eating and drinking with our Lord at his table. In order to which I shall,

I. Propose some plain and important arguments, to engage such to an early attendance on this sacred institution.

II. Answer some objections, which are most frequently urged to excuse the neglect of it; and,

III. Conclude with hinting at some reflections and inferences, which seem naturally to present themselves.

May divine grace render this attempt the means of leading many young persons into a conviction of their duty and interest, and of adding unto the church such as shall be saved!

I. I am to offer some plain and important arguments to engage religious youth to an early attendance on the supper of the Lord.

And, before I enter on these, I must entreat you to remember, that it is to religious youth only, that I address the invitation. I well know, my friends, that the sacred institution I am recommending, is a most awful and solemn thing. I know it was

* The Hebrew is, יכתב יד לה' וכנוי, which the LXX translate, γραψει χειρι αυτου τω Θεω, To the same.

† Sicut milites imperatoris nomen in manu scriptum habebant Graeci. Manus suae inscribent Sacramentum Jehovae, sicut milites, &c. Iren. Vad. Edms. lib. viii. cap. 12. Sigon. lib. i. cap. 8. Lib. ii. cap. 5. et Augustin. Epist. xx.

‡ Servi etiam olim stigmate nominis notabantur, ex quo agnos erebatur. Mercator. See Hammond, on Rev. xiii. 16.

§ Thus it is said, Rev. xiii. 16, 17. That all, great and small, received the mark of the beast in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that without it none might buy or sell. And in another place, we read of an angel, that had the seal of the living God, to seal his servants in their foreheads, Rev. vii. 2, 3. In allusion to this also our Lord promises, Rev. iii. 12. I will write upon him that overcometh, the name of my God, and my new name. On this account Christians are said to be sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. as by his operations God owns them as his, and secures them to himself, and to this God seems to refer, in those condescending words, Isaiah xlix. 16. I have graven Zion on the palms of my hands. See also Ezek. ix. 4. To this custom some think St. Paul alludes, when he speaks of the marks of Christ, which he bare in his body, Gal. vi. 17. Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. i. p. 7.

‖ Quos Deo dicatos consecrabant et notabant, hos stigmatibus notabant. Pitiscus Lexic. in voc. And Lucian de Dea Syr. says, Certis notis compunguntur omnes, qui eandem se Deam colere volunt, sic in carnifices, &c. The manner of doing it is described by Prudentius, Περι στεφανων, Hymn x. ver. 1075, &c. And many commentators suppose these words to be referred to, Lev. xix. 28. Ye shall not print any marks upon you. See Poole's Synops. in loc. and Spencer. de Leg. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 14.

intended, not only as the commemoration of a Redeemer's dying love, but as a seal of our covenant engagements to God through him; so that to attend upon it without a sincere desire of receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, and devoting ourselves to him, is a profanation that renders us, in some degree, guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. I am very sensible, that for any to approach it in so unworthy a manner, is not only in itself a sinful action, but may, in its consequences, prove a snare to their own souls, a stumbling to others, and a dishonour to the church. And therefore, far from encouraging such persons to come, I should think it a very necessary duty to labour to the utmost to dissuade them from it, and, if Providence gave me an opportunity, to prevent their admittance.

But I have frequently found, and I believe it has been the experience of many of my brethren in the ministry, that young persons, not only of a very sober and regular conduct, but even those who have appeared most deeply impressed with the concerns of their souls, and experimentally acquainted, so far as we can judge, with regenerating grace, have, in many instances, shown a strange coldness to this blessed institution; and we have known not a few who have grown old in the neglect of it. I apprehend therefore, that a regard to the authority and glory of my great Master, to the comfort and improvement of your souls, and to the edification and joy of the church in general, concur to require, that I offer you, my young friends, some public admonitions on this head; to which I now desire your very serious attention.

And here permit me more largely to plead the weight of a dying Redeemer's command, as well as the honour, the pleasure, and the various advantages of an early compliance with it.

1. The ordinance to which I now invite you, is the known command and institution of a dying Redeemer.

I need not enlarge on the proof of what is so apparent. You undoubtedly know, that Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, agree in giving us the history of its institution. And St. Paul afterwards received it by express revelation from Christ, and accordingly relates it in a very circumstantial and pathetic manner; telling us, not only that Christ commanded that this should be done in remembrance of him, but also that, by an attendance upon it, our Lord's death is showed forth till he come; plainly intimating thereby, (what the ends of the ordinance do further evince,) that it was to continue in the church to its remotest ages. So that, on the whole, you exceedingly mistake if you imagine this to be mere matter of choice, in any other sense, than as all the duty of a rational creature is so. Our Lord has plainly determined the matter by his own sacred authority, leaving this ordinance in charge to all his followers I say to all, for there is no limitation as to the age of those that should attend it. It is a command to young and old, as well as to rich and poor; and all, that are capable of understanding it, are obliged to comply with it, and thereby to do their homage to their exalted Sovereign, and express their gratitude to their most generous Friend. And can you in reason refuse your compliance? Methinks the name of the Son of God should carry along with it an authority too great to be despised, and the name of your Redeemer a constraining love too forcible to be withstood, especially the name of a dying Redeemer. Surely, my friends, if a dying parent, or brother, had given you a charge almost with his expiring breath, you could not lightly have acted contrary to it. How much greater regard do you owe to what the blessed Jesus appointed (as the apostle most pertinently observes) the same night in which he was betrayed! Had it been some hard thing that he had then enjoined, and had the reason of it been unknown, so that it had appeared as a mere arbitrary institution, the neglect of it had been foolish and ungrateful. Had it been a more painful rite than that of initiation amongst the Jews, more laborious than their frequent journeys to Jerusalem, and more costly than the sacrifices they offered there, the precept of our dying Lord had carried in it an abundant answer to all that ease or interest could have pleaded against it: how much more, when the reason is so evident, and the observation, in all respects, so easy! Judge, I pray you, whether it should be neglected. Judge whether it be a decent thing, that when we are sitting down to break and eat bread, and to pour forth and drink wine, that we may represent the breaking of Christ's body, and the pouring forth of his blood, and seal our covenant-engagements with him, more than one half of the professing Christians should rise, and either leave the place, or withdraw to a distance from the holy table. What is this but to say, "We will now have nothing to do with the memorials of a crucified Saviour?" Will you, my friends, thus separate yourselves from us? What if others were to learn of you, and to imitate your example? Where would the ordinance quickly be? Nay, where would it already have been, had this temper prevailed? Where, but in our Bibles? For there it would still have stood, to condemn our ungrateful disobedience, as it condemns yours.

2. An early attendance upon this ordinance will be truly honourable to you.

I wish I could say, that the omission of it were, in the repute of the generality of professing Christians, so dishonourable as it ought; but it is now grown so common, that much of the just infamy of it is worn off. Nevertheless, if we will seriously consider it, we must own, that where reason and duty require any practice, (which I have already

proved to be the case here,) the more frequently it is neglected, the more honourable is a regard to it; as it argues a laudable fortitude of mind, to oppose a prevailing evil, by which multitudes are borne away. And who, that hath any sense of generosity and goodness, would not wish to signalize himself on such an occasion as this!

I appeal to your own hearts, my brethren, even when you have divested yourselves of every sentiment of ostentation and pride, (which I would not desire to press into the service of the sanctuary,) would it not afford you a rational and pious pleasure to reflect, that your fellow-christians might say, with regard to you, "These are persons who are happily distinguished from most of their companions, by obedience to God and gratitude to their Redeemer; they dare stand up for the honour of his institutions, and of his name, in the midst of all the languor and all the impiety of a degenerate age. Far from running with others to the same excess of riot, they do not only secretly retire, that they may converse with God, and devote themselves to him, but they have the courage openly to appear in so good a cause. Far from being ashamed of Christ, or of his words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, they readily expose themselves to all the glorious reproach of a determined adherence to him. Thus do they publicly declare, that their hearts are touched with a sense of his love, and inspired with resolution for his service. And as they are thus planted in the house of the Lord, we hope they will flourish to old age there; so that generations, which are yet unborn, shall be refreshed by their shade, and nourished by their fruit." Thus will you, like Jabez, be more honourable than all your brethren, if, like him, you call upon the name of the Lord, or, in the language of the text, subscribe with your hand unto him.

3. Let me plead the pleasure which this ordinance affords, as a further argument for an early attendance upon it.

If your hearts have been touched by regenerating grace, you must surely know that communion with God through a Mediator is unutterably delightful; and must own, that when you enjoy it, your souls are satisfied, as with marrow and fatness. If this be the case, I am sure you would look with a holy scorn on any sensual gratification that could be brought into comparison with those sublime and sacred entertainments. Now, when you consider the Lord's supper as an ordinance of divine appointment, you have just reason to hope, that God will honour it with his gracious presence; nay, when you consider the nature and design of the institution, you may probably expect some peculiar sweetness and delight in it, beyond what you have hitherto known. I say not, that you can be absolutely secure of your finding it; for it becomes the sovereignty of the ever-blessed God, not to confine himself invariably to any method of operation; lest his agency should at length be disregarded in it, and the honour transferred to the instrument: but I speak of what may probably be found; and I think I might here appeal to all considerate persons, who know any thing of the workings of the human mind; for I persuade myself they would be compelled to allow, that a regular attendance on such a solemnity has a direct tendency to produce the most delightful sensations in a soul deeply impressed with the great principles of our Christian faith.

Oh, my friends, what a scene is there opened, when, by these lively memorials of his dying love, the Lord Jesus is evidently set forth as crucified among us! Surely the spectacle must be delightful, even to creatures who are themselves perfectly innocent and holy! Surely the angels, who probably are present in the churches while the solemnity is performed, must attend it with a pleasing mixture of admiration and of joy! "Thus," may they be ready to say to each other, "thus was the great design accomplished! In such sufferings did the Son of God expire! By such surprising steps of condescension and of love, were apostate creatures recovered to their God! Thus was the flaming vengeance of the Divine Majesty atoned! And now he is graciously smiling upon them; and these happy souls are sitting, as around their Father's board, and anticipating the entertainments of our celestial world."

But the guest, who is called to sit down at such a banquet, may well be supposed to feel some tender and transporting pleasure, beyond that of such an angelic spectator. "These," O my soul, may the believer say, when the bread is broken, and the wine poured out, "these were the painful sufferings which the blessed Redeemer endured for such a wretch as I am: for he loved me, and gave himself for me: he was wounded for my transgressions, he was bruised for mine iniquities. All these dreadful conflicts of nature did he pass through, to avert from me that weight of wrath, which would otherwise have overwhelmed me beyond all hope of deliverance. And here are the emblems of his dying love and his living care. Here are the precious seals of that everlasting covenant established in his blood, which, as it is well ordered in all things, and sure, is all my salvation, and all my desire. By these tokens doth a faithful God assure me, that my sins are pardoned, that I am admitted into his family, and entitled to all the invaluable blessings of his children. Delightful thought! I have nothing now to do, but quietly to sit down, and wait with a holy silence and tranquillity of soul for the intimations of my Father's will, till he calls me to dwell in his house above. Yet a little while, O my soul, and thou shalt rise to nobler enjoyments

than even these; for the bread thou hast now been eating, and the wine thou hast been drinking, are pledges of a divine banquet above, in the visible and immediate presence of the blessed Founder of this sacred feast. The security of the covenant I have this day been sealing, will continue in full force when the bands of nature are dissolved: if I drink no more with my Saviour of this fruit of the vine here, I shall drink it new with him in his Father's kingdom; and therefore may encounter death in the triumphant accents of good old Simeon, Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Through the divine goodness, I hope we can say, we speak what we know; and testify, not only what we have heard from the experience of others, but what we have ourselves tasted and felt. Thus is God visiting and refreshing our souls, while we are attending at the blessed ordinance: and why will you not come and share with us in the entertainments so sincerely and so freely offered? Is he not saying to you, Eat, O my friends; and drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved? Why then do you wrong your own souls, as well as affront his goodness, by neglecting the invitation? Would you come thus early, you might promise yourselves a peculiar welcome, and a peculiar pleasure. Many painful reflections might by this means be prevented, and the evidence of your sincerity be more happily secured; not to say, that while your spirits are brisk and active, you may feel the impression of those sacred passions, which are so suited to this occasion, with greater energy, and greater tenderness, than could be expected under the decays of nature, in the evening of life.

I shall only add, that these sublime pleasures are not limited to the happy moments which you spend in an immediate attendance on this feast of love; but they may be renewed, and perhaps sometimes increased, by reflection? whereas that often brings a sting along with it, more than sufficient to balance all the sweetness to be found in irregular, sensual delights.

4. An early attendance on the Lord's supper would be very useful, as well as entertaining.

It may probably be useful, both to yourselves, and others. I say,

(1.) It might be useful to yourselves in a variety of respects.

I consider, that I am now speaking to them that look upon improvement in religion as their highest interest; and therefore shall only endeavour to show you, what a tendency this ordinance has to assist you in this, and that is so evident, that I need not dwell largely on particulars, which, when suggested in a few words, may furnish you with matter of ample meditation. I shall but mention then the following hints:

The preparatory exercises of devotion might be very awakening and edifying to you. The review of your conduct, which you would be taking on the approach of these solemn seasons; the prayers and praises you would then be addressing to God, and the meditations in which your minds would be employed, would rouse you out of that lethargy in which you might be ready to sink, and which the best of men find too frequently prevailing.

The views of a bleeding Redeemer, of a reconciled God, of a confirmed covenant, and of a world of approaching glory, which this ordinance so naturally exhibits, would strengthen, as well as delight, your souls; and, by virtue of the refreshments received at these solemnities, you might be enabled to go on your way rejoicing, and to make a sensible progress in your journey towards the heavenly Canaan.

The remembrance of those solemn engagements, with which you would then be binding your souls unto the Lord, would be a ready answer in hours of future temptation. You would start back with horror at the thought of alienating your services from a God, to whom you had so seriously and publicly devoted them; and of returning to those follies and sins, which you had in a peculiar manner covenanted against: for this would appear to be adding sacrilege and perjury to the guilt of all your other offences.

I shall only add here, that, by entering thus early into the communion of a church, you will be brought under the more immediate inspection of the pastor of it, and likewise of your Christian brethren; whose faithful and tender admonitions may be of great assistance to your unexperienced youth, and happily promote your progress both in the paths of prudence and of holiness. Nay, the very thoughts of having drawn upon you the eyes of a society, and of others too, would engage you to some more than ordinary care, that you might not incur their censure, or disappoint the expectations which many have raised of you. And, in confirmation of all this, I cannot but observe, that many of the most eminent Christians I have ever known, were found amongst those, who in their early days took this method of giving themselves to God and his people.—I might further show you,

(2.) That your compliance with the exhortation I am now enforcing, might be useful to others, as well as to yourselves.

This is indeed, in part, a consequence of the former; for, the more your own souls are advanced in knowledge and holiness, the more capable and the more ready will you be, to promote the interest of Christ in the world, and to do good to those that are round about you. But I would especially lead you to consider, that your attendance itself, sepa-

rate from these remoter consequences of it, might probably be useful to others.

Other young persons would, very probably, be awakened to a sense of their duty by your example; and those who are more advanced in years may be shamed out of their neglect, when they see those, who are so far below them in age, getting the start of them here. Nor have instances been wanting within the circle of our own acquaintance, where parents have been stirred up to a holy emulation, by the early zeal of their own children in this respect. It will be a joy to all that wish well to the cause of a Redeemer, to see that God is giving him youth, like the drops of morning dew, and causing converts to flock to him, like doves unto their windows: but ministers will have a peculiar share in the pleasure, when they see of the travail of their soul, and find, that there are at least some instances, in which they do not labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought. Especially shall those of us, who are entering on the work of the Lord,* rejoice to meet our younger brethren at this ordinance, as it will give us encouragement to hope, that religion will not die in our hands, and be buried in the graves of our more aged friends; but will be supported and adorned by you, and transmitted to those that are yet unborn. The joy of our heart on this occasion may add vigour, as well as pleasure, to our labours; and so, through the concurrence of almighty grace, may have a tendency to render them still more successful.

Let me then entreat and conjure you, by the authority of the King of glory and of grace, and by a regard to the honour, the pleasure, and the usefulness, of your lives, that you no longer persist in the neglect of an ordinance so sacred and noble, so delightful and advantageous.

I am persuaded, you must know and own, that the arguments I have urged are both evident and weighty; and yet I fear, you will find something to oppose to them, which if it be not examined, may prevent, or at least diminish, their success. I proceed, therefore,

II. To obviate some objections, which may be offered in excuse for a longer delay.

And here I shall not raise difficulties merely to canvass them, but confine myself to such objections as I have heard some urge on this occasion; and shall briefly suggest some hints, by way of answer to them. And if the enumeration of them be not so large, or the reply so full, as you could wish, you know where you will be always welcome to propose your scruples as freely, and to state them as amply, as you please.

1. The most obvious reply to the preceding address is, that "you fear you are not prepared for this ordinance, and therefore apprehend, that your attendance would prove dangerous, rather than beneficial."

To this I answer; if the case be indeed thus, I have already told you, that you are not the persons to whom I have been addressing. Nevertheless, give me leave to remind you, that you ought not rashly to form such a conclusion against yourselves. I am sure the matter requires a very attentive examination; and perhaps, on such a review, you may find things are not so bad as you imagine.

You say, you are not prepared; but I hope you know, that there is a great deal of difference between the nature and importance of an actual and habitual preparation. It is plain, that actual preparation consists in those extraordinary devotions, which, when opportunity permits, we should use in our approach to this sacrament; and therefore supposes such an approach to be determined, and consequently there can be no room, in the present case, to object the want of that.

But you fear, that you are not habitually prepared, *i. e.* that you are not persons of such a temper and character as Christ, the great Lord of the feast, has invited, and will welcome to it. To determine that, consider the purposes for which the ordinance was appointed, and observe how far your present temper corresponds to them. It was appointed to commemorate the death of Christ, and, in this view, all are fit for it, who regard him as the great atoning sacrifice, and desire that their hearts may be affected, and their lives influenced, by a sense of his dying love. It is a pledge of our mutual affection to each other, even to all our brethren in the Lord; and in this respect, all are prepared for it whose hearts are divested of all turbulent and unfriendly passions, and overflow with undissembled charity and diffusive benevolence. True, will you perhaps say; but is it not also designed as a seal of the covenant of grace? It certainly is; and it must be a very criminal profanation to attend it, while an alien from that covenant: your determination therefore must turn on the answer which conscience will make, as to your readiness to enter yourselves into it. For if this be your prevailing desire, and stedfast resolution, you have not only a right to the ordinance, though it be a seal of the covenant; but its being appointed by Christ, in this view, is an additional and very weighty argument for your immediate and frequent attendance upon it. And here the question is in short this; "Do you sincerely desire to make an unreserved surrender of yourselves to God, as your owner, ruler, and supreme felicity, with a humble dependence on the mediation of his Son, and the enlivening and sanctifying influences of his Spirit?" If this be your prevailing desire, and sincere purpose, you may assure yourselves of the kindest welcome, though your

* This Sermon was first preached April 14, 1725.

graces may be attended with a great deal of imperfection and weakness. But if you are strangers to such a desire, I must allow the objection in its full force, and own that you have no business at the table of the Lord.

Nevertheless, I cannot part with you so. Oh, my friends, is there nothing mournful, and, I will add, is there nothing dreadful, in such a conclusion as this? "I have no business at the table of the Lord; I have no part in this blessed repast, because I have no part in that Redeemer, whose death is commemorated there: and therefore I am shut out, by his own appointment shut out! and is not that a sad intimation with respect to what is yet to come! When I enter upon the invisible and eternal state, as I this night may, will he admit me to live and reign with him in a world of glory, who would not allow me so much as an approach to his table on earth? Oh, my soul, it is too plain thou must be separated from his blissful presence, and driven to an eternal distance, whence thou wilt behold with despairing eyes those pious souls, who have eaten and drank with him here, sitting down with him in his kingdom." This will not seem a little matter then: O that it might now be duly regarded!

From all this it will appear, that if this objection from an unprepared temper be true, it ought not to be lightly passed over, but should rather be seriously considered, and the removal of it, through divine assistance, immediately attempted; since, till you are prepared for this sacrament, you cannot be prepared for heaven; and consequently are in circumstances of the extremest danger, and daily walk on the precipice of eternal ruin.

But I would hope, many of you, on inquiry, find this is not your character and case. The unfitness you object will amount to no more than this; that you find grace weak and languid in your souls, though you have reason to hope you are not wholly destitute of it. And is this a just excuse for absenting yourselves from so confirming and edifying, as well as so delightful, an ordinance? It is just as reasonable, as if you were to plead, "I am very faint, and therefore I will not take the most noble, reviving cordial. I am very weak, and therefore I will refuse the most nourishing and strengthening food." Thus much for the first objection. It is more than time that I proceed to those that remain.

2. Others fear, that "the society of Christians, to which they would join themselves, may be unwilling to admit them into such a relation."

Now I must own, that if this objection be made by persons who have been notorious on account of their immoralities, and who are but lately recovered to a sense of divine things, it will not admit of an immediate answer; nor can I invite such to this sacred ordinance, till they give evidence of the reality of a change in their heart, by an apparent reformation of life, and some steady and prevalent resolution in a religious course: in the mean time, a regard to the honour of Christian society may oblige the church to be a little reserved towards such persons, and such a reserve is consistent with the greatest tenderness towards them, and the most affectionate concern, that they may not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax.

But as for such young persons, or others, who have been preserved from such irregularities, whose conduct has been fair and honourable, and who have not only arrived at a competent knowledge of the great truths of Christianity, but have for some time been impressed with them, so that they have formed a determinate resolution for the service of God, and, it may be, for some years made trial of his ways; far be it from us, my brethren, to say one word to discourage your approach. On the contrary, we would rather invite it; for we know it is most evidently reasonable, that when the Spirit appears to say, Come, the bride, *i. e.* the church, should echo back the call. We know, my friends, that we are not the masters of this holy feast: we know, that it is not for us to set bounds of our own about this sacred table, and say, "Thus low must you bow to us, before you take your seats there." This is a conduct, which we not only abhor, as inhumanity to you, but dread, as an insolent usurpation on the rights of our common Lord. If you have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious, you will not sure be unwilling, with meekness and modesty, to give some reason of the hope that is in you: and blessed be God, we have not so learned Christ, as to make our own phrases, or forms, or any thing singular in our own experiences, or the customs of our own society, the standard by which we judge either of the faith or the piety of our brethren.

3. You may, perhaps, further plead, that "you fear lest, if you should enter into the church, you should dishonour it by an unsuitable behaviour, which might bring a reproach on religion, and its blessed Author."

But give me leave to say, that this very fear argues such a tenderness, and such a humility of soul, as may in a great measure answer itself. I hope you go forth in the strength of the Lord, as well as making mention of his righteousness alone: and you must know, that if a bare possibility of falling into sin were to exclude from this ordinance, the most confirmed Christian upon earth could not dare to approach it. But while you see your own weakness, and maintain, on the one hand, such a jealousy over yourselves, and, on the other hand, such a zeal for the honour of religion, it is a certain evidence, that you are not yet left of God, and a most comfortable sign, that he will never forsake you. Nay I will add, that I know none more likely to prove the ornaments of a society, than

those who have such humble apprehensions, lest they should prove its reproach.

4. Others may be ready to excuse their absenting themselves from this ordinance, "because it is so commonly neglected by professing Christians."

Now as for this, I bless God, it is far from being a singular thing amongst us, to see the table of the Lord furnished with guests, and young Christians taking their places there. I speak it with great pleasure and thankfulness. But suppose it were otherwise; what if the neglect of this institution were much more common, both amongst the aged and the young, than it is in most worshipping assemblies; could you have the heart to draw an argument from thence: "My dearest Friend, my most gracious Benefactor, is generally neglected; his dying command, his dying love, is in a great measure forgotten; and therefore I will forget him, and I will neglect him?" Say, Christians, could a generous mind reconcile itself to such a thought? Could a pious soul draw such a consequence as this? Methinks the argument lies quite the contrary way: "Therefore, O my compassionate Saviour, will I attend with the greater solicitude, that I may, if possible, shame others out of their neglect; or at least, may in part supply their lack of service, and bear my own testimony against an ungrateful generation, who call themselves thy disciples, and neglect this distinguishing badge of their profession, this gracious memorial of thy dying love."

5. Others may plead "the apprehensions of aggravated guilt and ruin, if, after sacramental engagements, they should apostatize from God."

To this I answer, that I hope you, my friends, are not so unacquainted with the nature of this ordinance, and the constitution of the gospel, as to imagine that it consigns us over to certain damnation, if in any instance we afterwards deviate from the paths of our duty; for, if it were so, who then could be saved? But it is probable your fears refer to total apostasy. If so, I readily own that, should this be the case, it would in a dreadful degree inflame your guilt and aggravate your misery, that you had not only known the way of righteousness, but that you had eaten and drank in the presence of the Lord. But have you any thoughts of drawing back from him, that you are thus cautious to avoid an instituted ordinance, merely because, in that case, it would aggravate your ruin? So would every prayer you offer, and every sermon you hear; but should that thought prevent your coming to the throne of grace, or drive you from the house of God?

Nay, to strike home, I will add, that with regard to you, my friends, the caution comes too late. I speak of those who have not only tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, but have made trial of the ways of wisdom and piety, and have had some experience in them; and as for you, I must plainly and faithfully declare, that it is not for you, of all people in the world, to think of gentle flames and tolerable damnation. No, my brethren, that hope, wretched as it is, if you shall fall away, is unavoidably cut off from you; and all your schemes must be for nothing less than certain salvation and exalted glory. And to your comfort let me tell you, that though it is always the duty of him that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall, yet you have all imaginable reason to trust the promises of an everlasting covenant, and to rely upon the great Redeemer, who hath declared, that he will give unto his sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand, or be able to separate them from his love. If, then, you fear the dreadful consequences of apostasy, which would, indeed, be dreadful beyond all your fears, keep near to him as the great Shepherd; and let those very fears rather engage you to an early and diligent attendance on this, and every other appointed method of approach, than drive you away from it. It is most reasonable to say, "Since there are so many professors that draw back even to perdition, I will wait upon the Lord, that I may renew my strength, and so be enabled to endure to the end, that I may receive the end of my faith in the salvation of my soul." If your fears operate thus, they may be a means of preventing the evil, of which you are so apprehensive.

On the whole, I hope, that when you weigh all I have been saying, and compare it with whatever can be objected against it, you will be convinced of your duty, and engaged to an immediate compliance with it. I have enlarged so copiously on these things, that, in the last place,

III. I can only mention two or three inferences, which will naturally arise from what I have been laying before you.

From hence we might infer, that great care ought to be taken to instruct youth in the principles of religion; that they may not be destitute of such an acquaintance with them, as is one necessary part of preparation for this ordinance, though far from being alone sufficient.

We may also infer, that more aged Christians ought carefully to cultivate serious impressions, which may be made on the minds of their children, servants, and others of the rising generation, that they may be engaged to an early compliance with their duty; while, on the other hand, great care ought surely to be taken, that there be nothing rigorous and severe in the terms of admission, which may bear hard upon that modesty and tenderness of spirit which is generally to be found in young Christians, and most eminently in those of the most hopeful and amiable characters.

As for those of a more advanced age, who have

lived in the continued neglect of this great and excellent institution, I hope they have long before this inferred the guilt and folly of their omission, which so evidently appears from all I have been saying, and it is attended with many other aggravations, which my time will not now permit me to mention.

I shall therefore conclude with observing, that those young persons, who, through grace, have been convinced of their duty in this instance, and brought to an early compliance with it, have abundant reason to reflect upon it with pleasure and thankfulness. I think it is one of the most important blessings of my life, that there are many such in the church here; many who, through the divine goodness, have lately been added to it. It would not be easy for me, my dear brethren and friends, to say how great pleasure your presence and society adds to my sacrament days; or what a delightful prospect it gives me, not only as to the comfort of my own more advanced age, but as to the support of religion here, when I am no longer amongst you. I, and our more aged friends, have reason to rejoice on this occasion; but surely you yourselves have much greater reason. Permit me to remind you, that it will be a most proper expression of your thankfulness, to labour with the utmost care to engage other young persons, your brethren and companions, to come and share with you in this feast. I hope your own experience of the pleasure and advantage which attends it, may be added to the other arguments I have been pleading. As for your own conduct, let me most affectionately entreat, and most solemnly charge you, not only by all other arguments, but by your sacramental vows; by the eyes of God and of man, that are upon you; by all our expectations from you, and all your engagements to us; that as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so you would walk in him. And may almighty grace strengthen and quicken you in your progress; and crown that fair morning, which is opening upon us, in so delightful a manner, with a long, a bright, and a prosperous day! Amen.

SERMON IX

THE ORPHAN'S HOPE

PSALM xxvii. 10.

*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.**

THERE are few precepts of the gospel which will appear more easy to a humane and generous mind, than that in which we are required to weep with them that weep. And surely there are few circumstances of private life, which will more readily command our mournful sympathy, than those of that afflicted family, to the poor remains of which you will naturally, on the first hearing of these words, direct your thoughts, and, perhaps, your eyes too. The circumstances of a family, which God hath broken with breach upon breach; of those distressed children, whose father and mother have forsaken them, almost at once; and who have since been visited with another stroke, which, if alone, had been very grievous, and when added to such a weight of former sorrows, is, I fear, almost insupportable.

I believe all of you, who are acquainted with the case, sincerely pity them, and wish their relief: but I am under some peculiar obligations to desire and attempt it; not only on account of my public character, but as I know the heart of an orphan, having myself been deprived of both my parents, at an age, in which it might reasonably be supposed a child should be most sensible of such a loss. I cannot recollect any scripture, which was then more comfortable, as I think none could have been more suitable, to me, than this which is now before us; and I the rather choose to insist upon it, as it will naturally lead me into some reflections, which I hope, by the divine blessing, may be of general use. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

As for the psalm from whence these words are taken, we are told in the title, that it was composed by David, but are left to conjecture the particular occasion of it. Dr. Patrick refers it to the latter end of his time, and to the combat that he had with the Philistines in his declining age; when we are told that David waxed faint, and was in great danger of being killed by a giant, if Abishai the brother of Joab had not seasonably rescued him; upon which it is added, that his subjects sware he should no more go out to battle, lest he should quench the light of Israel. To these words David is supposed to allude, when he says, The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Mine enemies come upon me to eat up my flesh: and, I had fainted unless I had believed. But I am rather inclined to conjecture, that this psalm was composed by him in his younger years, when he was under persecution from Saul. There is not a line in it which doth not agree to this supposition; and there are several verses which cannot so well be accommodated to the other; especially the 12th, in which he represents his dangers as arising from false witnesses. Now it is not easy to imagine what mischief they could have done him amongst the Philis-

* This Sermon was preached at Ashley, in Northamptonshire, March 9, 1725, to some young persons, whose father, mother, and sister had all died of the small pox a few days before.

tines, who opposed him in a national, rather than a personal, quarrel; but he expressly declares elsewhere, that the lying words of some treacherous persons had exasperated Saul against him; and complains of false tongues, in those psalms which are by their title fixed to this period of his history. I might add, that the words of the text seem to favour this supposition; for David doth not here say, that his father and mother had already forsaken him, but only speaks of it as what might happen. Now, as we are elsewhere told, that when David was but a lad, his father was an old man, it is very improbable that both Jesse and his wife should have been living at the time of this Philistine war, when David himself was grown old and feeble.

If this argument be of weight to fix the general occasion of the psalm, it is probable that this verse may lead us to the particular time of its composure. We are told, that when David had taken shelter at Adullam from the violence of Saul, and had raised a band of men for his defence, he conveyed his father and mother to the king of Moab, desiring that, till Providence had brought his affairs to a determination, that prince would shelter them from the fury of Saul, which might otherwise have proved fatal to them, as it had just before done to the priests of the Lord. Perhaps this was the pious reflection of David, about the time his parents were to remove: When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. As if he should have said, "Though a host of my enemies be encamping against me, and the nation be rising in arms to oppose me; and though I be forced to dismiss my aged parents, at a time when I have the greatest occasion for their prudent advice, and their tender consolations; yet this is my comfort, that God is with me. He will supply what I lose in them; he will take me up, and nourish me as his own child, when their parental tenderness can afford me no further support."

The words will naturally afford us these two plain remarks, which, with the improvement of them, will be the foundation of the present discourse.

I. The dearest of our relatives, and the most valuable of our friends, may possibly forsake us.

II. When good men are abandoned by their dearest friends, they may find more in God than they have lost in them.—When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

I. The dearest of our relatives, and the most valuable of our friends, may possibly forsake us.

You see David speaks of it, as at least a supposable case, with regard to himself, that not only his followers, his companions, and his brethren, but even his father and his mother, might forsake him. All the intimacy of relation, all the endearment of affection, could not secure him from being deserted by them. And this may be our own case;—our friends may abandon us through their own unkindness,—or God may remove them by the stroke of his providence.

1. Our dearest friends may abandon us through their own unkindness.

It is the remarkable saying of one, who had made many serious reflections on this head;* "If you put so much confidence in any friend, as not to consider, that it is possible he may become your enemy, you know man but little, and perhaps may be taught to know him better to your cost." Change of circumstances, contrariety of interest, our own mistakes, the misrepresentations of others, and sometimes mere caprice, and inconstancy of temper, render those indifferent, and perhaps averse, to each other, who were once united in the bonds of the most endearing friendship. Nay, it is certain, that sometimes an immoderate and ungoverned fondness on both sides, may not only justly provoke God to disappoint our hopes from each other, but may prove, in its natural consequences, an occasion of mutual disgust, and perhaps of separation. For, when the mind labours under this disorder, it contracts a kind of sickly peevishness, which turns every trifling neglect into an offence, and every offence into a crime; so that men find the extremes of love and hatred more nearly connected, than they could once have believed. Sudden fear will drive away some friends when we are in danger; and a much meaner principle will lead others, who, in better days, have called themselves our friends, to abandon, and, perhaps, to censure us, when we are reduced to low circumstances, and so have the greatest need of their assistance.

Such is the vanity of human friendship. And I will add, that neither, on the one hand, the sincerity of our affection, nor the worth of our character, nor the urgency of our affairs; nor, on the other hand, the former appearance of goodness in them, nor the highest obligations of gratitude; nor yet, the nearest ties of blood, or alliance, can secure us from disappointment in this tender article. David and Job, under the Old Testament, and Paul, and even his blessed Master, under the New, though all such excellent persons, were forsaken, and in several respects injured, by their friends; nay, I may say, as to most of them, by pious friends too. Such treatment therefore may we meet with from ours, even from those to whom we are related in the bonds of nature as well as affection. What union can be more strict and endearing, than that of marriage? Yet, you know, Job complains, while he was in circumstances which might have drawn tears from the eyes of a stranger, that his wife seemed to have forgot, not only the tenderness of her sex, and the intimacy of her relation, but even all sense of com-

* Mr. Baxter.

mon humanity towards him. My breath, says he, is strange to my wife, though I entreated her for the children's sake of my own body. From whom could we expect greater tenderness, than from parents to their children, especially from mothers to their infant offspring? Yet God expressly declares, what has indeed been seen in some amazing instances, that this may fail. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb? The little tender creature, that she has borne in her body, that she has been used to lay in her bosom; the poor innocent, that never offended her, that has all his dependence upon her; whom nature would therefore prompt her most resolutely to defend, most tenderly to cherish; can she forget it? Yea, they may forget, saith the Lord. This strange case may happen; it may happen in repeated instances. Thus may our dearest friends, and even our parents themselves, abandon us through their own unkindness. But be they ever so constant and affectionate, it is certain,

2. They may be taken away from us by the stroke of divine providence.

Whilst we are in the most delightful manner conversing with our friends, God may bring us into such circumstances, that we shall see ourselves obliged in duty to quit the dearest of them, possibly even contrary to their judgment and advice, as well as their importunate entreaties; or they may see themselves obliged, on the same principles, to quit us; so that we may seldom have the opportunity of seeing each other, and enjoying the pleasure of mutual converse.

But the severest trial is, when God sees fit to remove them by death. When that awful messenger gives the summons, we must part, though ever so desirous of continuing together. None can by any means deliver his brother from going down to the grave, nor give to God a ransom for him, though he should offer his own life under that view. Our fathers, where are they? And, I may add, where are many of our brethren of the same age, and once in the same stations of life with ourselves? What multitudes of them are already removed by death! Perhaps, more than are left behind. We have followed them to the grave, we have left them in the dust, and their places that knew them, know them no more. And if we are not quickly taken away ourselves, we must expect that our breaches will soon be multiplied upon us; and that nothing will remain of those dear creatures whom we now behold with tenderness and with transport, but a mournful remembrance that we once enjoyed them, and a despair of recovering them again, till we meet in the eternal world.

I will only add one very obvious reflection upon this head, and then proceed to the next.

May the dearest of our friends so soon forsake us? Then how careful should we be, that we do not value them too highly, and love them too fondly!

We find in Scripture, that the inconstancy and the mortality of human nature, are each of them urged as an argument against trusting in man. Thus we are cautioned to take heed every one of his neighbour, and trust not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And elsewhere we are bid to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? And how indeed can we reckon on any thing as certain, which is suspended on so uncertain a life? The words of Solomon are applicable to friends, as well as to riches, when he says, Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for they make themselves wings, and flee away; often swiftly and irrecoverably, as an eagle towards heaven. To set them up as idols, therefore, in the place of God, is the readiest way to provoke him to remove or imbitter them: and then our own iniquity, in this respect, will correct us. Our confident expectation from them will increase our perplexity and our shame, if they should forsake us through their own unkindness; and our excessive fondness for them will add new pangs to the agonies of a last separation. One way or another, they will prove broken reeds, that will not only fail and sink under us, but will go into our hand, and pierce it with a wound, which will be deep and painful, in proportion to the stress with which we have leaned upon them. On the whole, then, let us love our friends heartily, but let us love them cautiously, as changeable and as mortal creatures: and, from a conviction that it is possible they may forsake us, let us make it our greatest care to secure an interest in such consolations, as may be a support to us when they do. Which leads me to the second observation:

II. That when good men are abandoned by their dearest friends, they may find more in God than they have lost in them.

So David in the text declares his assurance, that when his father and his mother forsook him, then the Lord would take him up; i. e. would approve himself a friend and a father to him. And if we be Christians indeed, we may promise ourselves all that tenderness and care from him, which David and other saints of old expected and found. He hath said to every one of us, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; and for our peculiar support under the loss of the dearest and most useful relatives, he has more particularly added, A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

When our friends are dead, we are generally more sensible of their value than we were before;

but let the tenderest heart, under the immediate impression of this severe calamity, set itself to paint the character of a departed friend in all its most amiable colours; let it reckon up all the advantages which fondness could have taught it to hope for; and I will answer for it, that all this, and a great deal more, is to be found in God. Let the dejected orphan, that is even now weeping over the dust of a parent, yea, of both its parents, say, what these parents, in the greatest supposable advantages of character and circumstance, could have done for its support, and its consolation; and the complaints of the most pathetic sorrow shall suggest thoughts which may serve, in a great measure, to answer themselves, and to engage the mind joyfully to acquiesce in the divine care, though deserted by the best of parents, or any other friends, however hopeful or useful.

"Alas!" will a dutiful and affectionate child be ready to say, in such a circumstance, "do you ask what my parents were? They were my dearest, my kindest, my most valuable friends:—Their counsels guided me;—their care protected me;—their daily converse was the joy of my life;—their tender condolence revived me under my sorrows;—their liberal bounty supplied my necessities. Is it to be inquired, what they were? Say rather, what were they not? And now they are gone, where must I seek such friends? And how justly may I say, that my dearest comforts and hopes lie buried with their precious remains?"

Let us more particularly survey each of these thoughts, and consider, with how much greater advantage each of these particulars is to be found in the paternal care and favour of God.

1. Could your parents have advised you in difficulties and perplexities? God is much more able to do it.

You will perhaps say, "Our poor giddy unpractised minds have been hurried with a variety of schemes and projects, and we have soon found ourselves bewildered and lost: but then it has been the greatest pleasure to us to apply to our parents, from whose more advanced age, and riper experience, we might well hope for considerable assistance. We were sure they would not upbraid our ignorance, or despise us for our weakness; but would give us their best advice, with endearing tenderness, and a cordial concern for our welfare." I allow, my friends, that if they were wise and good, (which we now suppose,) they were valuable counsellors indeed; and that it was your duty, and your happiness, to use them as such while living, and as such to lament them now they are here no more. Yet, were they ever so prudent, you must still acknowledge they were fallible creatures. They could only form probable conjectures concerning the future consequences of things; and as those conjectures were always precarious, so, no doubt, they were sometimes erroneous; and you were, perhaps, in some instances, misled by their mistaken apprehensions. But the only wise God knows the end from the beginning; his views of the most distant futurities are not conjectural, but certain; and his wisdom is far more superior to that of the most sagacious and experienced mortal, than the wisdom of such a mortal can be superior to that of an infant. It is he that teaches man knowledge, in whatever degree he possesses it. He instructed our parents, that they might instruct us; and he has expressly promised his direction to all those that humbly seek it. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. You may therefore, according to his own instruction and command, cry unto him, My father, thou art the guide of my youth; and you will find him such a guide, as can give wisdom to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion.

2. Could your earthly parents have protected you from injuries? God is much more able to do it.

Nature has implanted, even in irrational animals, such a regard to the safety of their offspring, that many of the most weak and timorous of them become strangely courageous in their defence. The little bird, that will at other times fly from every noise and every motion, will hover over her young, when they are assaulted with danger; and, rather than she will forsake them, will share in their ruin. It is easy to perceive the spirit of parents naturally rise on the least injury that is offered to their children, even sometimes when it is only accidental, and undesigned; and all the professed enemies of their children they of course reckon to be their own. Nor do they only watch over them in their infancy and childhood, to defend them from the many dangers which surround those tender days; but in more advanced years, they are ready to use all their power and their influence, to shelter them from the unworthy usage which they might otherwise expect from an ill-natured world: and I own, it is a very melancholy thing for young people to lose such a guard, at a time when they are most exposed.

But surely the defence of the Almighty must be a much juster and nobler confidence. It is amazing to observe, in how condescending a manner he expresses his care for the protection of his people. In one place he says, He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye; and elsewhere, He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; *i. e.* he shall defend thee, as the bird shelters her little helpless brood, from the assault of any thing that would injure or destroy them. And could we desire a better guard? There are many seasons, when our earthly parents must of necessity be separated from us; and a thousand

calamities might overtake and destroy us, even in their presence, while they stood by helpless and amazed; but God is always with his children, and as there is no danger of ours unseen by him, there can be none from which he is not able to deliver us. When David was forsaken by his father and mother, and surrounded with a whole army of inhuman enemies, he speaks of this as his comfort. The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident; for in his help I shall be safe, though I stood single against united legions.

3. Did you hope for agreeable entertainment in the company of your earthly parents? You may expect far nobler pleasure in conversing with God.

I acknowledge there is something peculiarly delightful in the company of a wise, a pious, and an indulgent parent; and I doubt not, but many of us can easily recollect it. Even in our infant days, when we were fondly prattling to them, we perhaps often saw smiles of complacency sitting on their cheeks, and even tears of tenderness and pleasure rising in their eyes; especially if, with the dawnings of reason, they discovered in our minds any early impressions of religion; we can perhaps recollect the condescending air with which they talked to us, and the kind caresses which they intermingled with the discourse. And as we grew up to a riper understanding, we were still more charmed with the company of such parents. We had not only the manly pleasure of rational converse, but there was a mixture of reverence and of gratitude in our hearts, which much increased the delight. We were assured of their candour towards their children, and their prejudice in favour of what we might say; and that inspired us with spirit and cheerfulness. We were encouraged to attempt to please them, because we concluded we might easily do it; and the sense we had of the superiority on their parts, made every expression of their kindness so much the more sweet and obliging.

The loss of such conversation is indeed to be greatly lamented; and it would argue a strange mixture of stupidity and inhumanity to be unaffected with it. But still remember, that though your parents are gone, you are not left entirely alone; for not to mention other surviving friends, your heavenly Father is with you, if it be your prevailing desire still to be with him. Though your father and your mother be removed, and you can no longer go to them, unless it be to mourn over their grave, and to mingle your tears with their dust; yet you may go to God, and with pleasure pour out your soul before him. And what you find in him, may give a more transporting exercise to those sweet affections which added a relish to the conversation of your earthly parents. The first imperfect accents of prayer and praise will be a pleasing offering to him. Great and glorious as he is, he will bow down an indulgent ear, through Jesus, your dear elder brother; he will smile upon your souls, and allow you a holy freedom in all the endearments of filial converse.

Your earthly parents were not always at leisure, nor always in temper to receive your visits; but wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, God's gracious eye is always on his children; his indulgent ear is always open to their addresses. You may come and tell him how heartily you love him, how affectionate a sense you have of his favours, how sincerely you are concerned for his interest in the world, and how earnestly desirous of taking every opportunity to advance it; how well you are satisfied with his paternal care, and how cheerfully you can refer yourselves to his wise and gracious disposal. Our Lord intimates, that we may use such a holy boldness with God, when he teaches us to say, Our Father, which art in heaven; and the apostle further expresses it, when he speaks of the Spirit of adoption, as teaching us to cry, Abba, Father.

4. Could your earthly parents have pitied your sorrows and complaints? The like compassions may you expect from God, if you apply to him under the character of a father.

It is natural for a child, when any thing grieves it, to go to its parents, and complain to them; and if they cannot redress the grievance, at least they will be ready to condole it. Now we are expressly told in the word of God, that, like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. And how much more valuable are the compassions of God, than those of our earthly parents could possibly have been! In many cases theirs was only a mourning pity, and all that they could often do for our relief, was to sit down and weep over us: to afflict themselves with us; and to give us their company in distress: but the compassions of an almighty God can redress the grievances which he commiserates. Be our afflictions ever so many, or ever so great; in sickness and in pain; in the agonies of conscience, or the agonies of death; when parents and other friends are but miserable comforters, he alone can support the soul; can soothe it into serenity and peace; and can exalt it to the most triumphant joy.

5. Could your earthly parents have supplied your wants, and have made provision for your future subsistence? God is infinitely more able and ready to do it for his children.

In our years of infancy, though we had hardly any thing we could call our own, we made our-

selves easy in this, that our parents would take care of us; and sometimes the circumstances of families are such, that their care is almost all that the children have to depend upon. When this is the case, none can wonder that it is considered as a great aggravation of the loss. But, surely, when God proclaims himself a Father to the fatherless, he intends to suggest some encouragement to such helpless orphans as these; and it becomes them to take the comfort of it.

Earthly parents may sometimes be so indigent that they cannot, and sometimes so unkind that they will not, relieve their children, at least in such a proportion as their necessities require. But the most high God is the possessor of heaven and earth, and his goodness is as extensive as his dominion; we may therefore conclude, that he will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. There is not one parent in ten thousand so unnatural, as that he could stand by and see his child perish for hunger, while it was in the power of his hand to relieve him. Now our Lord hath taught us to argue thus: If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things unto them that ask him?

God has the estates and the hearts of all in his hands; and therefore can, with the utmost ease, raise up friends to us in the most abandoned circumstances, who shall act the part of parents to us, and do more for us than they could have done. And it is further to be remembered, that the bounties of God are far more excellent, than those of any mortal friend could possibly be. Their bounty, be it ever so great, cannot reach beyond the grave; but it is our Father's good pleasure to give us a kingdom, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: in the believing, though distant, views of which, we are rich amidst the extremest poverty, and happy in the most miserable circumstances that can be consistent with such a hope.

You see then, on the whole, how much more the good man may find in God, than he can possibly lose in the most valuable earthly parents.

It only remains, that I conclude the discourse with a few reflections on this second observation.

1. Let us thankfully acknowledge the gracious provision which God has made to support his people under the loss of parents and friends.

We should bless his name, that he does not leave us to sink under the burthen; or at best to collect some uncertain comfort from the precarious conclusions of our unassisted reason; but that, through the blood and righteousness of his Son, he has given his plain and express promise for the encouragement of such inconsiderable and undeserving creatures.

You, whose parents are living, ought to be thankful, that God hath provided such reviving cordials for you against the mournful time when they may be taken away.

And we, who have lost our parents, and have found relief in our extremities from such declarations as these, should recollect it with pleasure, and often repeat our songs of grateful acknowledgment.

And I will further add, we ought not only to rejoice and be thankful on our own account, but also on account of those afflicted friends who may receive support from such strong consolations. We pity children that have lost their parents; and it is delightful to see other generous persons rising up to take care of the orphans, and in some respect to make up their loss. But how much more delightful it should be to us, to hear an Almighty God proclaiming himself as their great guardian, and saying, that when their father and their mother forsake them, he will graciously take them up. How should we rejoice, that when we set ourselves to comfort and encourage them, we can not only advance our own conjectures, but can thus speak to them in the language of God himself. And indeed this reflection may be applied to all the other promises. We ought to rejoice, that our pious friends have an interest in them, and that God hath consulted their support and consolation, as well as our own.

And surely, when we are reflecting upon such a promise as this, our affectionate thoughts and praises should arise to him, in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen. It is natural to say, "Whence is it that thou, the holy Majesty of heaven, wilt appear under such endearing and tender characters to sinful mortals? that thou wilt speak of taking them up? of bestowing one gracious look upon them, and much more of extending an arm of mercy to raise them from that helpless condition in which they naturally lie, like abandoned outcasts? Whence is it that thou wilt take them into thy family now, and into thy kingdom at last?" (For all this is intimated in this expression.) "Lord," may each of us say, "I humbly ascribe it to the riches of thy gospel grace. I would declare it to the everlasting honour of Jesus thy Son, that it is through him we have received the adoption."

2. What an engagement should this be to young persons, to endeavour to secure an interest in God through Christ!

You must own the consolations, which I have now been representing, to be far from being small: and surely, when you consider how soon the best of your mortal friends may fail, you cannot but wish for an interest in them: but you wish it in vain, unless you seek it in the gospel way; unless you deliberately and resolutely choose God for your Father in Christ, and devote yourselves to him in

the bonds of an everlasting covenant. If you refuse this, you have reason to regard him under the character of an enemy; and to fear, that when he removes your friends, it is in judgment that he visits you with such a blow. Your hearts may justly meditate terror, if this be the case; especially when your pious parents are taken away. You are then deprived of their prayers, their exhortations, their advices, and their examples; and so seem to be thrown further out of the way of repentance and reformation. And let me add, that if almighty grace doth not prevent it, the trouble which you now feel, in being separated from such dear relations while you continue on earth, will be the smallest part of your unhappiness; for you must finally be separated, not only from all the most valuable persons you have ever known here, but, which is infinitely more, from the presence of the blessed God himself; must fall unpitied victims of the divine justice, and be delivered over to dwell with your father the devil, whose works you have chosen to do. And oh! how unutterably dreadful is it to think, that in the awful day, when this sentence is to be pronounced and executed upon you, there will not be one friend to plead in your favour! That though your pious parents be then present, yet, in a most terrible sense, father and mother will then forsake you indeed; and, instead of interposing their entreaties for you, will applaud the righteous vengeance that dooms you as obstinate rebels to eternal death; to those abodes of distinguished misery which are prepared for such as have broke through all the peculiar advantages which will then be found chargeable to your account.

3. Let what I have been saying be considered by parents, as an encouragement cheerfully to leave their religious children in the hands of God, when Providence shall see fit to make the separation.

When through the riches of gospel grace, a Christian parent sees his own eternal concerns so safe in a Redeemer's hands, that he can say, with respect to them, I desire to depart; yet sometimes he feels reluctance mingling itself with the holy desire, when he considers that he must leave his dear children behind him; perhaps in a destitute, and always, if they be very young, in a hazardous, condition. And this thought presses with peculiar weight on the minds of those who have lost the companion of their lives; as, upon their decease, their children will become entirely orphans. But may it not revive you to hear, that God will be their guardian, if they be willing to choose him as such? Surely you may be abundantly satisfied with his care. Alas! what were you yourselves, with all your parental tenderness, but instruments which God made use of for conveying some few of his favours to them? And cannot he do that by others which he hath been doing by you? Distrust not his power or his faithfulness; but turn all your anxious care about future events, into a religious concern to do your duty to your children, and by all the most prudent and affectionate methods of address, to lead them into the early knowledge of God in Christ; that so, through the mercies of an everlasting covenant, they may stand entitled to the special protection of a heavenly Father, who can never be separated from them; and who, as he is never unable, will never prove unwilling, to help them. Once more,

4. Let distressed orphans have an immediate and frequent recourse to such supporting considerations as these:—

Do not allow yourselves to suspect the truth of these exceeding great and precious promises, which have now been set before you; and, for your further encouragement, consider in how many instances they have been confirmed by experience.

There are, my friends, I am sure there are, those amongst us this day, who can set their seal to the truth of what has now been spoken; and can say, in the language of the text, That when our father and our mother did both of them forsake us, then the Lord actually took us, and proved a most gracious parent to us. He supplied the breaches that he had made, and by a train of providence, which we cannot but admire in the review, raised up other friends for us; and, it may be, inspired almost with the tenderness of parents, persons who were ever unknown to us, when the last of our parents was taken away. Nay, perhaps, some of us may say, that the death of a valuable parent, which we feared would be our ruin, has proved, in some of its then unthought-of consequences, on the whole, a very great mercy to us.

Let such reflections as these encourage you, my young friends, for whose admonition and consolation this discourse was peculiarly intended, to hope, that as your afflictions are the same, your consolations will also be the same. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Your father and mother are dead, but your heavenly Father can never die. I would willingly hope, that it has been your early care to secure an interest in him; and I would solemnly charge it upon you, as you value your present peace, or your eternal happiness, that it be the great business of your life to keep close to him: and then you may assure yourselves, with the most cheerful confidence, that he will never fail nor forsake you.

If therefore your hearts are almost overwhelmed within you, in the melancholy circumstances into which his providence has brought you, fly into his presence, prostrate yourselves before him with humble importunity, and turn your tears of sorrow into tears of devotion.

"Behold, O most compassionate Father," may

you reasonably and confidently say, "behold, thou hast plunged me even into the depths of distress; but blessed be thy name, thou hast not left me to sink in them without any support. I have this day received some kind assurances from thy word, and I now entreat thee to remember that word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. My father and my mother have forsaken me: Lord, wilt thou not take me up? Wilt thou indeed abandon me? Wilt thou add affliction to the afflicted? the insupportable affliction of seeing myself deserted by thee, when I most evidently need thy succour? That be far from thee, O Lord! and be the unworthy suspicion far from me!—I have lost my most prudent and faithful counsellors, but I look unto thee, as the guide of my youth.—I have lost those who were once my guardians and my protectors; but I come to take shelter under the shadow of thy wings. Their eyes are closed, and their mouths are sealed up in death: no longer can they look with compassion on my sorrows; no longer can their converse cheer or delight me. O may thy compassionate eye regard me, and thy comforts delight my soul! Permit me, O God! a humble freedom in approaching to thee, and in pouring forth all my heart in thy presence.—My parents are now returned naked to their dust, and, should my wants be ever so pressing, are now incapable of affording me any relief. May thy rich bounty supply me, thy unwearied providence take care of me! But, above all, withhold not thy covenant blessings, and let me share in that eternal inheritance which thou hast prepared for all thy children in Christ."

If these be the daily breathings of your souls before him, you have abundant reason to hope that he will return an answer of peace. In all your difficulties he will wisely direct you; in all your sorrows he will compassionately relieve you; in all your dangers he will powerfully protect you; in all your wants he will bountifully supply you; in a word, you will be conducted safely, and I hope, notwithstanding this gloomy prospect, you will be conducted comfortably, through this mortal life, till you come at length to your Father's house in peace. And when you are arrived thither, and take a view of all the various occurrences of the way, you will see apparent reason to acknowledge, what is now so difficult to believe, that the present awful dispensation was sent with a gracious design, and that all the paths of your heavenly Father have been mercy and truth to you. Amen.

SERMON X.

THE REFLECTIONS OF A PIOUS PARENT ON THE DEATH OF A WICKED CHILD, CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED.

2 Samuel xviii. 33.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

As the providence of God calls me this day particularly to address myself to young persons, so the words I have been reading suggest some very awful thoughts, which are well suited to such an occasion. And there is one circumstance, relating to this discourse, which I cannot forbear mentioning to you, because I hope it may be a means of engaging a more than common attention to it, from the auditory to which I am now speaking.*

It is this: The substance of the sermon, which I am now to deliver, was drawn up some time ago, at the desire of your late reverend and worthy pastor Mr. Jennings, and preached to a society of young persons then under his charge.† The text was chosen by him; and his tender and obliging care to assist his pupils in their first labours, engaged him to draw the plan of the discourse, and to furnish me with several of the most important thoughts, which I am now to offer.

So that, I think, I may properly say, that though your eyes will no more see him, nor your ears any more hear his persuasive voice, which has so frequently, and so affectionately, addressed you from this place, yet this day by me, he being dead, yet speaks, speaks to you, young persons; to many of whom, I fear, he hath often spoken in vain. Let me, therefore, solemnly charge you by your veneration for the memory of so excellent a friend, as well as by the authority of God, and the importance of your eternal interests, that you give these things a diligent hearing, a serious recollection, and a religious regard. And, indeed, if such a subject, introduced by such a circumstance, will not command them all, I can have very little hopes of impressing you, by what I may say in the course of my ordinary ministry amongst you.

The words of the text are the pathetic lamentation of good old David, on the death of Absalom; a favourite but wicked son. His pious father had no doubt given him a religious education; and it is

* N. B. This sermon was preached at Kibworth in Leicestershire, towards the beginning of the year 1725, about eighteen months after the death of the Rev. Mr. John Jennings, who had long been minister there, and was author of those excellent discourses on Preaching Christ, and Experimental Preaching, which have met with such great acceptance at home and abroad.

† At Hinckley, May 7, 1724.

very probable, that, considering the remarkable beauty and gracefulness of his person, he was ready to hope, that he would be endowed with virtuous and holy dispositions of soul, the correspondent beauties of the mind. But these hopes were dreadfully disappointed: for the darling, the beautiful Absalom proved a murderer and a rebel: he went in unto his father's concubines, in the sight of all Israel, and openly attempted to take away the life of him, from whom his own was derived, and by whose indulgence it had been spared, even when forfeited to justice. Yet, nevertheless, David had such paternal tenderness, as, under all these trying provocations, expressly to order the generals of his army to deal gently with the young man Absalom for his sake. But the righteous vengeance of God determined otherwise, and, notwithstanding all his father's fond precautions, brought him down to the grave with infamy and blood. He was snatched away by a violent and very terrible death, in the prime of his days, and the very act of his sin; and this was the occasion of those moving words, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

We may charitably, and I think very reasonably, suppose, that they are not only the expressions of David's natural affection, on the death of a son whom he tenderly loved; but that they arose from the views of that state on which he entered by death, which must certainly be very dreadful; so dreadful, that David, whose eternal interests were secure by the promises of an everlasting covenant, would have been willing even by his own death to have delivered him from such complete and such hopeless ruin.

It will be my business from these words,

I. To consider the reflections which may naturally arise in the mind of a pious parent on the death of a wicked child. And,

II. To draw some inferences from such a survey. O that all, and especially the degenerate children of religious parents, would attend with a becoming seriousness!

I. I am to consider the reflections which may naturally arise in the mind of a pious parent, on the death of a wicked child.

I cannot pretend to enumerate them all, or to describe them in such pathetic language as a bleeding heart will speak itself on so sad an occasion; but probably the chief of them may be such as these:

1. A pious parent will reflect on such an occasion, that his expectations from his child have been sadly disappointed in the past course of his life.

Parents are apt to flatter themselves with fond hopes from their infant offspring; they look upon them as the blossoms of future delight and support. They comfort themselves under the other burthens of life, and the additional cares and labours which a growing family brings upon them, by looking forward to future years, and anticipating the pleasures hereafter to arise from the duty, gratitude, and usefulness, of their children. "But, alas!" will the good man say, "could I have seen what this poor creature would have proved, instead of rejoicing in his birth, I should have mourned over it as a calamity to me and my family. I promised myself other things. My heart trembled for him in the various dangers of infancy and childhood. I congratulated myself on his arrival at a more confirmed age. But when I looked that this pleasant plant should have brought forth grapes, behold, it brought forth wild grapes. Well did Solomon say, A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. So, alas, have we found. Oh! how often has our authority been affronted, and our love slighted, for a mere trifle! Or when he was treating us better, what a thorn has it been in our very hearts, to think that our child was in a state of spiritual death, and on the borders of that eternal ruin, into which we have reason to fear he is now fallen. So that with regard to what is past, we have cause to say, Blessed, in comparison of us, are the barren, that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck." These thoughts will be aggravated, when, in the next place,

2. The pious parent reflects with concern on the fruitless pains he has taken for the reformation and conversion of his child.

"He that searches my heart," will the Christian say, "is witness, that, next to its concern for my own salvation, it knows not a more affectionate wish than this, that Christ might be formed in the soul of my children. That how little soever of this world I could give them, they might be the children of God, and the heirs of glory. And with relation to this unhappy creature, I was not entirely wanting in such endeavours as lay in my power. What knowledge of the things of God I myself had, I was willing to communicate to him: I urged them seriously upon him; I frequently reminded him of them; and, to supply the defects of my personal instructions, I put the book of God into his hands, and engaged him in an early and constant attendance on public ordinances. When I saw him wandering in the paths of folly and sin, I endeavoured to convince him of the fatal consequences of such courses, and in the most affectionate manner to dissuade him from them. I have again and again urged him to pray for himself; and I have frequently been praying for him. I have desired that he might be remembered in our worshipping assemblies; I have borne him on my heart before God in the family and the closet, and God alone knows with what overflowing tenderness. How importunately have I pleaded, and how unwilling have I

been to take any denial! But, alas! all my prayers and my tears have been like water spilt on the ground; and in all the endeavours I have been using for his conversion and salvation, I have been labouring in vain, and spending my time and my strength for nought. Nay, as to him it has proved worse than in vain; for every instruction, and every correction, every reproof, and every prayer, has aggravated his guilt, and increased his misery; so that, on the whole, while I thought I was acting the kindest and most affectionate part, I was only treasuring up for my child aggravated wrath and damnation." But this leads me to add,

3. That the pious parent, on such an occasion, cannot but deeply reflect on that state of everlasting ruin into which he has reason to fear that his child is fallen.

"Oh!" will the afflicted Christian say, "how comparatively light would my sorrows be, if, while I am looking on the breathless corpse, and mourning the disappointment of my hopes as to the present life, I could by faith look forward to a world of glory, and see the branch of my family which is cut off from earth, transplanted thither, and flourishing there: joy would then mingle itself with my parental sorrows, and praises with my tears. But, alas! I have reason to apprehend it was cut down that it might be cast into the burnings. On the former supposition I might have comforted myself with the thought of meeting my child again, of meeting him on terms of infinite advantage, no more to be separated from him. But now, alas! I have not only lost my child for a while, but I have lost him for ever; for the unhappy creature died a stranger to God and Christ, and therefore what can I imagine, but that he has fallen into the hands of divine vengeance? Overwhelming thought! While he lived, my bowels yearned for him when he was under any affliction; when I saw him struggling with illness and pain, I pitied him, and I wept over him. Oh how can I bear to think that he is now tormented in that flame, and that God is pouring forth on him the vials of his wrath! O that the blood of the parent could redeem the soul of the child, how willingly, how gladly, would I part with it! O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" But once more,

4. The pious parent cannot but be much distressed in such a circumstance as this, at the thoughts of meeting his child at the tribunal of Christ.

"It would be mournful," may the good man say, "to think that I should see him no more; yet, as the matter now stands, even that would be some alleviation of my distress; but the immutable decrees of God forbid it. I know, that when all the dead, small and great, stand before his throne, I and my child must appear together there; and oh, what a dreadful interview will it be! When God committed his education to my care, he did, as it were, put his soul into my hands, and at my hands will he require an account of it. And when he comes to make the inquiry, what will the issue be? Will my son accuse me? Or must I be a witness against him? How terrible an office! to bear my testimony for the condemnation of one whom I tenderly loved, of one whose soul I would have died to deliver! I know I shall not dare to interpose in his favour, and plead the cause of my Saviour's enemy; or if I were so far transported by the fondness of a father, I should plead in vain. Sooner, much sooner, would the mountains be removed for me, or the earth carried out of its place, than the sentence of heaven, its final solemn sentence, would be repealed. And if it must not be repealed, how shall I bear to hear it pronounced, to see it executed? to hear my own child separated by an everlasting curse from the presence of the Lord; to see the ministers of divine wrath hurrying away the helpless creature, and dragging him down to unquenchable burnings? O that, if no shelter must be allowed him, God would hide me in the grave till this tremendous scene of his indignation be overpast; lest the anguish of a parent mingle itself with the joys of a rising saint, and, to me, overcast the triumphs of the day!" Hardly can a good man refrain from such sentiments as these, though some of them be dictated by passion rather than by reason.

After this survey of the reflections, which such a sad event might naturally produce, I would proceed to draw some inferences from it; yet I cannot but delay them for a few moments, in compassion to the sorrows of those pious parents, if any such be amongst us, whose case this has been. Are there any of you, Christians, that experimentally know the anguish of such thoughts as these? any of you that have thus been mourning over your dead children, when God has on a sudden called them to his bar, with all their follies and sins on their head, without giving you any probable hope, that his grace had first recalled them to himself, and washed their souls in the blood of a Redeemer?

It grieves me, my friends, to have been forced by a sense of duty, as I have now been, so largely to represent a scene which must call up your sorrows afresh. But permit me to remind you, that, even in this dreadful circumstance, the consolations of God are not small. Your hopes in your children have been sadly blasted; but you have hopes in God, your heavenly Father, which nothing can shake. You have reason to fear, their souls are lost; but is it nothing to you to reflect, that your own are given you as a prey? And that, though your house be not so with God, as in this respect you could most affectionately wish it, yet he has made with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in

all things, and sure. As to these unhappy creatures who are now lost, you have indeed laboured in vain, and spent your strength for nought; but still your work is with the Lord, and your reward with your God; and you, like the faithful minister, may hope, that you shall be unto God a sweet savour of Christ, not only in them that are saved, but even in them that perish. And, as to the final interview, which appears so grievous in the prospect, remember, that you are not to carry along with you the fond instincts of nature into a world of perfection and glory. All your passions will then be refined; your wills so entirely resolved into the will of God, and your souls so completely satisfied with his presence and his love, that no creature-regards will be able to disturb their sacred serenity. You will look on the whole assembly of the enemies of God with so deep an apprehension of the malignity of their character, and of the wisdom and equity of that divine sentence by which they fall, that you will not distinguish any of them from the rest, by the sentiments of a painful compassion. Nor will your concern for those of them, who now lie nearest your heart, prevent your concurrence in that song of triumph, so proper to the solemnities of that awful day: Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true thy ways, thou King of saints. In the mean time, let the expectation of so happy an improvement in your temper moderate the excess of your present sorrows; and when they are moderated aright, the remainder of them will be a sadness of the countenance by which the heart may be made better. And now,

II. I proceed to draw some inferences from the sad survey we have been taking of the pious parent's reflections on the death of a wicked child. And hence we may infer,

1. That wicked children are acting a very cruel and unnatural part, while they are exposing their pious parents to such reflections as these.

I say it with a sorrowful heart, but so it is, that I fear there are several of you, my young friends, who live in the neglect of your own souls, and whose consciences will presently charge it upon you. How soon that awful Being, whom you now forget, may cut off the number of your months in the midst, and add you to the number of the dead, you know not: but this is certain, that if you die as you live, and your parents survive the stroke, they will feel the weight of these terrible reflections; and even now they cannot but fear them. Doubtless, if they be present here, their hearts are bleeding whilst I speak, and they are looking upon you with unknown anguish. And does not the thought grieve you, and does it not shame you? Ungrateful creatures! are these your returns for all their bounty, for all their tenderness; to be a sword in their bowels, and to pierce their very hearts? Alas, they did not expect such scenes as these, when you hung about them with your infant arms; when you answered their fond smiles, and lisped out the first broken accents of endearment. I wonder how you can bear the thought! I wonder you are not ashamed to be conversing with them daily, and daily receiving new favours from them; while you are behaving in such a manner that, the better they love you, the more they must be afflicted and terrified for you. O that you would have compassion on them! or, if this will not move you, O that you would have compassion on yourselves! for your own interest is still more nearly concerned than theirs. Which leads me to add,

2. We may further infer, that a dreadful counterpart to those reflections will be the portion of the ungodly child.

Alas, sinners, if your pious parents weep thus for you, how bitterly will you weep for yourselves! for if these things be done in a green tree, what will be done in the dry? If they, the children of God, perhaps even then under the smiles of their heavenly Father, and in the near views of their own complete salvation, may utter their griefs in such melting accents, what agonies will take hold of your hearts, when you are actually entered on those scenes of horror and despair to which the righteous vengeance of God has doomed you? It is impossible fully to describe them; yet something relating to them we may certainly infer from what has been already said. Give me leave to offer it to your view, if peradventure, through the agency of divine grace, to have heard of these reflections may be the happy means of leading you to escape them.

Your parents may reflect "on the disappointment of their expectations from you:" but oh, how heavy will the disappointment of your own hopes and expectations then sit upon your souls! How will you then bear it, sinners, when you see all your enjoyments and all your prospects blasted in a moment, and irrecoverably lost?

It is true, you are lifting up your souls unto vanity; but these vanities are your all. You pursue them with the utmost vigour and intenseness of mind, and have a great many fond and chimerical schemes for years of pleasure and happiness yet to come. But if God cut you off in the prime of your life, and in the very flower of your hopes, in that day all your thoughts will perish. And how will you be confounded to see all the beautiful and enchanted scenes that now charm you to the neglect of God and religion, vanished like the shadowy glories of a dream, and your souls left naked and destitute, upon an inhospitable shore, where, in all your indigence and distress, there will be no eye to pity you, no hand to relieve you!

And it will be so much the more dreadful, as you will go down to these melancholy regions with your

appetites and your passions warm about you, and by frequent indulgence strengthened and inflamed; so that, for want of their proper objects, they will prey upon your heart, and an insatiable thirst will continue, while you will not have one drop of satisfaction or comfort. Nay, I may add, that as, in these unripened days, you have had little experience of the vanities and disappointments of life, and have entertained a great many fond and extravagant hopes of what you would never have found in it, your regret, in being cut off from them, will not be in proportion to what they really were, but to what your error and folly imagined them to have been.

Your pious parents will reflect upon it with unutterable anguish, "that your souls are for ever lost:" but how much more sensibly will you yourselves feel it! They, in their present situation on earth, can have but a very faint and imperfect notion of the horrors of the infernal prison; for to those we may accommodate the language of the apostle on a very different occasion, and say, that neither has eye seen them, nor ear heard them, nor has it entered into the most terrified heart fully to conceive them. But how will the change affect you, when you are just entered on those realms of woe; when you look round about you, and think, This is my last abode, my only remaining inheritance! Alas, how will your hearts be overwhelmed when you compare that place of torment with all the cheerful scenes of the world from whence you came; where you had been surrounded with so many delights; where it had been your chief care to make provision for the flesh; and where you had, perhaps, spent your days in mirth, till in a moment you went down to the grave! when, instead of the light of the sun, you see nothing but the flames of the divine indignation; when, instead of all that soothed and regaled your senses, you feel the never-dying worm, and exchange the gay and agreeable companions that did surround you, for the society of devils and damned spirits!

I appeal to your consciences; can your hearts endure, or your hands be strong, in such a circumstance as this? You, that are so impatient of every little anxiety of life; you, that cannot bear the fatigues of duty, nor the restraints of religion, how will you bear the agonies of damnation? How will you live in those doleful regions, where joy and cheerfulness are everlasting strangers, and nothing remains but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?

Were this to be your case only for a thousand or a hundred years, how miserable would you be! but oh, how much more miserable, when you think, that it is an everlasting destruction! when your thoughts weary themselves in search of some distant point, where a glimmering of hope may break in upon you, and you go onward, and onward, and onward still, and find nothing but blackness of darkness for ever! when you feel yourselves plunged in a boundless ocean of distress, without a bottom, and without a shore! "Must the smoke of my torments ascend up for ever and ever? Must I lie in this infernal prison, till I have paid the uttermost farthing? Surely then I must bear indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, as long as an immortal soul can sustain it, as an eternal God can inflict it."

It is almost insupportable, to think that this should be the case of any of our fellow-creatures. How much more insupportable must it then be, to feel that it is your own!

Again, your pious parents will lament, "that all their kind endeavours for your salvation were in vain:" but with what aggravated sorrow and despair will you then reflect on those endeavours, and on all the other religious advantages you enjoyed!

"Alas!" will you then be ready to say, "if there could be any thought of comfort in the midst of this dark gloom of desolation and horror, it would be to transfer the blame of my ruin upon another. O that I could say, there was some powerful, arbitrary being, by whose irresistible hand I was forcibly borne away, as by a mighty torrent, and swept into this burning gulf! O that I could say, that I was wicked and miserable by a fatal necessity! But there is not a wretch, amidst all the rage and blasphemy of such a dwelling as this, who can dare to assert that to have been the case; how much less then can I assert it!

"When I look up," may you justly say, "when I look up to yonder seats of unapproachable glory, from whence I am now cast out, as an abominable branch, why was not my portion there? Wretch that I am, I was once numbered among the children of the kingdom; I was born in Emanuel's land; I was educated in a religious family: and oh, my parents and my ministers! how diligently did they instruct me! how awfully did they admonish me! how tenderly did they expostulate with me! I had indeed line upon line, and precept upon precept; and therefore I have now stroke upon stroke, and wound upon wound. The blood of a Redeemer was once offered me as a healing balm, and I despised it; and now it is poured out as a burning corrosive on my bleeding soul. I was once lifted up even to the gates of heaven, and now I am cast down to the very centre of hell: I am now looking with envy, and with rage, on the milder torments of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah." There, sinner, thou wilt perhaps curse the compassionate heart, which is now almost sinking under this necessary representation of thy danger, and those unavailing tears, which one or another of us may now be shedding in the distant views of thy ruin.

Yet I must add once more, that as your pious parents will tremble " at the view of meeting you at the tribunal of God," so the thoughts of such an interview must be insupportably dreadful to you.

If Satan now draw you from your allegiance to God, and harden your heart to final impenitency, being partakers of his sins, you will be partakers likewise of his plagues, and like him be reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. And how will your haughty hearts brook it, when you are to be brought out to that judgment? Oh, how often will your anxious, foreboding thoughts anticipate the shame and horror of that dreadful day!

" I must stand forth," will you then say, " I must stand forth before my inexorable Judge; my sin and my folly must be publicly proclaimed before the assembled world, and my parents too must be the witnesses of it. But oh, how shall I be able to lift up my face before them, blackened with the marks of guilt and despair? If I call, will there be any to answer me; or to which of the saints shall I then turn? Shall I turn to my parents, and entreat them, by all their former tenderness for the children of their own bowels, to plead with the Judge in my favour, if, perhaps, they may mitigate the rigour of his wrath? Alas, I know him, and myself, and them too well, to expect any such attempt, or to ask any such favour. Will they not rather stand up as swift witnesses against me, and call for an increase of wrath on my guilty head? Will not all their former tenderness be turned into stern and awful severity? Will they not upbraid me with their instructions, their reproofs, their prayers, and their tears; and applaud the triumphs of the divine vengeance, in the condemnation of so wicked, of so incorrigible, a creature?" - With these awful remonstrances I dismiss you, and conclude with a reflection of a more comfortable nature.

3. From this survey of the reflections of a pious parent on the death of a wicked child, we may certainly infer, that the parents of religious children have abundant reason for thankfulness.

They have reason for thankfulness, both as they are free from such melancholy reflections and apprehensions; and as a foundation is laid of other views, as full of cheerfulness and joy, as these are of terror and distress. My brethren, I congratulate the happiness of those of you, who can say, through grace, that God has established his covenant with you, and with your seed after you, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and unto them. It is the joy of my heart, to think how much it must be the joy of yours, to see your children walking in the truth; and to see them flourishing in the courts of your God, as well as growing like olive plants round your own tables; to see that they have not only escaped the grosser corruptions, which are in the world through lust, but subscribe with their hand unto the Lord, and surname themselves by the name of Israel his people. With what sweet tranquillity may you look forward to all the uncertainties of life and death, for yourselves and for your children, while you have such a joyful persuasion, that you leave them in the hand of your Father, and of their Father, of your God, and of their God!

And give me leave, on so natural an occasion, to address myself to you, my dear friends, from whom the great Sovereign of life has been pleased to take away pious and promising children, by (what we are apt erroneously to call) an immature death. You are ready to say, with a peculiar accent, that you are the persons who have seen affliction. The images of those lovely creatures rise in your memory on such a hint as this, and crowd into your minds afresh. You saw them growing up, and flourishing under your care; growing up, perhaps, to ripeness of years, and flourishing in some remarkable degrees of knowledge and of grace. And you fondly promised yourselves, from what you saw in them, that they would not only have been the comfort and delight of your declining, broken age, but the support and honour of the church, when you were here no more: and now all these pleasing prospects are vanished, all these important hopes are buried with their dear dust.

Nay, perhaps God hath, in this respect, broken you with breach upon breach, has taken away one desirable branch of your family after another, till all the branches are lopped off, and you stand like the naked trunks of trees which were once diffusing a thick and extensive shade. Yes, I am aware, there are some of you, that know the peculiar agony (to all but such as yourselves probably unknown) of following your last child to the grave. I fear, I come too near you, and that some of your wounds are bleeding anew. Would the balm of sympathetic tears administer any relief to them, how easy would it be to pour it out in abundance! but, in a case like yours, there is a much more efficacious and sovereign relief.

I am speaking to Christians. You sometimes plead the indications of wisdom and piety, which you discerned in your children as an aggravation of your sorrow for the loss of them: and I acknowledge, in one view, they are indeed so; but in another view, how greatly do they extenuate it!

You saw them, it may be, when they were under a languishing distemper, for some time, as it were, daily dying before your eyes: but did you not likewise see the divine rod and staff comforting them? It may be, sometimes to such a degree, that you regretted not so much, that they were going off the stage, as that you were not accompanying them in the same way, and with the same spirit. You heard their expiring groans; but did you not also hear

some songs of praise mingled with them: perhaps you heard them strengthening their feeble voices, and summoning up all their little remainder of spirits, to say, as from their very soul, My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And does the recollection afford you no pleasure? or does your pleasure terminate even here?

Your dear children are now dead to you; but do you not believe, that they live to God, and live with him? What if they had been still continued on earth, answering all your schemes, and possessing all that you intended or desired for them? How low had those services been, and how worthless those possessions, in comparison to the services which they now render, with the riches and glory which they now inherit!

Methinks it should be, and surely, Christians, it sometimes is, matter of rejoicing to you, to reflect, that the desolation of your houses is, in some degree, the prosperity and joy of that celestial society, to which you are more intimately allied, than to any thing here: to think, that your families should have been nurseries for heaven, and that God should have honoured you so far, as already to have taken some of your children to minister around the throne of his glory, and so to be the associates of angels in their highest honour and joy.

And is it not most delightful to think of meeting them again? Had they still survived, the thoughts of leaving them might have sharpened the pangs of dissolving nature, which now the remembrance of them may moderate. You had left them in an insnaring, calamitous world: perhaps some of you had left them in circumstances of difficulty and distress. But now all those apprehensions are over; and what would otherwise have been the stroke of painful separation, will now be the means of ending your separation, and bringing you, once for all, to the embraces of each other. And O, with what mutual congratulations will the converse be renewed; with what delightful overflowings of parental complacency on the one side, and of filial gratitude on the other! How thankfully will they for ever acknowledge your pious cares and early instructions, to which perhaps, under God, they owe their first religious impressions, and, in some sense, even their present glories! And in the great day of the Lord, with what unutterable transports of holy joy will you stand forth, and say at once, in the most literal and the most sublime sense, Here are we, and the children that our God hath graciously given us!

Surely, when you think of these things, your joys may abundantly counterbalance your sorrows: and I appeal to your own hearts, even in the midst of all this tender distress, whether such a circumstance as yours, supposing it ever so aggravated, be not much more tolerable than that which we have been describing; of a pious parent bewailing the death of a wicked child, or even looking upon him in life and health under the tyranny of Satan and of sin, and in the probable way to everlasting misery.

And thus I have finished my meditations on this pathetic and important subject. Let me conclude with my most affectionate prayers to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, for all of you to whom the discourse has been addressed.

May young ones be brought, by the blessed Spirit of God, to know, in this their day, the things that belong to their eternal peace; that they may apply to Christ for life and salvation, and join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant! There all our applications to you centre; there may all your attendances on our ministrations issue!

May those, who have been effectually taught this lesson, who are the joy of parents and ministers, and the hopes of the church, as to the rising age, be very deeply sensible of the distinguishing grace of God to them! may they be spared to rise up in the stead of their parents! and may they labour with great success, to spread a spirit of seriousness amongst their companions, and to maintain it continually in their own souls!

May the pious parents of pious children be suitably affected with the goodness of God to them and theirs! and may the parents of others be stirred up, as they value the souls of their children, and their own comfort and repose, to renew those attempts which have hitherto proved unsuccessful, and to exert the most vigorous efforts, for plucking the unhappy creatures, as brands out of the burning!

In a word, may divine grace so cooperate with all, that all of you, according to your different relations and characters, may have reason to bless God for those awful thoughts which I have now been laying before you; that such cutting reflections, as I have so largely described, under the former heads, may never be known by one parent or one child in this assembly, otherwise than by description, by imagination, by reason, and by faith! never may they be known by heart-rending and overwhelming experience! On the contrary, may parents and children be mutually growing joys and comforts to each other, in life, and in death, at your appearance before the solemn tribunal of Christ, and throughout all the ages of a glorious eternity! Amen.

* Some, into whose hands these discourses will probably fall, know that these were not imaginary circumstances; and cannot but remember, they have since attended the death of some of those young persons to whom this sermon was first preached.

SERMON XI.

YOUTH REMINDED OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT.

ECCLESIASTES xi. 9.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

My dear young friends! if it were possible for me, while I am speaking, to lay open my whole heart before you, in such a manner as that you should be witnesses to every secret sentiment of it with regard to you, I should do it with a great deal of pleasure. You would see a tenderer concern for your present and everlasting welfare than words can express, and a proportionable desire of approving myself your faithful servant for Jesus' sake. I know not how far you may have considered what I have largely laid before you, concerning the importance of the rising generation;* but I am so thoroughly convinced of this importance, and so impressed with the conviction of it, that there is no part of my public work to which I arise with a greater solicitude about the success, than I feel when I am thus particularly applying myself to you; and there is no prayers which I offer to God with greater earnestness, than that I may have the joy to see you walking in the truth, a seed to serve the Lord, which shall be accounted to him for a generation.

This is what I wish and pray with regard to all of you. It is with inexpressible pleasure that I see so evidently, as to many, that my prayers and my labours are not in vain. Many of you are my joy now; and I trust, through divine grace, will be my crown, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. But would to God there were none of whom I had occasion to say, I stand in doubt of you! Would to God I could see that spirit of serious piety universally prevailing amongst you, which, wherever it doth prevail in young ones, is such a token of good to themselves, to their friends, and to the church of Christ!

Where it is otherwise, I look upon you with compassion and sorrow; but blessed be God, not with despair. I am not without hope that God hath purposes of love and grace to serve on many of you; especially those who have been the children of so many good instructions and so many prayers, as I have reason to believe many of you are; and who can tell but this is the day, and this the ordinance, in which these gracious purposes are to take place?

I know that the first step to your safety is a sense of your danger. We live in a world so full of snares, that the righteous scarcely are saved; and yet I fear some of you have very little apprehension of this danger, very little concern about the whole armour of God, so necessary to preserve you from it. And, therefore, not to give you any vain and groundless alarm, but to produce, if possible, that holy caution and solicitude of soul which may be the happy means of your security and preservation, I am now setting myself to discourse on some of the most awful words, which are any where in the whole book of God, addressed to persons of your age. I hope you will listen to them, and that God will make them as a kind of solemn trumpet, whereby those that are spiritually dead may be awakened;—so awakened, as that the other trumpet to which they refer, and which will surely awaken your sleeping dust, may be heard, not with sorrow, but with delight.

It is observable, that Solomon had a great regard to young people in his writings; and it is an evidence of his wisdom that he had so, for youth is the age of discipline. He therefore gives them line upon line, and precept upon precept. Sometimes he soothes, and sometimes he rebukes; sometimes he beseeches them with paternal tenderness, and sometimes persuades them, as knowing the terrors of the Lord; and saves them as with fear, plucking them out of the fire. And this he doth in the words I have now been reading: Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

It will be my business—to explain, and—to enforce the caution, and then—to conclude with some reflections upon it. May the plain but awful things I am to deliver be, as the words of the wise are, like goads, to pierce and rouse your minds, and like nails fastened in a sure place by the skilful masters of assemblies, which being given out from the one great Shepherd, are succeeded by his grace, and improved to his glory!

I. I am to explain the words I have been reading.

And, in order to fix the sense of them, I shall only observe, that some understand them, as intimating Solomon's readiness to allow young people in the innocent pleasures and gaieties of life; whilst others interpret the whole as a solemn and a lively warning of the great danger they were in, of running into the most fatal excess. I shall in a few words give you my reasons, both why I mention the former, and why I prefer the latter of these senses.

1. Some understand these words, as an intimation of Solomon's readiness to indulge young people in all the innocent entertainments of life.

They paraphrase the words in a soft and easy

* Sermon V.

manner, as if he had said: "Do not imagine, O young man, that I give thee lessons of morality and piety in a gloomy humour, or with any rigorous and unkind design. Far from desiring to lay thee under any unnecessary restraint, I rather exhort thee to rejoice in the days of thy youth, those best days, in which the spirits are brisk and lively, and all the powers of nature in their most vigorous state. Let thine heart then cheer thee: wear an habitual smile upon thy countenance, and indulge that gaiety which is so natural to the spring season of life; so natural, and indeed so decent. Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. Seek out every innocent object of amusement; gratify thy genius, thy temper, thy relish, in all the particularities of it; provided only that thou dost still remember thy future account, acknowledging God in thy ways, and guarding against every abuse of his goodness, every thing that would on the whole be offensive to him, and detrimental to thyself."

My brethren, I readily own, that there is nothing in this paraphrase of the words which is unbecoming the piety and wisdom of the author, and that he has, in effect, said the same in several passages of this very book. There is hardly a sentiment which he more frequently repeats than this. There is nothing, says he, in express words, again and again, there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of his labour. It is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun; for it is his portion, and a heart to rejoice in it is the gift of God. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart: let thy garments be always white, and thine head lack no ointment. And once more, I recommend mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and drink, and to be merry. The sense of which, if we would find a sense worthy of the author, must, no doubt, be this, "that religion is far from forbidding a cheerful use of the enjoyments of life; and that without such a use they are given to the possessor in vain:" who indeed can otherwise hardly be called the possessor, but rather the steward and purveyor for the next heir, who may perhaps be as profuse as his predecessor was penurious and insatiable.

And I hope you will not imagine, that in what I have further to say I intend any thing inconsistent with these observations and advices. To be devout, and to be melancholy, are two very different things; and the greatest enemies of religion could not call it by a more invidious and unjust name, than a walking mournfully before the Lord of hosts. Instead therefore of dissuading you from a life of true pleasure, I would rather direct you to it, and only urge you to despise that which is visionary and mean, and to secure that which is solid and noble: in a word, to decline no delights which will not interfere with others much more valuable, none which will not be mingled with regret, or followed by a lasting anguish, a thousand times more than an equivalent for them. And so far as these precautions will admit, I will venture to say, even in this sense, Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth. Nevertheless, I am well persuaded this is not, and cannot be, the original sense of the words; and therefore add,

2. They are rather to be understood as an awful and lively caution to young persons, to be upon their guard against those gratifications whereby conscience might be wounded, and God dishonoured.

I suppose, with the general stream of commentators, that the words are an ironical way of expressing, in a more pointed and lively manner, the very contrary to what they seem literally to speak; like that speech of Elijah concerning Baal, when he said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; or that of Micaiah to Ahab, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper; or that of our Lord to his disciples, Sleep on now, and take your rest: to which, I suppose, we may add that saying of God concerning Adam after his fall, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. Thus do these words most strongly forbid what they seem to allow, and are as if he had said, "Thou poor thoughtless creature, who in this giddy intoxication of youth art so madly bent upon sensual pleasure, take thy fill of it, and withhold not thine heart from any joy. Follow all the most impetuous appetites of nature, and wantonly bound over every restraint of reason and piety; trample on the admonition of all thy teachers, shake off the fetters of a strict education, and burst the bonds of religion, like threads of flax when they are touched by the flame. But think not, O sinner, that thou shalt always carry it off with that haughty triumph; know, that as thou hast thy day, God will also have his: a day of strict account, and of ample recompence. Know, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment; and if thou canst find out no expedient to conceal thee from an all-seeing eye, or to defend thee from an omnipotent hand, a deluge of wrath will bear thee away to everlasting destruction. Dearly shalt thou then pay for every present indulgence, and every sweet morsel shall then be turned bitter, and be as the gall of asps within thee."

This, I say, appears to be the evident meaning of these words. And that for this plain reason; that some of the phrases made use of are such as are never taken in a good sense, and therefore cannot admit the former interpretation. Solomon doth indeed, as you have heard, exhort his readers to eat

and drink, and enjoy the good of their labours; but where can you find him, or any other sacred writer, exhorting or allowing men to walk in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes? I am sure that phrase generally signifies an indulgence to the irregularities of appetite and passion, in the neglect of reason and of Scripture. Thus the Israelites are charged to wear fringes on their garments, that they might remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and might not seek after their own heart and their own eyes; that is, (as it follows,) that they might not go a whoring from God after those gay and luxurious idolatries, which regaled the senses, while they debauched the soul. And thus the wicked Israelite, whom God would separate to evil out of all the tribes, is represented as vainly and arrogantly saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart; that is, (as it follows,) to add drunkenness to thirst, or one riot to another. And once more: to judge after the sight of the eyes, is a proverbial expression, to signify partial and corrupt judgment. We have no reason therefore to imagine, that Solomon would vary the signification of a phrase already so expressly fixed in some of the sacred writings, which he was himself obliged not only to read, but to transcribe, as he undoubtedly did on his accession to the throne; where he had also read it again and again, that the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth; and he had himself elsewhere said, that foolishness is so closely bound up in the heart of a child, that not only words of admonition, but the rod of correction, is necessary to drive it away. To these general remarks on the usual signification of the phrases occurring here, we may also further add, that the connexion of these words would lead us to understand them as an ironical rather than a serious concession, since they conclude with what seems a very awful menace: But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment: as if he should have said, "Assure thyself, thou must answer for all." Which sense is further illustrated by what follows in the last verse of this, and the first of the next, chapter: [which are very unhappily divided from each other, as several other passages are, which have indeed a very close and necessary connexion:] Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart; (i. e. the regret which would follow these sensual indulgences, if thou walk in the way of it,) and put away evil from thy flesh, (i. e. those carnal pleasures which religion forbids, or those punishments they would certainly draw down upon them;) for childhood and youth are vanity, and remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, instead of sacrificing them to vanity and folly. You easily see, there is a beautiful and lively opposition between the several parts of the period on this interpretation, which on the other must be much injured, if not entirely destroyed.

I would further observe, that the judgment to which Solomon here refers, must undoubtedly be that of a future state; since he had expressly asserted above, that here all things come alike to all; and no man knoweth either love or hatred, (i. e. the favour or displeasure of the Divine Being,) by all that is before them: that there is a wicked man to whom it happeneth according to the event of the righteous; and, on the other hand, many a righteous man to whom it happeneth according to the event of the wicked; i. e. that very bad men often prolong their lives through a long series of prosperity, while good men are cut off by an untimely stroke, or linger out their days in a painful succession of sorrows. This led him to conclude, Surely God will judge the righteous and the wicked; which in many of these cases could only be done in some invisible state, to which both should be reserved. And of this judgment he solemnly warns the young sinner, as a most powerful antidote against the baits of sensuality; as an awful thought, which might fix the most roving eye, and be a means of reducing the most ungoverned heart to the discipline of wisdom and piety.

As I conclude that this sense of the words is now sufficiently illustrated and established, I proceed,

II. To enforce the admonition by such considerations, as are expressly suggested in the text, or may naturally arise from it.

I importunately beg your serious attention; for I say not these things either to grieve or to shame you, but as my beloved brethren and children, I warn you. And here let me prevail upon you to consider,—the depravation and corruption of your own hearts,—the many delusive charms which are continually offering themselves to your eyes:—consider, that the blessed God is now the spectator of your conduct,—that he will certainly bring you to an account for it,—an account which will be inexpressibly strict and awful. These are the arguments, which I shall more largely enforce; and if they make no deep impression on your mind, there is the utmost reason to fear, that you will go on hardened in your evil ways, till you actually come to that tribunal which you now forget or contemn.

1. Think of the depravation and corruption of your own hearts, to deter you from walking in the ways of them.

The heart of man is described by that God who alone perfectly knows it, as deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The imagination of it is, by him, said to be only evil, and that continually. It is a very sad truth though perhaps you have never seriously considered it, that a degenerate and corrupted nature is conveyed down from [illegible] to another, so as

still to leave room for that expostulation of Job, What is man that he should be pure, and how can he be clean that is born of a woman?—for that confession of David, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me!—for that declaration of the apostle, whether in his own name, or that of another, In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. If you know not the plague of your own heart, it is a plain argument that you know little of God, or of yourselves; and you had need be seriously reminded of it, lest, with Solomon's fool, you should trust it, and the blind lead the blind, till you fall into the pit of destruction.

Do you not know the degeneracy and corruption of your own hearts? I beseech you to review what has passed there. Think of the advantages which you have enjoyed for knowing and serving God; of all the mercies you have received, of all the instructions you have heard, of all the convictions you have sometimes felt, and of all the good resolutions you have probably formed in consequence of them. And then think, how little all this hath produced; how you have forgotten God, days and times without number, and started back from him like a deceitful bow; how you have been delivered over, in a foolish circle, from one vanity to another, wearied with the pursuit of trifles, and yet rising, after a little respite, to pursue them again. Think, my friends, how you have overborne the dictates of your own consciences, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God, when he hath been pleading with you in the most importunate manner, and saying unto you, Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate. Yet you have done it, and sacrificed the repose of your own minds, and the hopes of glory, to mean, vile considerations, which you would be ashamed to hear mentioned before an assembly. And this not in one instance, but again and again. You have formed good purposes, and broken them; and formed them again, and broken them again; and run such a round of folly and sin, that I am persuaded many of you could not have suspected yourselves of such a conduct some time ago, nor have believed, if one had told you, that you should act such a part. And must these treacherous hearts still be trusted, and will you go on to walk in the ways of them; when they have already led you into so much sin, when they have already plunged you into so much distress?

2. Think how many delusive charms are daily offering themselves to your eyes, that you may not heedlessly walk in the sight of them.

Remember, Sirs, I beseech you, that you are in a very dangerous situation, and walk among snares. The most mortal poisons are often mingled with the sweetest dainties, and the most dangerous enemies of our souls accost us in the fairest forms. The fruit which undid our common mother, and brought death and a curse upon us all, was a fruit which appeared to be good for food, and which she saw to be pleasant to the eyes.

It is an awakening saying of one of the most lively and pathetic, as well as of the most pious, writers which our age has produced,* "That the condition of man in his natural state seems to be like that of a person sick of a variety of diseases, knowing neither his distemper nor cure, but unhappily inclosed in a place where he could hear, or see, or taste, or feel nothing, but what tended to inflame his disorder."

Not that the world in its original constitution, and considered as the work of God, is by any means to be blamed. The whole system of it is such, as would lead a regular mind to wise and pious reflections; and its most pleasurable scenes would be the natural occasion of exciting correspondent gratitude and devotion to the great Author of every good and perfect gift. But our souls being corrupted, those things become dangerous to us, which might otherwise have been innocent, and even beneficial; as some of the most wholesome and nourishing foods are fatal to a person inflamed with a raging fever.

I am persuaded, that nothing is so likely to make us truly wise, as observations on facts: let me therefore beseech you, my young friends, seriously to consider how many, within the compass of your own knowledge, have been ruined by the blandishments of the senses; and, perhaps, some of them persons, in other respects, of no contemptible characters. We may indeed say of the world, that specious harlot, She hath cast down many wounded, and many strong men have been slain by her. Do not, therefore, walk in the sight of your eyes, lest you also be like the bird, that, struck with some gay promising appearance, hasteneth eagerly to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. But endeavour to open the eye of the mind, and by faith to behold the great realities of the invisible world, that you may govern your lives with a regard to them, and so secure, not the deceitful forms, but the substance, of true happiness.

3. Let me seriously remind you, that the blessed God is the spectator of all your conduct.

This is strongly implied, though it be not expressed, in the text: For all these things God will bring thee into judgment. And we are apt to imagine, that he is like earthly judges, who must have recourse to witnesses, to inform them of what they would otherwise be ignorant. He is not, he cannot be, far from any one of us, seeing in him we live, and move, and have our being. Nor can we be concealed from his eye, should we fly on the wings of the morning, and with the swiftness of

* Law, in Christian Perfection, sect. 11.

light, to the uttermost ends of the earth: for his hand must lead us thither, and his right hand support us there. Remember this, my friends, he sees you when you overlook him; sees himself neglected by you, and his laws violated, and his grace despised. And all for what? You have reason to blush and be confounded, when you think of that; for every vanity that offers itself to your pursuit, for trifles lighter than air, for which you would not violate the common rules of decency to a fellow-creature. As if it were to be taken for granted, that his favour is a thing of no consequence, or that nothing can forfeit it. O, Sirs, he hears me while I am speaking to you; and sees, perhaps, that some of you hardly give me an attentive hearing. He observes how many admonitions are despised by you, how many convictions are overborne, how many vows are broken, how many vain words are spoken to him, in those formalities which you call your devotions; and, perhaps, with regard to some of you, I may add, how many bold words are spoken against him, when those mouths are set against the heavens, whose tongues have walked through the earth. All those slights of religion, which, for want of understanding, you may be ready to call wit; all that licentious contempt which you throw on his sacred word and ordinances, and fancy it is freedom of thought. You may go on, and presume upon it, that your lips are your own; but I must tell you, that the Lord hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written for you likewise; —a book, which will another day be thrown open, and read to you with a voice of vengeance and terror: which leads me to urge you,

4. To think how certain the judgment of God is, and your own personal appearance before him.

You know, there is not any doctrine of the gospel more plain and evident than this, That every one of us must give an account of himself to God; and indeed it was a doctrine of the Jewish revelation, and even of the wiser heathens: but I would desire you particularly to observe, how strongly it is expressed in the words of the text, Know thou, that God will bring thee into judgment! Thee, O young man, thee, O child, whoever thou art that hearest me this day, to thee is the word of this admonition sent, God will bring thee into judgment. His trumpet will sound, his tribunal will be set; thou wilt be summoned, and thou must obey. In vain will be every attempt to conceal thyself, or to excuse or dispute an immediate attendance. He will bring thee; his hand will be strong upon thee, infinitely too strong for thy feeble resistance. And therefore the assembly of the whole world before him is beautifully described, by driving together a flock of sheep or of goats. Bear witness, O sinner, and let thy conscience record it, I warn thee of this solemn, this dreadful, day. I tell thee, that as surely as thou art now in the house of God, thou shalt then be standing before his bar. And how will you stand? Look you to that. We are to give the warning, and knowing the terrors of the Lord, are to persuade men. Hear now therefore this admonition for yourselves, and know it for your good. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. And to increase the weight and efficacy of the thought, reflect, once more,

5. How strict and awful this judgment will be. For all these things God will bring thee into judgment; which naturally implies, that it will be particular and final.

Every particular will be reviewed. All these things; or, as it is yet more strongly expressed elsewhere, every work, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. He hath sworn by himself, that he will not forget any of thy works. Poor thoughtless creatures! you sometimes conceal your irregularities from parents and masters, or others to whom you are accountable; you disguise them in so artful a manner, or form such excuses for them, as may impose upon men: and you value yourselves on the dexterity with which you do it. But be not deceived, God cannot be thus mocked. For all these things, and a thousand times more than you can remember; actions, and words, and thoughts of vanity, which passed with you unobserved in the crowd, or, if at all observed, were forgotten in a moment; for all these will he reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes, i. e. he will marshal them in dreadful array, as a host of enemies armed for thy destruction. Have you never seen a criminal at the bar, how he is confounded, when the force of evidence bears him down, and the sagacity of a judge detects the idle, foolish pleas, with which he flattered himself before his trial, and imagined he should easily come off with impunity? Then did you see an emblem of yourselves, and your own state; thus will you, if you go on in your sins, be entangled and silenced, and shamed and condemned. All your crimes will be produced, in all their circumstances of aggravation. Nor will God forget this present admonition and expostulation, though you may forget it, or though you should remember it only in scorn, and wonder what occasion there is for all this earnestness and importunity. You may, if you please, make a jest of divine judgment; but you will find it dreadfully serious. Nothing so easy, as to despise it; but, O sinner, nothing so hard, as to endure it: for I add,

It will be a final doom, and your eternal state will be fixed by it. It is no light crime of which you will then be convicted: no less than wilful, obstinate, incorrigible rebellion against the Majesty of heaven, against the God of your lives, and the

Father of all your mercies; and it will be no light punishment to which you will be consigned, for following the way of your heart, and the sight of your eyes, in opposition to all the authority of his law, and all the methods of his recovering grace.

Read over the sentence, as recorded from the lips of him by whom it is to be pronounced. There is but one for those on the left hand, and hearken to it: Depart from me, ye cursed:—sinner, thou must be separated from God. But that perhaps you can bear; it is but calling him by some bold name; it is but dressing him up in your imagination under some false odious character, and you may perhaps think it is best to be at a distance from him. Wretched creature! but thou must depart, as accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And canst thou reconcile thy mind to that? To dwell for ever in darkness and horror, in such a scene, and with such associates! To have nothing to entertain the eye, nothing to cheer the heart, nothing to divert painful reflection, nothing to allay the most cutting remorse! To see every pleasurable object, for which you forgot God, and sold yourselves to destruction, removed to an eternal distance; to feel all the irregular passions of your own hearts let loose at once, like so many hungry vultures to prey insatiably upon them; and hope, the last of supports under the last of evils, shut out for ever!—Oh, Sirs, this is the result of the judgment of God. Lo, this is the portion of the wicked, and this the heritage appointed to him by God. It is a grief to a tender heart to think of it, to hear the very report. Oh! what will it be to you to meet it and feel it, in all its force and all its terror? Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with you?

Alas, my heart is pained for you, and my bowels yearn over you! Methinks I see all the haughtiness of your spirits broken, see you pale and trembling on the very brink of that pit, from whence there is no redemption, and into which the flaming sword of divine justice is driving you. And can nothing be done to save you? Alas, what should be done? Can any rescue you from the hand of Omnipotence? Can any intercede for you with that then inexorable Judge? It cannot be. But he is not yet inexorable. He has not yet laid aside the character of a Saviour, of a compassionate friend to perishing creatures. And I present these things to persuade you, if possible, in this your day, to know the things that belong to your peace, before they be for ever hid from your eyes. May divine grace effectually do it; and teach you so to judge yourselves, that you may not then be condemned of the Lord! And now,

III. It only remains, that I conclude this discourse with some plain inferences from it. And here,

1. The young sinner has surely a great deal of reason to be thankful, that he hath not already been brought into judgment.

You have indeed the greatest cause to say, it is of the Lord's mercy that you are not consumed. Your breath is in your nostrils; and perhaps you can recollect times and circumstances, in which it seemed just ready to take its flight, when you appeared to be in the extremest danger, so that there was but a step between you and death. And what if that little interval had been passed? where had you then been? how low had you then fallen? Why, it is most certain, as to some of you, that had you been thus cut off, the torrent had swept you away into eternal ruin. Even now, while we are worshipping God in his house, rejoicing in mercy and hope, your miserable spirits had been in the regions of the damned, feeling more than mortal language can express, and fearing yet more, much more, than you felt; being, like the apostate angels, reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Adore the divine patience and forbearance, that your case is so different; for most happily different it is. I have the pleasure to testify to you this day, in the midst of all these terrible things which faithfulness to your souls extorts from me, that the Lord waiteth that he may be gracious, and does, as it were, raise himself up that he may have mercy upon you: he rises from his throne to stretch out the golden sceptre to you, to open his compassionate arms to embrace you, if you approach him as humble penitents. Jesus the judge will become your friend; he will receive you, he will shelter you and bless you; if, with believing hearts, you seek his mercy, after having so long dared his vengeance. This day do I testify, that he is ready to bestow upon you far more valuable pleasures than those which he calls you to resign, and to give you much greater satisfaction in contradicting the corruptions of your heart, and controlling the impulse of your senses, than you ever have found, or could possibly find, in gratifying them. May you be persuaded to the wise and happy exchange! Then will the patience of God be salvation to you, when his goodness leads you to repentance.

2. The young Christian hath apparent reason to be thankful for that grace, which hath sanctified his heart, and turned away his eyes from beholding vanity.

My brethren in the Lord, permit me to remind you, that you were sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures; but there is now room for us to congratulate you, and say, Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. You now know your true interest; the fear of the Lord is implanted in your heart, and your eyes are directed heavenwards. You are ex-

periments!y acquainted with the pleasure which religion brings, and see that you have exchanged your tinsel for gold; your shadows for the most valuable substance; the momentary blaze and crackling of thorns, for the steady light, and influence, and glory of the sun, which is shining more and more till the perfect day.

Let me invite you to the most cheerful acknowledgments of the riches of divine grace to you. Bless God for the new nature he hath given you; for that heart of flesh into which the rock is transformed by a new-creating power; for those new hopes which he hath opened upon you. Bless him, that you are now sheltered from the storms of divine wrath, and that, instead of looking forward to the judgment-day, with the horrors of a malefactor, who is then to be condemned and executed, you are rather lifting up your heads to meet the prospect with triumph, as knowing that your complete salvation will then be manifested, and your redemption be perfected.

3. We may further infer, from what we have now been hearing, that the gospel of the blessed Jesus gives us very great advantages for reclaiming young persons from the snares of sensuality and ruin.

The text abundantly intimates the importance of those considerations, which are taken from the final judgment. Now it is certain, the gospel discovers this in the strongest light. Therein is the wrath of God revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; and some more awful views of judgment are given, than even the language of the prophets, emphatical as it is, can furnish out. In the gospel, we are not only told in general, that God will judge the world in righteousness, but particularly assured, that he will do it by that man whom he hath appointed, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who for that purpose shall descend from heaven, in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him; that the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised; that small and great shall stand before God; while in the mean time the world is in flames around them, the sun being darkened, and the moon not giving her light, the stars falling, the heavens passing away with a great noise, the elements melting with fervent heat, the earth with all things in it being burnt up, and departing out of its place. And can any thing be more awakening and awful than all this pomp of horror, this conflagration and confusion of nature? Yes, Sirs, there is one thing yet more awakening; and it is that which the gospel expressly pronounces, that, in consequence of all, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. Eternity, eternity, my brethren, is the declaration of the gospel. Nature might lead us to suspect it, the law might give some intimation of it, but the gospel alone asserts it; and not only asserts it, but describes it too. It lends to our faith that perspective by which we descry the paradise of God, and it lays hell open before us, so that destruction hath no covering. The Christian preacher may then say it, with an energy beyond what Solomon could conceive, merely on the principles of the Jewish revelation, Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, &c. but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Nor must I by any means omit that grand advantage which the gospel gives us in these addresses, by the discovery of the blessed Jesus under the character of a Saviour. It displays him as the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; as inviting, as waiting, as pleading, as weeping over sinners, yea, as bleeding and dying for them: as describing the terrors of judgment, that he may awaken them to flee from it, and may gather them as a hen gathers her chickens under her compassionate protecting wings. But is this a simile that we may use, when speaking of him who is to appear under the character of "the worthy Judge eternal?" Yes, my friends, low as it may seem, it is a simile that he himself uses, and perhaps uses it in part because it is so low, that the language itself may be a specimen of that condescension which it is intended to express.

Such is that wonderful contrast of what is most awful, and most engaging, in the gospel; and this gospel, Sirs, do you daily hear. To you is the word of this salvation sent; to you is the whole counsel of God declared. May you never be left to reject it against yourselves, but may divine grace render it a savour of life unto life! Once more;

4. We may further infer, that the serious thoughts of death must be very useful to young persons, since judgment is so nearly connected with it.

It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment; and though the final solemnity of that judgment may be delayed to distant ages, the state of the soul is in a moment unalterably fixed: and, in this sense, as the tree falls, so it must lie, for there is no device nor working in the grave.

Now, as this is generally acknowledged, we may naturally conclude, that those who remember death will not forget judgment. Let me, therefore, my young friends, call down your thoughts to the grave; and methinks, among so many monuments of mortality, it should not be difficult to do it.

Recollect, I beseech you, what of that kind you have seen the year past. How many of you have attended the funerals of youth like yourselves, of children much younger than yourselves! They have given up the ghost, and where are they! What a change hath death made! Where are they? Why, perhaps, what remains of them, within the walls of this place, under the feet of some of you. Could

your eye penetrate a few feet of earth, you would see them; but oh, what spectacles of horror would you discover! Yet perhaps a year ago they were in the number of the most amiable objects of your sight. And such is your bloom, such is your vigour: and will you presume upon it, presume so far as to continue exposed to all the terrors of divine judgment, in a vain dependence that some years hence you shall consider and escape it?

O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end! O that you would be willing to converse with the dying, and the dead! you will, no doubt, soon have renewed opportunities of doing it. Some will probably be called away for lessons to the rest; and before the year rolls round, you may perhaps see some pious youth going with joy and triumph to glory, or some careless incorrigible creature dying in terror, or, which is yet more dreadful, in a stupid insensibility of soul. Reflect, my brethren, on what of this kind you have seen; attend to what you may further see: and remember, that the house of mourning may prove a school of the most useful discipline, if the living will lay it to heart.

But why do I mention the house of mourning? You are perhaps going to that of feasting.* The leisure of the season invites to it; and custom hath established it into a law, to close the old year and begin the new with some peculiar vanities, in some more than ordinary forgetfulness of all the important purposes for which time and the opportunities of it are given. Such is our wisdom, such is our gratitude, such is our consistence with the name we bear, and the profession we make!

* N. B. This sermon was preached at Northampton, Dec. 25, 1745.

You are perhaps, some of you, impressed with what you have heard; but I am much afraid there are those that within twelve days, or even twelve hours, will have lost the impression, and be as unconcerned about this great judgment, as if God's own hand had sent them a discharge from appearing at it. It is a discouraging case, and it makes us your ministers almost dread this season, cheerful as it is thought, as that in which former convictions will be worn off, and the heart of unthinking youth will be steeled against those that might otherwise be made: as the season, in which we do, as it were, see the infernal lion bearing away the lambs of our flock, even before our faces.

But we will at least cry out for their deliverance, we will lift up our voice like a trumpet; and may hope, that some of you will take the warning, and hide the word of God in your heart. Sinners will no doubt be enticing you, to walk as they do in the way of the heart, and according to the sight of the eyes; but consent not to the solicitation, if you would not be destroyed with them, in that day when they shall appear, as they have now been represented, unable to stand in the judgment, and shall perish from this unhappy way which they have taken; and that in a moment, when the wrath of him, whom they now despise, shall but begin to be kindled against them: for it shall be kindled with such terrors, that they shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? The Lord grant, that you may all find mercy of the Lord in that day! Amen.

SERMONS

ON THE POWER AND GRACE OF CHRIST, AND ON THE EVIDENCES OF HIS GOSPEL.*

DEDICATION.

To the young persons of the auditory and society under my stated ministerial care, these ten Sermons, at first preached and published with a peculiar view to their edification, is now, with the most cordial prayers for their temporal and eternal happiness, inscribed by their

Most affectionate friend,
And faithful servant in the bonds of our common Lord,

P. DODDRIDGE.

PREFACE.

GROWING experience convinces me, that I have no reason to fear lest candid and judicious readers should be offended with me, for having given way to some warmth of devout affection in the greatest part of these discourses; the subjects are of a nature not only to excuse but to require it. And while I have any reverence for Scripture, or any knowledge of human nature, I shall never affect to speak of the glories of Christ, and the eternal interest of men, as coldly as if I were reading a lecture of mathematics, or relating an experiment in natural philosophy. I hope I shall always remember how unworthy the character of a man and a Christian it is, to endeavour to transport men's passions, while the understanding is left uninformed, or the judgment unconvinced: but so far as is consistent with a proper regard to these leading powers of our nature, I heartily pray, that I, and all other gospel ministers, may so feel the energy of divine truths on our own souls, as to preach and write concerning them with a holy fervency and ardour; nor can I imagine it would bode well to the interest of religion in general, to endeavour to lay all those passions asleep, which surely were implanted in our hearts by God, to subserve the religious, as well as civil, life; and which, after all, will probably be employed to some very excellent or very pernicious purposes.

I would hope that these Sermons, and those on Regeneration, will be of some service to religious families, especially on the evenings of the Lord's day. We are happy in a great number of excellent discourses suitable to such an occasion; and perhaps in none more suitable than in the two volumes of sermons at Berry street, of which I can with great cheerfulness repeat what I said, when making my acknowledgments to the founder, immediately after their publication: "That I cannot recollect where I have seen a set of important thoughts on such various and weighty subjects more judiciously selected, more accurately digested, more closely compacted, more naturally expressed, or in so few words more powerfully enforced, than I have generally found in those sermons: on account of which, I doubt not but the thanksgivings of many are often abounding to the glory of God."

I esteem it my great felicity, to be engaged with those worthy authors in the same great design of assisting to form men's minds to a scriptural religion and a Christian temper: and though many provinces may appear much more splendid in the eyes of the learned and the polite world, I trust ours will be at least as favourably remembered in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming; and I would have no standard of honour, wisdom, and happiness, which will not stand the test of that important day.

Northampton, June 9, 1741.

* Printed at Northampton, 1741.

SERMON XII.

THE ABILITY OF CHRIST TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

A VARIETY of trifles in life are daily breaking in upon us, and hurrying us away into a forgetfulness of God and ourselves. But how much soever we may be careful and cumbered, agitated and distracted, about many things, one thing is needful, viz. the approach of the soul to God, that it may see and enjoy his salvation. The most important question, is that of the awakened and trembling jailer, What shall I do to be saved? And the only pertinent answer to that question, is that which the apostle gave, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

And have these latter days, these ages (as we are ready fondly to imagine them) of greater refinement and reason, discovered any new method of salvation? God forbid there should ever be any pretence to it! When we see a person, like our Lord, appearing in an opposite cause, with an equal pomp of miracles, with equal demonstration and power of the Spirit, we may perhaps let go that anchor of our souls, which we now esteem as sure and stedfast; but till then we will, by divine grace, strenuously retain that gospel, which is recorded by those, who first preached it, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: and if an angel were to appear, in robes of the purest light, and with all the charms of a celestial eloquence, to establish any other foundation, far from yielding to the evidence of such a single wonder, in opposition to so many greater, we would hold that angel accursed; as we might certainly conclude, that he wore a deceitful form, and was a messenger from the father of lies.

If the gospel be indeed of divine original, and we are not following cunningly devised fables, it is most certain that those doctrines, which are peculiar to it, are not only true, but infinitely important. And shall we, who are stewards of the mysteries of God, decline insisting upon them, because they are such common topics, and because we must in effect be obliged to say the same things again and again? As well might we despise bread, because it is an old-fashioned diet, on which our ancestors have fed for a long succession of ages, and on which the lowest of our species are subsisted. As reasonably, and much more safely, might the physician decline the use of all the most celebrated medicines, recommended by the experience of many hundred years, and pride himself in trying only such, as had hitherto been entirely unknown: nay, he might much better do it; for it is possible, that there may yet lie hid, amongst the secrets of Nature, some plant or drug of unknown virtues, some richer cordial, and more sovereign antidote, than has ever yet been discovered: but we are as sure, as we can be of any thing in the revelation we profess to believe, that there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, but that of Jesus, whereby they can obtain righteousness and life.

I hope therefore it will not (as, I am sure, it should not) be disagreeable to you to hear, that after the many sacred hours we have spent together in meditations on such subjects as these, I am again to resume the theme, and to discourse to you from it for some succeeding sabbaths. I do it at the desire of a friend,* who has recommended the subject to me with a peculiar regard to the rising generation, for whose use these discourses are to be made yet more public. And I would hope, they will not be the less agreeable to my younger friends, or any of my other hearers, because they are equally the concern of all; and such a concern, as to be the very life of our souls, and (as I have largely shown elsewhere†) the only foundation of our eternal hopes.

The holy apostle Paul had (as he elsewhere very emphatically expresses it) a continual most tender and zealous affection for his brethren of the Jewish nation, his kinsmen according to the flesh; and this epistle is a remarkable monument of it. It was indeed directed to the believing Hebrews, and its most evident design is, to animate them to adhere resolutely to the Christian faith, whatever dangers or difficulties might attend that resolution. But the mind of this excellent man was very capacious, and continually filled with a variety of schemes for the advancement of the gospel, the glory of his Lord, and the salvation of souls: and as he could not but know, that it was highly probable that this, rather than any other of his epistles, would fall into the hands of many as yet unconverted Jews, he not only conceals his name, against which he knew they were strongly prejudiced, but in a very wise and happy manner makes use of such sentiments and such language here, as might be very proper to awaken and convince the unconverted, as well as to assist the faith and the joy of them who had believed in Christ, that they might be justified by him, and not by the works of the law. And if any have not made this remark, I apprehend they have lost much of the strength and beauty of this excellent epistle.

In pursuit of these great and very harmonious designs, the sacred writer insists largely on the dignity of the person and offices of our great Re-

* These sermons were first preached and published at the desire of William Coward, Esq.

† See my Sermons to Young People, No. II.

decree. He represents him as far superior to the most exalted angels, and therefore much more to the most excellent of the children of men; superior to Moses, that most honourable servant of the Lord, who was faithful in all his house; superior to Abraham, the friend of God, and father of the faithful; superior to Aaron the priest of the Lord, and all the holy family descended from his loins. And it is on this branch of the argument that he is now insisting. He labours at large, by a chain of reasoning which I have not time to trace, to show that our Lord was made after the order of Melchizedec, in many glorious and important circumstances, in which the priesthood of Melchizedec was superior to that of Aaron and his sons: amongst other instances, this is one of the most considerable, that whereas in the family of Aaron there were successively many high priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, this illustrious person, the Lord Jesus Christ, because he continues ever, in immortal life and glory, hath an unchangeable priesthood, or (as the word* most exactly signifies,) a priesthood which does not pass from one successor to another. Now from hence the apostle draws that important inference in the words of my text, "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost," completely and perpetually to save, all, that in the remotest ages and nations of the world desire to come unto God by him, (or to make use of his mediation, when they approach the throne of God as humble worshippers,) seeing he ever lives, to make a most prevalent intercession for them; of which, (as the apostle elsewhere more largely states it,) the intercession of the high priest before the mercy-seat on the solemn day of atonement was but a very imperfect type.

It will be the business of several succeeding discourses on these words,

I. To consider what we are to understand by Christ's being able to save to the uttermost.

II. To prove that he is really so.

III. To consider the particular argument for it, which the apostle draws from his ever living to make intercession for them. And,

IV. To state the character of those who may expect salvation from him, which is here expressed by their coming to God by him.

You see the copiousness of the subject we are entering upon. I shall endeavour, in the prosecution of it, to lay before you the genuine doctrine of the gospel on these various and important heads, with plainness and seriousness. And I humbly implore the influence of the divine Spirit, to open mine eyes, that I may behold the wonders contained in his word; and to open your ears so to hear them, and your hearts so to embrace them, that every soul here present may be an eternal monument of

* Ανυπαραβατον.

Christ's being able to save to the uttermost, and may for ever live to receive the fruits of that intercession, which our blessed High Priest is ever living to make. Amen.

First, I am to consider what we are to understand by Christ's being able to save to the uttermost.

For clearing up this matter I would only offer these three remarks.——It implies the danger and calamity of those, to whom Christ is proposed as a Saviour;—it expresses a power of working out complete deliverance for them;—and it further imports the continuance of that saving power without diminution or decay, throughout all succeeding generations.

1. When Christ is spoken of as able to save, it strongly implies, "That those, to whom he is proposed as a Saviour, are, without him, in a state of danger and calamity."

It would be a foolish mispending of time to attempt to prove at large, that in Scripture, as well as in ordinary speech, to save, and to deliver, are words of the same import. "Jesus shall save his people from their sins;" and "he delivers us from the wrath to come."

It is a most obvious remark, but so necessary, as not to be lightly dismissed, That the *whole* have no need of a physician, but they who are sick; and the secure have no need of a Saviour, but they who are in danger. And as the apostle argues, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, all were in a state of death, or they would not have needed such an expiatory sacrifice; so we may assure ourselves, that if Christ is to be offered to all as a Saviour, then were all in a state of ruin. And if he is of God to be made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, then are we without him destitute of all these, foolish and guilty, polluted and enslaved, condemned and perishing.

This is expressly asserted in a variety of scriptures, largely and laboriously proved in the three first chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and generally acknowledged by all who pretend to believe the gospel; as indeed it must be, if they would not in the most notorious manner contradict themselves. Yet, alas, how little is it felt! We see it in the indolence of men's lives, we see it in the air of indifference with which the tidings of salvation are commonly received. The greater part of mankind are soothed into an insensibility of their danger; they are amused with the dreams of sensual pleasure, with the vain rovings of a gay imagination, and the fond expectation of a thousand satisfactions, which they never have found and never will find, in life. And hence it comes to pass, that they hear not the thunder of God's law, loud and dreadful as it is; nor see the flaming sword of his vengeance, stretched out against them, and just

ready to give them the mortal blow. And probably it is the case of several amongst you. Perhaps many of you may find, even on the most transient reflection, that you were never alarmed with a sense of your danger, nor saw yourselves perishing without a Saviour: but if it be so, give me leave to proclaim it aloud, with all the earnestness which is suited to a matter of life and death, that it is time, high time, for you immediately to awake out of sleep; for you nod on the brink of a precipice, and there is but a hand's breath between you and eternal ruin.

In the name of God, Sirs, and as you love your own souls, rouse up your stupified senses, and open those drowsy eyes. Look into the holy law of God, and read over the records of conscience; and see the agreement, or rather, the dreadful disagreement and contrariety between them: such a contrariety, that one would almost think, you imagined that the commands of God were given to tell you what you should not do, rather than what you should. And dare you imagine, that the eternal God, with all his almighty power, and all his unspotted holiness, will look with indifference on the violation of his law, merely because you have the boldness to violate it with indifference? Do you think he had no meaning, or that it was not a meaning full of terror, when he told the Israelites of old, that if they presumed thus to walk contrary to him, they should be cursed in the city, and cursed in the field, cursed in the fruit of their body, and in the fruit of their ground, cursed in their coming in, and cursed in their going out; nay, that a fire should be kindled in his anger, that should burn even unto the lowest hell; that should consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains? Think you the Scripture speaks in vain, when it says such terrible things as these? Or will you say these things were only spoken to the Jews of old? Can you imagine, that sins committed in the land of Canaan, some thousands of years ago, should provoke the eyes of God's holiness, and kindle the flames of his wrath; and that he should wink at crimes committed in the present age, and in Britain; while we have higher advantages to know our duty, and stronger engagements to perform it, than even that favourite nation of Israel had? I appeal to your consciences, sinners, whether this thought has even the lightest degree of probability in it. And if it has not, then surely here is danger, and horror, in all their most frightful forms. To see the drawn sword of an inexorable enemy waved round your defenceless head, or pointed at your naked breast; or to see this building all in flames, and yourselves surrounded beyond possibility of escape, (were the prospect to terminate there,) were a danger at which a man might justly smile, and stand collected and composed, when compared with that into which sin has brought you, and in which the gospel finds you.

And it is a terrible aggravation, that without Divine assistance this danger is inevitable. We can neither vindicate our conduct, nor atone for our offences; we can neither avoid nor endure the punishment, should God lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. All our soul is enfeebled, and all our nature corrupted; and he must be a great stranger to himself, as well as to the rest of mankind, who will not acknowledge with the apostle, that when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for us. This is apparently the doctrine of the gospel: and as the forerunner of Christ made way for him, by declaring that men were by their sin in danger of the wrath to come, and that the axe of divine judgment was laid to the root of the trees; so I think it is our duty, as we tender the honour of our Redeemer, and the salvation of your souls, often to be reminding you of these things; and the words of the text so naturally imply them, that I am persuaded you cannot think them a digression. But I add,

2. When it is said, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, it must express a "power of working out complete deliverance for his people."

So some judicious commentators descant upon these words, and I think with a great deal of reason, "He is able to save in the most perfect manner, so that nothing shall be wanting to complete the salvation."* And this is a thought of so great importance to our joy and peace in believing, that I will further illustrate it by the mention of various particulars, which are evidently comprehended in complete salvation. But I shall only touch on them now, because some of them are to be resumed at large under the second general.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is able "completely to answer the demands of divine justice, and thereby to save us from the curse of the law."—It was indeed impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin; but we may easily believe, that the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself a spotless sacrifice to God, should avail to that blessed purpose, and be accepted as an infinitely valuable and adequate satisfaction. Justly may we conclude, that the offended Deity is now rendered propitious, and that by faith in a Redeemer we may be justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Here is a door of hope opened, not only to those who have escaped the grosser pollutions which are in the world through lust, and maintained a fair and honourable character for the decency and morality of their behaviour, but even for the chief of sinners. Iniquities that have been as scar-

* [illegible]

let, may be made white as snow, and those that have been red as crimson, may be as wool.

The almighty power of Christ, as a Saviour, extends to the "sanctification of our natures," as well as to the justification of our persons before God; for he is made of God unto us, not only righteousness, but sanctification, in order to his being made complete redemption.—When our own most vigorous efforts fail us, and prove too feeble to break those cords in sunder, by which we are natually enslaved and disgraced; when we find that to attempt a reformation of our corrupt habits and exorbitant passions, is but as if the Ethiopian should labour to change his skin, or the leopard his spots; by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, we may be made free from the law of sin and death, and be formed by his grace to such a temper, as may render our souls a delightful habitation for a holy God. As by his healing touch in the days of his flesh he removed an inveterate leprosy, which no human methods of cure could reach; so can he diffuse purity and health throughout all the soul, if he put forth his gracious hand, and say, to the most polluted and degenerate creature, I will, be thou clean. Again,

The Lord Jesus Christ is able to save his people "from all the artifice and power of the prince of darkness."—If that crooked serpent attempt to insinuate himself into the hearts of Christ's people by the most artful methods, he can trace all his winding ways; and as all the treasures of divine wisdom are hid in him, he knows how to turn all the most wily practices of this experienced deceiver into his own confusion; to detect every laboured stratagem, and from the most dangerous snares to teach such useful lessons of holy prudence, as shall tend to the future security, as well as the immediate deliverance, of his servants.—Or should Satan put on the form of a roaring lion, to throw their souls into a trembling horror, it shall appear in this respect, as in others, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. He who has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly on the cross, will still assert the conquest he has gained. And it shall appear, to the everlasting disappointment and shame of all the host of hell, that it was not a vain boast, but the words of eternal wisdom, as well as invariable faithfulness, when he said, I will give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Which leads me to add further,

That Christ is able to save to the uttermost, as "he can enable his people to persevere to the end of their course, even in the midst of the most formidable opposition."—The state of a Christian is indeed a warfare, and he had need to be completely armed for the combat: but he may depend on being victorious in it, under the conduct of the great Captain of his salvation, who can teach his hands to war, and his fingers to fight, so that even a bow of steel should be broken by his naturally feeble arms. Jesus, his great covenant-head, to whom the Spirit is given without measure, can pour it out in so plentiful a manner, that were a career of labour, or of suffering, arduous and hazardous as that of the blessed apostle Paul, to be opened before the weakest saint, he might say, with such composure and intrepidity as Paul did, I can do all things, or am sufficient for all, through Christ that strengtheneth me; and might repeat the triumph which he has taught us, What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Yea,

Our blessed Redeemer is able to save to the uttermost, as "he can support his people in death, and receive their spirits to a world of glory."—In that awful hour, when the dearest of their human friends stand around them with tears of unavailing pity, he can command deliverance for them; he can support them, though flesh and heart fail, by the lively views of approaching glory, while he strengthens the eye of faith, to see, as it were, heaven opened, and himself standing at the right hand of God, to receive the departing spirit. So that the Christian may justly make his exit from off the stage of life, with those graceful words of the apostle, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day. And when he hath shot the awful gulf, and is cut off from any further commerce with earth and its inhabitants, he still finds himself in a province of the Redeemer's empire, and feels the important support of that hand, which bears the keys of death and the unseen world. And, to add no more on this head,

The Lord Jesus Christ is able to save his people to the uttermost, as "he can raise their bodies from the dissolution of the grave, and conduct their complete persons to the regions of eternal felicity."—He is the resurrection and the life; and though death be the king of terrors, he knows and owns the conquest of the King of glory, who will at length swallow him up in victory; so that there shall be no more remainder of his power, than if he had never invaded any of the subjects of Christ. Their triumphant prince will verify the heroic words of Moses to the Egyptian tyrant, in a far more exalted sense: There shall not a hoof be left behind. The sleeping dust of his people, wherever it be dispersed, is still within the ken of his discerning eye, and the reach of his almighty hand; and when the appointed hour is come, all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; and so illustrious a change shall

pass on their vile bodies, that they shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to that mighty power whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. When this noble work of his power shall be accomplished, and in it the schemes of his love completed, with regard to all his elect, then shall he be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Experience shall then most amply attest, what such a variety of other evidences is now assuring us of; and the whole redeemed world shall ring with the joyful acknowledgment, That he is able to save to the uttermost, in the most complete manner, in the most perfect degree.

I know all these thoughts are common and plain; yet I have insisted thus largely upon them, because they are the great foundations of our faith and hope: and had I been capable of furnishing out any curious and abstruse speculations on the subject, I am sure, that when laid in the balance with these sacred and important truths, they would have been lighter than a feather, weighed against talents of gold. But I would proceed to observe,

3. That when it is said that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, it may further imply, "that the efficacy of his saving grace continues the same, throughout all succeeding ages."

Some very celebrated commentators have taken the phrase in this sense, and rendered it, He is able always to save;* and it must be confessed, at least, that the following connexion evidently proves this to be implied. For the apostle had before observed, that Christ had an unchangeable priesthood, that admitted of no successor; and, in the close of the verse he argues his ability to save, from his ever living to make intercession; and therefore it cannot be improper here to touch on this thought, in whichever part of the text we suppose it chiefly to be suggested.†

Our Lord Jesus Christ was able to save from the beginning. His energy wrought from the date of the first promise to our fallen parents, as his saving power and grace were indeed the foundation of it. And still, from that day to the present, has the seed of the woman been bruising the serpent's head in many instances, which have been as preludes to the complete expected triumph.

By faith in him, under the more obscure discoveries before his incarnation, the elders obtained a good report, and died in expectation of a better resurrection. Their faith embraced him, according to the degree in which he was revealed; they saw his day, in a distant prospect, and rejoiced; and were received to the divine favour here, and to eternal happiness above, in regard to a sacrifice which was yet to be offered, and a righteousness which was yet to be wrought out.

He appeared to be able to save, when he dwelt on earth in a tabernacle of clay. Still he mingled the dignity and power of a God, with the abasements and infirmities of a mortal man; asserting to himself the divine prerogative of forgiving sins; speaking of a glorious resurrection, and eternal life, as his gift; representing himself as the head-stone of the corner, on whom was fixed all the stress of men's eternal interests; and as the awful judge, before whose tribunal the greatest of the children of men should stand, and from whom all should receive that decisive sentence, which should fix them in final happiness or despair. Nay, even in his deepest humiliation, on the cursed tree, a ray of divine glory broke through that dark cloud of infamy with which he was then surrounded; and amidst all the scorn and rage of insulting enemies, who were reproaching him as a wretch abandoned by God and man, he speaks from the cross, as from the throne; and, as the King of heaven, takes upon him to dispose of seats in paradise, and to promise life and glory, to one who was then sharing with him in the agonies of death, and the ignominy of crucifixion; Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Now, if he were thus mighty to save, when he dwelt in so humble a form, when he passed through so calamitous a scene; how much more evidently is he so, amidst all the magnificence of his exaltation in the highest heaven; whither he has ascended as a glorious conqueror, having led captivity captive, and received gifts for men! Can we imagine, that an abode of seventeen hundred years at the right hand of the Majesty on high, has enervated his arm, that he cannot save, or rendered his ear heavy, that he cannot hear? It were a thought most evidently absurd! We may therefore confidently assure ourselves that he is, at this moment, as able to exert an almighty power for the salvation of his people, as he was on that illustrious day, when he poured out the Spirit on his disciples at the feast of Pentecost; or that in which he appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus, with the glories of heaven new upon him, even with a lustre exceeding that of the meridian sun, and in a moment subdued his stubborn heart, and transformed him from a persecutor to an apostle.

Still is our Redeemer able to save, and still shall he continue to be so. When we and our children are laid in the dust of death, he shall be the joy and

* Christus non tantum potest, quamdiu mortalis erit, sed et nunc continuo potest salvare. *Estius*, in loc.

† I cannot think it easy, or necessary, to determine which of these two senses of saving to the uttermost is to be preferred: it is certain, both the thoughts are comprehended in the verse. If, by saving to the uttermost, we understand saving perpetually, the completeness of the deliverance is comprehended in the word save; if we prefer the other sense, of saving completely, that comprehends the perpetuity of it, which is most expressly asserted in the following words. I think Bremmius justly unites both, when he explains it, εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, perfecte, et in perpetuum; and I have the pleasure to find, since I wrote this, that the great and excellent Dr. Owen explains the text in this extent, almost in the very words I had used above, which therefore I shall not transcribe. See Owen on the Heb. vol. iii. p. 235 and 238.

confidence of a new race of believers; and, to the very end of time, one generation shall arise and declare his righteousness to another, and their righteousness shall still retain its original value. This foundation of God shall stand sure, though rocks moulder into dust, and the mountains are removed out of their place; yea, when the sun shall fade away in its orb, and all the golden lamps of these lower heavens are extinguished, the sun of glory shall shine forth with undiminished radiancy: and if the work of rescue and deliverance cease, it will be only because danger and misery shall no longer be known, and the very last of his enemies is completely subdued. Yet still his victorious energy shall continue the same, and it shall be as true of his power as of his fidelity and grace, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

I have thus endeavoured to show you what we are to understand by this phrase of Christ's being able to save to the uttermost:—it implies the danger and misery of those to whom he is proposed as a Saviour;—and evidently expresses a power of working out complete deliverance,—and the continuance of that power throughout all generations.

I shall conclude this head, and the present discourse, with two very obvious reflections on what I have already delivered. How great is that salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ hath wrought out for us!—and how much are we all concerned very seriously to inquire after it!

1. How great is that salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ hath wrought out!

We have been taking a survey of many important branches of it; and is it not most evidently worthy of the title that the apostle gives it, when he styles it, "So great salvation?" So great indeed it is, that if we compare with it the most illustrious salvations which God wrought out for Israel of old, far from being eclipsed, it will rather be brightened by the comparison; and it will appear how justly he might say, I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour: none that, compared with me, deserves that important name. It was a great salvation which God wrought out for Israel by Moses, when he broke the power of Egypt by repeated blows; when he led the chosen tribes through the Red sea, and through the desert, guided by the pillar of cloud and fire, and supplied by heavenly bread, and water streaming from the flinty rock. But the salvation of Christ is ten thousand times more important. A pious Israelite under the rod of an Egyptian oppressor, might have risen in holy contemplation and devotion, from the brick-kiln or the dungeon to the presence of God as his Father, to a liberty of soul before him, which would have rendered his servitude happier than Pharaoh's royalty: or should the sword of the tyrant have taken away his life, he would have found the stroke a blessed release, to a state of complete and eternal glory. But our souls, in this state of apostasy, were enslaved to Satan and to sin; we were incapable of spiritual pleasure; we were lost to all future hope; till Jesus appeared, and seasonably came to break the iron yoke of our fatal bondage; to conduct us by his Spirit through all the perplexities and dangers of the wilderness: and, in our way to the heavenly Canaan, to feed us with the true bread from heaven, and to give us that water of life, of which, if a man drink, he shall thirst no more. Have we not infinite reason to say, This deliverer is worthy of more glory than Moses!—It was a great salvation that was wrought by Aaron, when the plague was broke out against Israel; when it was running through their ranks, and laying them, in a moment, in the dust of death: and that anointed priest of the Lord, by divine instigation, took a censer in his hand, and placing himself between the dead and the living, put a stop to the spreading destruction, and made an acceptable atonement for the sins of the people. But how much more prevalent is the atonement of Jesus, our great High Priest, who arose, and stood in the breach, to turn away the wrath of God from us; the incense of whose intercession not only, like Aaron's, procures the reprieve of a mortal life, but the favour of God and eternal happiness!—But neither Aaron nor Moses completed the purposes of the divine favour to Israel his people; and it was in some respect a greater salvation than either of these, that Joshua effected, when he led them through Jordan to the land of promise; when he vanquished the kings of Canaan and their armies; when he stopped the sun in its career, to give them light to pursue their conquest; till at last he divided the whole country to them for an inheritance, even the land flowing with milk and honey. But this was only a type of the true Joshua, who, having himself conquered our enemies alone, and trodden them down like grapes in the wine-press, causes us to share in the fruit of his victory by assigning us a settlement in a better country, that is, a heavenly. Were I to speak of the succeeding salvations under their judges and their kings, I should, by mentioning a succession of deliverances, intimate the comparative imperfection of each. In the land of their inheritance Israel sinned against the Lord: and they were chastened there, and oppressed by one enemy after another; till, at length, the whole nation of them were dispossessed of it, and fell by the sword, or were carried into captivity. But it is the glory of Jesus, our great deliverer, to perfect his work, conducting his people to a world of everlasting security, from which they can never be expelled, and in which they shall never be molested. Let them the rod of Moses, and the censer of Aaron,

and the sword of Joshua, and the sceptre of David, bow to the superior glories of the cross of Christ, and be laid down in humble reverence at the footstool of his throne. And let our souls adore Jesus the Almighty Saviour, and be daily more solicitous to secure an interest in that salvation which he has introduced. Which leads me to add,

2. How important is it, that we all seriously inquire after this mighty Saviour!

You have all frequently heard of him. Let conscience say, whether you have diligently inquired into the credentials he brings, into the offer he makes, into your own concern in such proposals as these. I fear, many of you are conscious to yourselves that you have neglected this great salvation. Unhappy creatures, how will you escape, if you persist in such a neglect?

Yet still, my friends, after all that is past, there will (if God continue our lives a few sabbaths longer) be another opportunity of reviewing these things at large. I am more fully to lay before you the proof that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, the efficacy of his intercession for this blessed purpose, and the character of those who may expect this salvation from him. Let me bespeak the serious attention of all, and particularly of the younger part of my auditors. Let passion, and business, and every worldly vanity, be silent; and let every one that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit is still saying to the churches; what it is the very life of sinners to know, the duty of every faithful minister often to repeat, and the wisdom of the most established saints often to recollect.

SERMON XIII.

THE PROOFS OF CHRIST'S ABILITY TO SAVE.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Though the nature of man be sadly degenerated, and we are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us; yet there are some remainders of human and social affection, which seem so wrought into the constitution of our soul, as to be as inseparable from us as our being. From hence the mind feels itself delighted with the survey of benevolent actions, no less necessarily, than the eye with the finest prospect, or the ear with the most harmonious music. Nor can it be merely a regard to our own interest, which adds a relish to such accounts; for we delight to hear them, though the scene be laid in the most distant age, or country. Nay, fictions of this kind have a secret charm, which it is not easy to resist; and the pleasure is real, where we know the occasion of it to be only imaginary.

But sure it may be said with the utmost propriety, that as eye hath not seen, nor ear by credible report heard, so neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, any other display of benevolence and goodness, even comparable to that which the gospel presents. All the celebrated exploits of real or fictitious heroes are not worth the mention, when compared with those of the great Captain of our salvation. Were we to contemplate it merely in idea, and to set aside all the evidences of it, and all the remembrance of our own concern in it; yet even then how delightful would the contemplation be! Behold the Son of God, a person to whom the mightiest potentate on earth, the most exalted angel in heaven, is but as a worm, divesting himself of celestial glory, putting on the form of a wretched mortal, and submitting to death in the most horrible shape! For what? to free some single nation from civil bondage? to humble some proud tyrant of the earth? to restore an oppressed people to liberty and peace? or to form uncultivated savages to discipline, arts, and social life? These are great things for a man to do; these may render the name of a prince immortal. But the Lord of glory descends for nobler purposes: to conquer and destroy the tyrant of hell, to rescue from his cruel servitude an innumerable multitude of all nations, and people, and kindreds, and tongues; to form their grovelling and degenerate minds to the most useful knowledge, to the noblest sentiments, and the most exalted pleasures; to bring them to the glorious liberty and inestimable privileges of the children of God; and, finally, to fix them for ever in a state of honour and happiness, from whence they might look down with superior contempt on whatever earth can afford, most grateful to our senses, most amusing to our imaginations, most transporting to our passions.

I have already told you that all this, and much more than this, is comprehended in the phrase of Christ's being able to save to the uttermost. But is all this only a pleasing dream, an agreeable amusement of thought? Is it only what our fancy may paint, and our hearts might wish? Is it a conjecture built on dark probabilities, or precarious reports? No; through the divine goodness we can say, that the proofs of this salvation are as convincing, as its design is amiable, and its blessings important. We proceed therefore,

Secondly, To prove the truth we have explained; or to show you how evident it is, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able thus to save to the uttermost, and to complete the salvation of every believer, in every succeeding age of the church and world:

This is an evangelical mystery, which the deepest reach of human reason would not have been able to discover; and which, when discovered, in this corrupt state, it is too unwilling to receive. Should I take the proof in its utmost extent, it would be necessary to divide it into two grand branches; first,—to show that the gospel revelation is true; and then,—that admitting its truth, the almighty power of Christ to save follows by a most easy and necessary consequence.

The former of these is so extensive a subject, that I shall choose to handle it apart;*—and to insist at present on the latter. I hope it will not be thought an unreasonable thing, when addressing an auditory of professed Christians, now to take it for granted that the gospel is divine. Allowing it to be so, it will indeed be an easy thing to prove the ability of Christ to save. And did I aim at nothing but abstract argument, the proof might be unanswerably despatched in a very few words; for as the whole tenor of the gospel supposes it, so a multitude of scriptures directly assert it; and indeed the very words of the text may alone serve most firmly to establish it. But, my brethren, I cannot be contented with your cold and lifeless assent, to so vital and so important a doctrine. I would prove it, not merely to your understandings, but your consciences. To affect these, various topics of argument are suggested in the word of truth. I will now endeavour to trace them. O that they might be attended with such demonstration of the Spirit, that every trembling awakened sinner may be encouraged to venture his soul on this almighty Saviour; and that every Christian may be quickened to a more delightful acquiescence in him, and being strong in faith may give more abundant glory to God through Christ!

I would argue then, that our Lord Jesus Christ will evidently appear thus able to save, if we consider,—that he was commissioned by the Father for this great work;—that he appears in his person and character eminently fitted for it;—that he has done and borne all that we can imagine necessary to effect it;—that he has been approved by the Father, as having completely answered this glorious design;—that, in consequence of all, he has made such overtures and promises, as imply a full power of accomplishing it;—and that, as a convincing specimen of this power, he has already begun and carried on the salvation of a multitude of souls, whose experience confirms this comfortable truth.

If these particulars be duly considered in their connexion with each other, I am persuaded nothing more will be necessary, to prove, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost; nor could we so much as wish for clearer evidence of it, though it be the great basis of our eternal hopes: yet, because it is so, I hope you will pardon my indulging what might otherwise seem a redundancy of proof.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was "appointed by God to the work of a Saviour," and therefore is able to perform it to the uttermost.

We are sure, that the witness of God is according to truth; and this is his testimony, that he hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. As soon as ever the first intimations of grace and mercy were given to sinful creatures, their eyes were directed to him, as the great seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head. In succeeding ages, he is spoken of as God's servant, in whom he delighted; as his elect, in whom his soul was well pleased; and that, particularly, while he considered him as the person, who should be given for a covenant to the people, and for a light to the Gentiles. And, to show how great a stress was to be laid upon him, he is sometimes represented as made, by the immediate interposition of God, the head-stone of the corner, though he had been rejected by those whose office and profession it was to build up the church. Nay, he is elsewhere described as the foundation-stone, which God himself had laid in Sion, elect, and precious; a sure and tried stone, so that he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. When he was coming into the world, the name of Jesus was given him, on purpose to show, that he was to save his people from their sins: at his entrance on his public ministry, he was declared by a voice from heaven to be God's beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased: and through the whole course of it, he was sealed by the Spirit in an extraordinary manner, as the person who was to feed hungry souls with the meat which endureth to everlasting life.

Now surely, if we were capable of going no further than this, we might rest here with great satisfaction. The wisdom of God cannot err. He is the sovereign Judge of the fitness of ends and of means; and where his judgment is declared, we may acquiesce in it without further debate. Since he appears to have fixed Christ as a nail in a sure place, we need not fear to hang upon him even the vast weight of our eternal interest. And we might cheerfully have done it, even though God had concealed from us many of those glories of his person, which he has in some measure discovered in Scripture. Nevertheless, so far as they are there revealed, it is our happiness to know, and our wisdom attentively to consider them; which reminds me of adding,

2. That, so far as we are capable of judging, "the Lord Jesus Christ appears in his person and character, perfectly fit to accomplish the work to which he is thus divinely appointed," and to save his people even to the uttermost.

* Serm. XIX. XX. XXI.

For the illustration of this great argument, it will be proper for us humbly to view him, in his glorious appearance under the title of the great Emanuel, God with us in our nature: and to regard him as God manifested in human flesh. For the mysterious union of the divine and human natures in the person of our blessed Redeemer, is that which renders him the secure confidence of our souls, an anchor both sure and stedfast.

Even in the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is that which appears admirably suited to the blessed design of our redemption. The apostle tells us, that forasmuch as the children, whom he undertook to conduct to glory, are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same. He was indeed bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and thus became capable of yielding that obedience to his Father's law, and making that atonement to his justice, which had otherwise been impossible. It was necessary that he should have somewhat to offer: he therefore assumed a mortal body, that he might offer it as a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour.

And that it might be so, it was absolutely requisite, that he should be an immaculate lamb. He was therefore such a victim, and such a high priest, as became us, being perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Nor was he only free from every degree of stain and pollution, but by his own voluntary consent was made under a law, to which he was by no necessity of nature subject; that he might bring in a complete and everlasting righteousness, by the knowledge of which (having borne their sins) he might justify many.

Again, as he was perfectly fit for this great office with respect to the holiness and purity of his character; so he was likewise completely furnished for it by the most plentiful effusions of the Holy Spirit, which was given to him without measure, and poured out upon him as the oil of gladness, with which he was anointed above any of those, who by divine grace were appointed to be the humble partners of his glories. It not only descended on him, and resided in him; but from him it streamed forth, as water from a fountain. He was appointed to baptize his people with the Holy Ghost and with fire, with a spirit of wisdom, of zeal, and of holiness, as well as with that miraculous energy which wrought in so powerful a manner in the first of his servants, whom he sent forth to publish his gospel in the world.

But is this all that we can say of our Redeemer's fitness to answer the glorious character under which he appeared, and to effect the important work he undertook;—that he was an excellent and holy man, and furnished with an uncommon degree, both of the miraculous gifts and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit? No, Christians, we are very thankful, that we have not so learned Christ. We have been taught to adore him, as over all, God blessed for ever; as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; as Jehovah our righteousness; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and took upon himself no higher character, than what he had a right to claim, when he spake of himself, in his appearances to the saints under the Old Testament, as the living and true God, as a person properly divine. Here, my brethren, here is the most glorious evidence of his being able to save to the uttermost. We should dread the curse pronounced on the man that maketh flesh his arm, should we repose all the trust and confidence of our souls on created power and goodness, wisdom and fidelity, appearing in a human, or we may add, even in an angelic, form. But how cheerfully may we trust the merit of his atonement, and the efficacy of his grace, when we consider him as that glorious and wonderful person, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily? Permit me on this occasion to resume some of the heads of my former discourse, and briefly to show how they are illustrated by this important thought.

Well may our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour; for surely in his name we may courageously set up our banners, against the various legions of surrounding enemies. Let conscience marshal our sins in order before us, as a mighty army, in the most dreadful array; let it charge us home with the exceeding sinfulness of each; and with that dreadful eloquence, which is peculiar to itself, aggravate each as a kind of infinite evil: there cannot be a malignity in any of them, or in all, greater than the efficacy of that sacred blood, which was poured forth to expiate them. Had it been merely the blood of a whole hecatomb of bulls or of goats, of innocent men, or even of holy angels, should they for such a purpose have become incarnate; we might still perhaps have been ready to object, Where is the proportion between the offence on one hand, and the satisfaction on the other? But we see it here, when we consider that the church of God is redeemed with his own blood. In that blood, we behold the honours of the divine law most gloriously displayed, and the rights of his government so strenuously asserted, that we can easily believe, that neither will be injured, by pardoning the most aggravated offences with a view to such an atonement.

Let Satan appear in every form of artifice, or of rage, possessed, as he is, of such formidable remainders of angelic knowledge, or angelic strength. We know, that by Christ were all things created, whether visible or invisible, not excepting thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. So that

all the knowledge, and all the power which this prince of hell could ever boast, even in his primeval state, when a shining cherub in the regions of glory, was only a feeble reflection of the glories of his great original. His hand formed this crooked serpent; and how easily can his hand crush him, and enable even the weakest of his servants to trample him under their feet!

Storms of passion are sometimes rising, and the floods of corrupt nature are often beating fiercely on the soul; but he that stills the foaming and the roaring of the sea, can command this tempest into a calm. He that created us at first, can create us anew, can deliver us from every evil work, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

Though difficulties, and dangers, and death itself lie in the way to our complete salvation, a divine power can arm us against all. While the Spirit of the Lord is with us, though destitute of all other might, vast mountains shall spread themselves into a plain before us. Destruction itself shall hear his voice, and nature shall a second time rise out of its chaos, to wear a brighter face of order and of beauty. For God brings down to the grave, and raises again. And since Christ is the Son of God by a generation which none can fully declare, by a union which none can fully comprehend; we may easily believe, that those who sleep in the dust shall come forth at his call, and that nothing shall be wanting to the everlasting security and complete happiness of those, whom he will condescend to own as his people.

You will not blame me that I have insisted thus copiously on the argument taken from the divinity of our Redeemer's person, to prove the extent of his power to save; considering the stress he himself lays upon it, in those memorable words,—I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand: my Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one; his omnipotence is therefore mine; and in that my sheep are secure.

3. "The Lord Jesus Christ has done all that we can imagine necessary, in order to effect and secure our salvation;" and therefore we may conclude that he is able to save to the uttermost.

You have heard something of the glories of the Redeemer's person; and I trust you are not entirely strangers to the riches of his grace. I hope I may say, with the apostle, You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. You know that he emptied himself of that original glory, which he wore in the heavenly world, and took upon him the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man. You know, that he submitted to the inconveniences and sorrows of a mortal life, and at last, to the agonies of an accursed death, to atone the injured justice of God, to purchase forfeited happiness for his people, to procure for them the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, and to furnish out those endearing considerations, whereby their hearts are constrained to holy obedience, more effectually than by all the terrors of the Lord; constrained, perhaps I may say, more powerfully, as well as more sweetly, than by any arguments drawn merely from a view to their own interest, and the prospects of a future reward: for love is strong as death, and in some remarkable instances has proved much stronger. I might add, that having finished his embassy on earth, and closed the scene of his labours and sufferings, he at length returned into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us; to present before him the blood which he shed on the cross, and in virtue of it to make continual intercession for us; using all his interest in the court of heaven, in favour of his unworthy servants on earth. But this would lead me into another branch of my subject, which I must reserve to a future discourse. And I content myself for the present with observing, that though we could not by the light of unassisted reason have known all these things to be necessary, yet now they are discovered to us, we find them to be very fit and reasonable; and cannot imagine that any thing more is requisite, completely to accomplish the work of a Saviour. But, blessed be God, we have a still surer foundation for our confidence here: for if any should urge, (what is indeed true,) that we are not competent judges of the rights of God the supreme governor, we may with great pleasure answer,

4. "That the Father hath declared his full approbation of what Christ has done under the character of a Saviour," and thereby given us the most glorious proof that he is indeed able to save to the uttermost.

His power to save, as Mediator, is evidently founded on the efficacy of that atonement which he presented to the Father for the sins of his people. We wonder not if his disciples were under some alarm, while he hung on the cross, and appeared to an eye of sense incapable of delivering himself; while they heard his insulting enemies cry out, He saved others, himself he cannot save. We wonder not, that while his sacred body slept in the dust of death, the faith of his servants was weak, and their fears strong; so that they said, with a trembling uncertainty, We trusted this had been he that should have saved Israel. But God raised Christ from the dead, and with him he raised our hope and our confidence. Thus he declared him to be the Son of God with power, and showed that the demands of his justice were satisfied, since otherwise his

prisoner could not have been released. Nay, in order to declare it in the most convincing manner, God appointed that his Son's resurrection should be attended with circumstances of peculiar honour; an angel descending from heaven to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; and two angels being employed to wait there, to give his dejected followers the first welcome notices of this great event.

Nor must I by any means omit the mention of that very illustrious and important circumstance, his ascension into heaven in the presence of his apostles; a cloud, as a triumphant chariot, receiving him out of their sight; and angels at the same time descending to assure them, that he who was then rising to mansions of glory, should another day appear conspicuous to every eye, when he should return under the character of universal judge.

His being admitted to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and sending down, upon his intercession there, the miraculous endowments of the Spirit on the apostles, at the day of Pentecost, are incontestable and everlasting evidences of the divine acceptance, and therefore of his saving power. And surely we cannot entertain a doubt of it, when we consider, that he is gone into heaven, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him; and is there constituted, by the designation of the Father, head over all things to the church.

5. "I might further argue the ability of Christ to save, from the gracious promises of salvation which he has made either in his own person, or by those who had a commission from him."

You know those important and encouraging passages so well, that it will not be needful for me largely to insist upon them. You know how plainly they express an extent of grace, reaching even to the most enormous sinners; and therefore, how clearly they imply a correspondent extent of power. He invited all that labour and are heavy laden to come to him; and promised on their application to him, that he would give them rest. He proclaimed in a numerous assembly, on a day of public festivity, that every thirsty soul should be most cordially welcome to come unto him and drink; and assures his hearers elsewhere, that he will by no means cast out any who should come. The apostle Peter declares, that by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, and consequently not by the law of innocence, which left no room for repentance. And St. Paul had his authority to assure us, not only that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom himself was chief; but he adds, that it was for this very cause that he obtained mercy, that in him first, (or rather, in him as the chief) Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to such as should hereafter believe. Now let me entreat you to consider what I have already said of the dignity of his person, the glory of his kingdom, and the sanctity of his character; and then say, whether infidelity itself can suggest so unworthy a thought as this, that Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of glory, the faithful and true witness, should ever mock and delude wretched mortals, by the offers of a salvation which nevertheless he knows he is not able to bestow? That be far from thee, O gracious Lord! and be that base and absurd suspicion as far from us! But to add no more on this head,

6. "We may very surely and comfortably argue, from the instances in which the saving power of Christ hath already been displayed, that he is able to save to the uttermost."

There is nothing that strikes the mind of a wise man like fact. Experiments do sometimes strengthen our assent to those propositions, which have been demonstrated to us, even in methods of mathematical proof: at least they impress the mind with a peculiar kind of conviction, which nothing else is capable of giving. Now, blessed be God, there is a cloud of witnesses to attest this sacred truth, that Christ has begun and carried on the salvation of a multitude of souls.

Let us look back to the history of former ages, and see how many, who were once sunk into the lowest degeneracy, have been renewed to a divine life by the gospel of Christ. What multitudes, who were once the reproach of our nature, have been washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit communicated from him. Reflect on the former and the latter conquests of divine grace; and you will see, that even the chief of sinners have not been beyond its reach.

And I persuade myself the subject will appear to be further confirmed by the experience of some who hear me this day. Are there not many of you, my friends, who find a most happy alteration in yourselves, when compared with what you once were? Are there not many whose eyes, once spiritually blind, have been opened, and their deaf ears unstopped? May I not say to you, my brethren, as Paul to the Ephesians, You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins? For that it was indeed his work, that it was wrought by his gospel and by his Spirit, you are as sure, as that it has been wrought at all.

Nay, to advance yet further in this argument, let faith unveil the eye of the soul, and help it to look forward to a world invisible to sense. View it in the light thrown upon it by Scripture, of whose divine authority you are so abundantly assured; and what a delightful spectacle will open itself

there! What shining forms of holiness, and of joy! what an innumerable triumphant multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues! How loud do their praises sound! With what unutterable rapture do their souls overflow, too big to be expressed even by the language of heaven! Now if it be asked, as it once was, Who are these, that are clothed in white robes? and from whence do they come? the answer may be given as there, They are come out of great tribulation: They were once the inhabitants of earth, heirs to the infirmities and sorrows of this mortal state; and the most excellent of them, even they who sacrificed their lives in the defence of the truth, and sealed it with their blood, even they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They owe it to his atonement and righteousness, that they are now holy and glorious creatures; and each of them will be an everlasting monument of his power, as well as of his grace. And surely when we view them in the joys and glories of the intermediate state, we may well assure ourselves, that he who has saved them thus far, is able to save them to the uttermost: and we can no more doubt, whether he can raise their bodies from the tomb, than we could have doubted, whether he could untie the linen bands in which Lazarus was held, when we had seen him loosing the bands of death, and animating his corpse after it had begun to putrify.

Nothing more can be requisite to prove the truth. I persuade myself, you are convinced, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost; and, I hope, you feel your hearts impressed, as well as your judgments satisfied. But I cannot dismiss the subject, till I have added a few reflections upon it.

Now I shall omit some, which might naturally arise from what I have already said, because they will occur afterwards with greater advantage; and shall content myself with suggesting these two, which I recommend to your further consideration.—How great is the danger of those, that reject and affront this Almighty Saviour!—And how groundless are the fears of those, that have ventured their souls upon him!

1. How great is the danger and misery of those, that reject and affront such an Almighty Saviour!

If he is able to save, he is also able to destroy; to break his enemies with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel! Alas, sinners, though your treatment of Christ be so odious, as to move the astonishment, as well as the indignation, of all that view him and you, in a just, that is, in a Scripture, light; yet my heart is both grieved and terrified for you, when I think what the end of your opposition to him will be. Unhappy creatures! what will you do, when he rises up? and when he judges, what will you answer him? When he proceeds to execute his sentence, how will you escape, or resist, or endure it? Were it merely the indignation of a man like yourselves, you might either oppose it or bear it. But, alas, how insupportable will be the vengeance of an almighty arm! If it could alone bring salvation, it will alone be able to bring calamity and ruin. Yet were auxiliary force necessary, all the legions of heaven would appear armed against you, under the command of Jesus their Lord. If you do indeed believe your Bibles, I wonder that you do not tremble, when you read, or hear, of that dreadful day, in which you are to be so intimately concerned; when it is expressly said, that the most insolent of his enemies shall flee before him in wild and helpless consternation; when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, as well as others of meaner ranks, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? What a dreadful emphasis is there in these words! How plainly do they intimate, that they would prefer the crush of a mountain to the more insupportable weight of his wrath; and that they will have more hope of moving rocks by their entreaties, than of prevailing on their then inflexible Judge? And will your hearts endure, or your hands be strong, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll, and mountains and islands shall be removed? Were the least of the servants of Christ this day addressing himself to an assembly of the greatest princes and potentates on earth, he might be bold to say, in the name of this King of glory, Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with humble fear, and rejoice in your own dignity, or in the offers of his grace, with trembling: kiss the Son of God, in token of your ready submission to his government, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way in a moment, when his wrath is kindled against you. And this faithful and necessary warning would I now address to you, adding, as the Psalmist doth, Blessed are all they that put their trust in him; which leads us to the other reflection,

2. How unreasonable are the fears of those, that have ventured their souls upon Christ!

Too frequently does the humble Christian, in the view of all his difficulties, his dangers, and his enemies, secretly borrow the words of David in his melancholy frame, and say, I shall one day perish by their hand: but as the anointing oil of God was upon him, he preserved him in all, and made him victorious over all: and it was an emblem of the victory of the Christian, under the conduct of Christ, and the anointings of his Spirit. It is very dishonourable to Christ, as well as very uncomfort-

able to ourselves, to be continually terrified and alarmed, while under the care of such a helper, who declares himself the Lord mighty to save; and the devil gains a great advantage against the soul, by throwing it into such panic terrors: the succours of reason are then betrayed, and the nobler relief of faith in some measure intercepted. And therefore let the particulars I have been now illustrating be often recollected, and frequently plead them with your own hearts. "O my soul, is there any thing so peculiar in thy case, that he who has saved so many millions, cannot save thee? Has Satan acquired any new power, since Jesus conquered him on the cross? or can I imagine, that hell shall now begin to triumph over heaven, and the Almighty Shepherd be at length repulsed by these infernal wolves, so as to stand by a helpless spectator, while they are destroying his sheep? How blasphemous and how detestable a thought! My soul, thou art in the hands of Christ; and by a new act of faith, I do this moment commit thee to him, as able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him." Nor is that additional encouragement light and inconsiderable, which may be derived from the concluding words, Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. But this great argument will be handled at large in the following discourse.

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST'S SAVING POWER ARGUED FROM HIS INTERCESSION.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

As we have already endeavoured both to open and to confirm this great truth, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, we are now,

Thirdly, to consider the particular argument which the apostle suggests in proof of it, in the words of the text, which is drawn from his ever living to make *intercession* for his people.

In handling this, it will be evidently proper, first, to state the doctrine of Christ's intercession; and then, to consider how it tends to demonstrate the extent of his saving power. What little time may remain, when these are despatched, will be employed as usual in a few reflections.

I. I shall endeavour to state the Scripture doctrine of Christ's intercession.

Now the substance of this doctrine appears to me to be this. Christ's intercession for his people, is his pleading for them in heaven,—under the character of their great High Priest;—which he always does virtually, by appearing before God, in that body in which he suffered;—and which he always intends to present before him in this view,—in favour of each of his people:—and this intercession, whether it ever be, or be not, vocal,—is always conducted in a manner becoming the dignity of our exalted Redeemer, and is abundantly effectual for the security, acceptance, and final happiness of all his servants.

Permit me a little more distinctly to open each of these particulars; and the rather as some of them must be acknowledged to have their difficulties; and as it is fit we should settle some rational and digested notions of a doctrine, of such daily use and such great importance.

1. "The word * which is here made use of to express Christ's intercession, does properly signify pleading."

It is evident from the use of it in other Greek writers, and especially those of the New Testament, that it imports "an earnest address to one person on account of another:" and according to the particle with which it is joined, it may express the action of a friend or of an enemy; as a person may in our own language be said to plead for or against another. Thus, on the one hand, Elijah is said to have made intercession to God against Israel; and the Jews to have dealt, or, (as the original word is,) to have interceded, with Festus, that Paul might be put to death. On the other hand, Paul exhorts Timothy, that intercessions be made for all men; and elsewhere speaks of the Spirit's helping our infirmities in prayer, and so in effect making intercession for us, *i. e.* as he renders our prayers, both as to the matter and manner of them, agreeable to the will of God. In this sense also, in the same chapter, as well as in the text, it is said, that Christ being risen maketh intercession for us, *i. e.* he pleads our cause with the Father. And St. John likewise encourages us with this thought: If any man sin, (as there is not a just man upon earth who does not,) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; who is the propitiation for our sins, by that expiatory sacrifice on which he pleads; in sweet harmony with those memorable words of Isaiah, He poured out his soul unto death, and in consequence of that, he made intercession for the transgressors: to which words, it is probable, that Philo may refer, when speaking of the Logos, or Word, he says, among many other surprising things, "He is an intercessor for mortal man with the immortal God."† You see then, that Christ's intercession signifies his pleading the cause of his

* [illegible]
† [illegible]

people with the Father, and therefore must import a part of his work as mediator, and in its fullest extent comprehends his office, both as an advocate in the court, and a priest in the temple. But I add,

2. That in this connexion, "it is evidently spoken of as a branch of his priestly office, typified by the ministration of Aaron and his sons, in the Jewish tabernacle.

This, as I formerly showed you,* the context very plainly proves: under the law there were many priests, &c. but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save, &c. and then it immediately follows, For such an High Priest became us. And a very few verses after, the apostle observes, that the sum of what he had here spoken was this; we have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. So that, seeing Christ's intercession in our text is so evidently a sacerdotal or priestly act, we may, no doubt, be assisted in our conceptions of it, by considering that of the Jewish priests, to which it is compared. Now you know, it was their office to present their prayers to God in the name of the people, both in their daily and their yearly ministration. In their daily ministration, they went into the holy place, to burn incense before the Lord on the golden altar; and this incense is often referred to in Scripture, as an emblem of the acceptable prayers of pious worshippers. And it is observable, that at the very time when the priest was thus employed, the people stood praying without; and no doubt, it was a part of his duty to concur in the devotions, which in their name he presented before God. But this intercession was most solemnly made once a year, *i. e.* on the great day of atonement, when the high priest entered into the most holy place, with the blood of the victims, the incense at the same time fuming, with a grateful odour, before the mercy-seat. This was the grand act of intercession; by attending to which, we may be more particularly informed of the nature of that, which Christ as our High Priest is making in our favour: and we particularly learn,

3. That "the appearance of Christ above, in that body in which he suffered on earth, is virtually a continual intercession with the Father."

We are told, that the high priest carried the blood of the burnt-offering, and of the sin-offering, into the most holy place, and sprinkled it before the Lord there; and by this action he is said to make the atonement, the other sacrificial circumstances being only preparatory to this. And thus our Lord Jesus Christ has taken into heaven the human body, in which he bare our sins on the accursed tree; and appearing thus in the divine presence, he does thereby present his own blood before the mercy seat, as the apostle expresseth it, in a most evident allusion to the preceding passage in the Mosaic institution, Not with the blood of goats and calves, which were the sacrifices appointed on the day of expiation, but by his own blood, he hath entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us: and by this one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; so that nothing further should be requisite, for the complete expiation of their guilt. And it is accordingly declared, that after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, he for ever sat down at the right hand of God.

Now this appearance of Christ in heaven, which is expressed by his standing in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain, may properly be called a virtual intercession. There is a language in that circumstance, more forcible than in any words we can imagine. This is happily illustrated by the pious Mr. Flavel,† by the story of Amyntas and Eschylus, as Elian relates it. Eschylus was condemned to death by the Athenians, and was just going to be led to execution. His brother Amyntas had signalized himself in the service of his country; and on the day of a most illustrious victory, in a great measure obtained by his means, had lost his hand. He came into the court just as his brother was condemned, and without saying any thing, drew the stump of his arm from under his garment, and held it up in their sight; and the historian tells us, "that when the judges saw this mark of his sufferings, they remembered what he had done, and discharged his brother, though he had forfeited his life."‡ Thus does Christ, our dear elder brother, silently, but powerfully, plead for our forfeited lives: and such is the happy consequence. His Father looks on the marks of his sufferings, and remembers what he has done; and in this sense his blood is continually speaking better things than the blood of Abel. We have an advocate with the Father, who is also the propitiation for our sins.

4. "Our Lord always intends, that his appearance before his Father in heaven should be interpreted as a plea for his people."

He does not only perform an action, which may be so understood, but it is his habitual and constant desire and intention, that it may be considered in that view. He entered into heaven, not merely that he might in his glorious human nature be honoured with exalted dignity, and be delighted with that fulness of joy which is in the presence of God there, but that, as their forerunner, he might prepare a place for them. Still he remembers, that he is made head over all things to his church.

* Serm. VII.

† Fount. Treat. of Life.

‡ Ælian. Var. Hist. [illegible]

which is his body, and which with constant tenderness he nourisheth and cherisheth. This is the language of his compassionate heart: "Behold me, O my heavenly Father, behold me in a form thus different from that, in which I originally was. Behold me, now dwelling in human flesh; and remember wherefore this flesh was assumed; and remember how it was once treated. When thou saidst, Sacrifice and offering I will not;—I said, Lo, I come; I delighted then to do thy will, and I still delight to recollect that I did it. Thou wast a witness to that awful scene; nor canst thou forget this blood that was once offered to thee on the cross, to assert the honours of thy law, and to appease the terrors of thy wrath. Thou didst once own it, as an offering of a sweet-smelling savour; and wilt thou not still own it? I have performed my part of the covenant; and I cheerfully put in my claim to the performance of thy part, in favour of those for whom I descended and died. Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; and that nothing be wanting to begin, to carry on, and to complete, the salvation of every one of them." Thus does our Lord even now own his people in the presence of his Father, and of his holy angels; and in the administration of his mediatorial kingdom, he does all things for the elect's sake, for whom he once endured all.

5. This gracious intention and care of Christ respects, not only his church in general, but "every particular believer, in all the variety of his personal circumstances."

When the Jewish high priest stood before the Lord, he bore on his heart the names of the twelve tribes of Israel: but Christ our great High Priest bears on his heart, not only the names of the various nations, and tribes, and families of his people, but the name of every individual person amongst them, even of all the children of God who are scattered abroad. So that "he is as mindful of me," may every humble believer say, "and each of my concerns, as if I were the only happy creature under his care." Thus, as the good Shepherd, he is said to know all his sheep by their names; and is described, as accommodating himself with proper care to the necessities of each, as seeking that which was lost, and bringing again that which was driven away, and binding up that which was broken, and strengthening that which was sick; as gathering the lambs in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. His eye is still upon each of them, and his heart is tenderly affected toward each. And while, as a mediator, he presents the prayers of each unto the Father, he intermingles his own intercession, not only that an answer of peace may be returned to them, but that other necessary blessings may be given in, and that they may be preserved from dangers by them unseen: as in the days of his flesh, he foresaw the trials of Peter and his brethren, and prayed for them that their faith might not fail, when they were under no apprehensions for themselves.

6. "The Scripture does not expressly determine, whether there be, or be not, some verbal address of Christ to the Father, in favour of his people."

Some very eminent divines have indeed positively concluded, that there is none.* But I cannot think that so certain as they have supposed it. It is true we know but very little of the heavenly world, of the methods of converse or worship there. We know not in what accents its blessed inhabitants address their songs of praise to God, or cry to each other, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty. But this we assuredly know, that our Redeemer is gone into heaven in his human body, though now, in an admirable and inconceivable manner, refined and beautified, invigorated and adorned. And we know, that since his entrance into his glory, he has not only appeared in a visible form to some of his servants on earth, but spoken to them with an audible voice. And must we say, that he still dwells in everlasting silence above; or that, if he speaks, it is only in the language of authority to his celestial subjects? Is it absolutely certain, that his sacred voice is never employed in any of the triumphant songs of heaven? or that it is never addressed to his Father in the language of prayer? On earth, he importunately asked those blessings for his people, which he knew that his father had, by the covenant of redemption, expressly stipulated to bestow: and when he was returning to the regions of glory, he said, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter. Now can we say, there is any thing in a vocal, more than in a mental, prayer, unworthy the character of the Son of God, and the Lord of all?

We cannot indeed imagine, that our Lord is always thus employed. We know he has other business in the world of glory, with which a continued address to the Father would be inconsistent. But we are confident, that nothing of this kind passed, when he first ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high? or that such an intercession has never since been repeated? I would stand at the remotest distance from a bold intrusion into these unseen things; but I must presume so far as to say, that I see no absurdity in granting, that some Scripture passages we have just referred to, may be taken in a more literal sense than many have allowed. Nor can I imagine, that the supposed silence of the high priest, when he entered into the most holy place, can have much weight in the pre-

* The great Dr. Owen expressly asserts, He intercedes [illegible] Hebrews" (Dr. Owen on the Spirit, p. 105. See Owen's [illegible] vol. 3. p. 283. and many others.

sent question: for not now to urge, how possible it is, that he might then use some words of prayer, though no form be prescribed for this, or any other peculiar service of the day, it is certain that he was then alone in the divine presence; whereas Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, is surrounded with an innumerable company of angels, and with the spirits of just men made perfect. But after all, I will assert nothing positively here; and to prevent the mistake of what I have already said, I think it proper to add,

7. That in whatever manner this intercession may be carried on, we may depend upon it, that it is "always congruous to that dignity and authority, in which our Lord appears in the world above."

When our Redeemer was on earth in the days of his humiliation, he poured out strong cryings and tears, when addressing his Father; he fell on his knees, and sometimes prostrated himself on his face: but now, sorrow and abasement are no more. He is described, as sitting at the right hand of God; and to raise the idea, is represented by the prophet, as a priest on his throne. And the language of his intercession is princely too; "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

And I must further add, that his addresses to the Father, in favour of his people, are also "perfectly consistent with his administration of the affairs of his mediatorial kingdom." All power is given to him both in heaven and on earth; and God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, having said unto him, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. He is, as it were, the grand almoner of heaven, by whom the divine bounties are dispensed. In his hand are the ways, the hopes, the lives of all; and even the keys of death, and of the unseen world. We are not therefore to think of any intercession inconsistent with this, if we would make our scheme agreeable to Scripture, or Scripture consistent with itself. I add once more,

8. The intercession of our blessed Redeemer "is always effectual, for the vindication, the acceptance, and the final happiness of his people."

He is, as the apostle styles him, God's dear Son. And if on earth he could confidently say, Father, I know that thou hearest me always, we may then well assure ourselves, that he cannot fail of success, when pleading in the court of heaven; especially when asking those things, which he has purchased for his people by his own blood, and which his heavenly Father, by promise, stands engaged to bestow.

By this intercession "the characters of his servants are vindicated." Observe how the apostle triumphs in the patronage of such an advocate, even under the humblest sense of his own imperfections; and while joyfully ready to renounce every appearance of confidence of himself. Who, says he, shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us. Though Satan stand at our right hand to accuse us, though that malignant spirit aggravate every miscarriage, and detract from every service, and add, as in the case of Job, artifice to rage, and falsehood to malice; Jesus stands at the right hand of God, to vindicate our character from every misrepresentation, and to plead his own righteousness and blood, in answer to those charges which cannot be denied. Again,

The intercession of Christ prevails "for the acceptance of our persons and services." We must indeed humbly own, that we are such sinful creatures, that we pollute whatever we touch; and there is so much sin adhering to the best of our duties, that they need forgiveness rather than merit reward. But the angel before the throne offers the prayers of the saints with much incense, which gives them a grateful savour; and they are made acceptable in the Beloved.

In a word, this intercession is effectual "to procure for us all necessary blessings;" which Christ, in consequence of it, is commissioned to bestow upon us. Thus he now keeps us from falling; and he will ere long present us before the Father with exceeding joy. The prayer he offered on earth, as the model of that which he is presenting above, shall be completely answered with respect to all his people; we shall be one in the Father and in him; and shall all be made perfect in one, being with him where he is. And the eternal happiness of every believer shall show the value the Father sets on the blood of the Son, and on that intercession which is founded in it.

We have thus taken a brief survey of what the Scripture informs us, concerning the intercession of Christ. I am,

II. To consider, how this intercession, which he ever lives to make, "is a proof of our Lord's being able to save to the uttermost."

So you see the apostle affirms; and so it will appear to be, if we consider—the foundation,—the extent,—and the perpetuity of it.

1. The intercession of Christ "being founded on his atonement, is a proof of the efficacy of that," and consequently of his ability to save.

You have seen it expressly asserted in Scripture, that it is by his own blood that he is entered into the most holy place. He pleads with and upon that; urging before the Father, virtually at least, the merit of his sacrifice on the cross, as the great argument to bestow gospel blessings on those for whom he hath thus purchased them. So that you evidently see, that were not the atonement of Christ

satisfactory his intercession would be vain. And can you imagine that God would ever have permitted a person to enter heaven, and to take up his stated residence there, under the character of an intercessor, whose plea he had disallowed? It were most absurd to suppose it. The satisfaction of Christ, therefore, appears to be complete, and consequently his person divine, and therefore his saving power almighty, from his ever living to make intercession. And this the apostle seems plainly to intimate in those memorable words: Who being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; having, in consequence of these divine perfections, by himself, that is, by the sacrifice of himself, purged or expiated our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; which he could never have done under this public character, had his nature been less glorious, and so his atonement less complete.

2. The actual exercise of this intercession, "in such an extent, does further imply divine perfections," and by consequence a fulness of saving power.

I have before observed, that there is the greatest reason to believe, the intercession of Christ is not merely his appearance before God in the body in which he suffered: but that it is attended with a constant and ardent intention, that his death may be effectual to the purposes designed, not only for his people in general, but for each of them in particular: and I endeavoured to show you, that it implied a care correspondent to their various circumstances, that grace might be accommodated to every time of need. Now this plainly implies a knowledge extending itself even to omniscience; a knowledge of the hearts, as well as the conditions, of his people; a knowledge of those unutterable breathings, in which often the most valuable part of prayer consists, and of those secret assaults and strugglings which are often the most painful scenes through which the Christian passes. Yet such a knowledge must the great Intercessor have, not only of one particular person, but of each and of all the children of God that are scattered abroad in the most distant nations of the earth, and all at the same moment of time. Surely we must say, such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it: especially when we consider it as joined with the administration of that universal kingdom over which he is exalted. In this view the humble soul must fall prostrate before him in the lowliest homage, and cry out, "My Lord and my God! Thou art indeed able to save to the uttermost: nothing can exceed the penetration of thy wisdom, or the extent of thy power."

3. "The perpetuity of Christ's intercession is a further argument of his ability always to save."

In this view the apostle introduces the thought: He is able to save to the uttermost,—seeing he ever lives to make intercession. It is an encouragement to our believing application unto him, as the Lord mighty to save, when we consider, that in the prosecution of so amazing an employ, he fainteth not, neither is weary. Had it been the appointment of the Father, that he should have retired from the office of an intercessor, after he had attended to it for some few days or years, we must by faith have looked to a past, as the Old-Testament saints did to a future, transaction: but surely our comfort could not have risen so high, as it now does, when we reflect, "Even at this moment is Christ appearing in heaven for me: he is there as the refuge of his people throughout all generations; and I have all imaginable security of his saving power, because his one offering has so fully completed the work, that he needs not come down to earth again, by dying to renew the sacrifice that he presented here. No; the efficacy of it is everlasting, as his intercession upon it is perpetual." This seems plainly the apostle's meaning, by what he adds just after the text;—Such a High Priest became us,—who needeth not, as those high priests under the law, daily to offer;—having done it once for all, when he offered up himself.

III. It only remains, that I conclude with a few obvious but important reflections.

1. How admirable and how amiable does the blessed Jesus appear, when considered as the great intercessor of his people!

How admirable is he in this view! What an honour is done him in the heavenly world! How dear to the Father does he appear to be, when God will not accept the services of the greatest and best of mankind, unless presented by him; and for his sake will graciously regard the meanest and vilest sinner! And how great does this intercessor appear in himself! "Blessed Jesus," may the Christian say, "who is like unto thee, who canst at once sustain so many different relations, and canst fill them all with their proper offices, of duty to thy Father, and of love to thy people! who canst thus bear, without encumbering thyself, without interfering with each other, the priestly censer and the royal sceptre! How wise are thy counsels! How extensive thy views! How capacious thy thoughts! and yet, at the same time, how compassionate thy gracious heart! That amidst all the exaltations of heaven, all the splendours of thy Father's right hand, thou shouldst still thus graciously remember thine humble followers! That thine eye should be always watchful over them, thine ear be always open to their prayers, thy mouth be ever ready to plead for them, and thine arm to save them! As if it were not love enough to descend and die, unless thou didst for ever live and reign for them, and

even glory in being made head over all for thy church."

"But especially," may the Christian say, "when I think of thee, blessed Jesus, not only as the intercessor of thy people in general, but as my intercessor, when I think that thou hast espoused my character and my cause, vile and obnoxious as it is, and that thou art recommending my poor broken services, which I daily blush to present before thee; and art using thine interest and thine authority in the world above, to complete my salvation, which thou hast begun; what shall thy poor servant say unto thee! All these astonishing and kind regards to me, who am unworthy to wash the feet of the least of thy followers! Shall not the wonders of such condescending grace engage my gratitude to all eternity! My praises now are so exceeding feeble, and so low, I am almost ashamed to offer them: O when shall those nobler praises begin, which I hope ere long to offer in that world of perfection to which thy gracious intercession is bringing me!"

2. With what holy joy may the Christian reflect on his interest in such an intercessor!

Methinks we should often be entering into this pleasurable thought. The Lord Jesus is pleading for us above, and he ever lives to make intercession there. We had pious friends, who were once bearing us on their hearts before God in prayer; but they are now sleeping in the dust: our dear religious parents, our holy ministers, our guides and companions in the ways of God! We have no warrant to expect any further assistance from their prayers. In this sense, Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel does not, and cannot, acknowledge us: but Christ is an ever-living intercessor, without whose interposition theirs had been vain, and in comparison with whom we have none on earth or in heaven to desire. Let papists commit themselves to the patronage of angels and saints, and by a voluntary and offensive humility, entreat them to intercede with God, or to intercede with Christ in their favour: as Christ has by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified; so by one continual intercession, in which he needs and admits no associate, he for ever secures them.

3. With what holy boldness may the Christian draw near to God, in dependence on such an intercessor!

We have daily important errands to the throne of grace, and perhaps hardly any thing would more promote the success of them, than to lift up a cheerful and believing eye, as expecting to receive something from God's hand. A consciousness of our own numberless imperfections and defects may indeed discourage us, a sense of our guilt might even fright us away; but when we see Jesus standing before the throne, in such a posture, in such a character, surely we may venture near, and when most awed and most dismayed, may encourage ourselves in him. This is an inference which the apostle draws, and which he repeats again and again: Seeing we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need; for surely, neither mercy to pardon, nor grace to strengthen, will now be withheld. Having therefore boldness (as he elsewhere expresses it) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way which he hath consecrated for us,—let us draw near: and O that we may ever do it with a true heart, since there is so blessed a foundation laid for a full assurance of faith!

4. What reason is there to adore the divine wisdom and goodness, in appointing so excellent a way, at once to promote our humility and our confidence!

You have seen, how justly it may establish our faith, to consider, that though we are unworthy for whom any thing should be done, yet Christ is worthy, and I may add, that in appointing him to be our intercessor, God hath declared his own favourable regard to us, and we may comfortably conclude, that the Father himself loveth us. Yet this love is manifested, as in a very gracious, so also in a very humbling, way. This token of divine displeasure against sin is yet upon us, that we are not allowed to draw near to him in our own name, or to expect the least favour for our own sake, but he still keeps us at a humble distance, nor will he permit us to see his face, unless our elder Brother be with us. And as he treated Eliphaz and his companions, saying, My wrath is kindled against you; take now an ox [illegible], and go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, and him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly: thus God refuses to look on the best of our offerings, if they do not pass through a [illegible] acceptable hand. How awful a reflection, and how wise a provision, to promote that humility, which so well becomes pardoned rebels, before the long-injured Majesty of heaven! This is, as he expresses it by Ezekiel, That we may remember our ways, and be confounded, and never open our mouths any more, because of our shame, even when he is pacified towards us for all that we have done.

Lastly, How powerful ly should this comfortable doctrine operate on our minds, to promote our love to this great intercessor, and our zeal for his honour and glory!

"Blessed Lord," should each of us say, "dost thou remember such a worthless worm amidst all thine honour and joy above, and shall not I remember thee, the King of glory! Where should my heart

be but with thee? On what should I set my affections, but on those things which are above, where thou sittest at the right hand of God? My righteousness and my strength, mine advocate and my guardian! shall I be unmindful of thee? While thou art pleading my cause in heaven, shall I not be joyfully willing to plead thy sacred and honourable cause on earth? Rather, much rather, may I forget the powers of reason, and lose the faculty of speech, than neglect to use them for thee: rather may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, than it should be ashamed, or afraid, to vindicate thy gospel, though I stood alone in a crowd of insulting blaspheming enemies, and though they added cruelty and terror to their impieties. So mayst thou confess me before thy Father and the holy angels, in the last solemn day, as I determine that I will confess thee now, though this crooked and perverse generation should grow still more degenerate than it is."

Christians, if we have not such sentiments and resolutions as these, I fear we have no title to any of the comforts of Christ's intercession, and shall have no share in its invaluable blessings.

SERMON XV.

COMING TO GOD BY CHRIST, THE CHARACTER OF THOSE THAT SHALL BE SAVED

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

WHEN the Psalmist had been celebrating the majesty of God, as the almighty Creator and Possessor of all, he breaks out into this most natural and important inquiry, Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? And methinks, Christians, when we have been hearing of the boundless power of Christ to save, and of the prevalency of that intercession which he ever lives to make, we should immediately cry out, "Who are the happy souls, in whose rescue this almighty arm shall be employed, and whose cause this gracious intercessor will undertake always to plead?" The text answers the question in a very edifying and satisfactory manner, though in few words. They are such as come unto God by him.

You know that from this scripture I have already considered,

I. What we are to understand by Christ's being able to save to the uttermost.

II. What evidences we have, that he is really so.

III. I have considered the particular argument for it, which the apostle here draws, from his ever living to make intercession.

It only remains, that I now open,

IV. The character of the persons who are encouraged to expect a share in this salvation; they are such as come unto God by him.

Now before I proceed to the more particular discussion of these words, you must give me leave to observe, that they seem in their primary and strictest sense to signify "an approach to God in the solemnities of religious worship, in the name of Christ as the great intercessor."

As when the Jewish people were honoured with the abode of the Shechinah, the visible token of the divine presence, they did in their highest religious solemnities approach to that, surrounding with their sacrifices and their prayers the tabernacle or temple where it held its residence; hence it seems to have come to pass, that the phrases of coming to God, coming into his presence, and drawing near to him, were often used to express the acts of divine worship. And as the priests were admitted to come nearer to the ark, on which this visible glory usually rested, than others even of that holy nation, they are with peculiar propriety spoken of, as drawing near to God. We may also add, that forasmuch as once a year the high priest went into the holy of holies, in the name of the whole congregation, with the blood of victims offered to expiate their sins, they might properly, at that solemn season, be said to come unto God by him. And the connexion of these words, as I have largely shown, does most evidently imply an allusion to these Jewish rites, and a regard to Christ as the great high priest of our profession.

But it would be very imprudent, and unsafe, to leave the matter thus generally explained. Salvation is here promised, to all that come unto God by Christ; as it elsewhere is, to all that call on the name of the Lord. Yet most certain it is, from the whole tenor of Scripture, that there are multitudes who call on his name, and transmit their petitions to God in a professed dependence on his mediation and intercession, whose persons and services God will reject with abhorrence, who shall see salvation only from afar, and never be permitted to taste of it. And therefore it is manifest, that, to make the Scripture consistent with itself, these phrases, when connected in such a manner, must be taken in a much larger extent, as comprehending all that, by which the acceptable worshipper, and the true believer, is distinguished from the hypocritical professor, who draws near to God only to dishonour him, and to bring on himself aggravated guilt and condemnation.

And by consequence, coming to God, as the phrase is here used, must signify in the general, "applying ourselves with the greatest seriousness

to our important business with him;" as such expressions often signify, when they are put for the whole of religion: and coming through Christ must imply, "such humble and faithful regards to him as the great mediator, such a cordial acceptance of him, such a cheerful dependence upon him," as is so often in the New Testament expressed by that faith in him, to which the promises of eternal salvation are made, and to which they are limited.

But since it is a matter of so great moment, and a matter in which it is to be feared so many are deceiving their own souls, give me leave to descend into some particulars of explication. And let me entreat your diligent attention, and beseech you, as you dread the ruin of the hypocrites in Sion, that you enter seriously into your own hearts, and judge yourselves, as persons that expect shortly to be judged of the Lord. O that, through the sanctifying, the quickening, and the witnessing influences of the Holy Spirit, we might see the characters which are now to be drawn, more and more evidently agreeing to ourselves.

The believer you see is here described,—as coming to God,—and as coming to him through Christ.

I. The believer is described, "as one that comes to God."

This evidently implies,—a firm persuasion of his being and attributes,—a deep conviction that it is our highest interest to secure his favour,—a readiness to renounce whatever can come in competition with it,—a cheerful and resolute subjection to his service,—and a care to keep up a continual correspondence with him, and to live as in a state of nearness to him.

1. Coming to God evidently implies, "a firm belief of his being and perfections."

This the apostle asserts in express words, which carry their own evidence along with them: He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And indeed the latter is as necessary as the former; for merely to believe a first cause of almighty power and consummate skill, as some pretend to do, without any sense of his providence, government, and goodness, is, with regard to all the purposes of practical religion, as vain and as pernicious as atheism itself.

But you will remember, that a good man does not rest in such a cold assent to the truth of these doctrines, like that he gives to propositions which he studies only for amusement. No, but they descend into the mind with a due energy, and he realizeth them to himself with the utmost seriousness. "O my soul," does he often say, "it is not a precarious conclusion, or a mere probable hypothesis, that there is a God, and such a God as I profess to believe, but it is a most certain and evident truth. I do not more clearly see the meridian sun by his own rays, nor more surely know, that I myself think and exist, than I see God by his works, and know him as the original author of my being, and of these thinking powers which are now inquiring after him. There is, there is an eternal and immutable Jehovah. He reigns on an exalted throne above, and the highest potentate of that shining world is infinitely more inferior to him, than superior to the meanest insect on earth. God is there, and he is here; he surrounds all his creatures with his immensity, and preserves them all by his influence. In him I live, and move, and have my being; on him angels and worms are equally dependent; nor is there a motion in the material, or a thought in the intellectual, world, to which he is not most intimately conscious. Behold him, O my soul, with reverence and love; for he is a most awful Being, in whom unsearchable wisdom, and almighty power, are joined with unerring justice, unspotted holiness, and invariable truth; but remember, he is also the most amiable. There is a beauty in all these perfections; and it is softened and sweetened by the overflowings of goodness and mercy; those rich and gentle streams, which not only water paradise, but visit these regions of guilt and darkness."

Such views as these are familiar to the mind of the believer: and this firm and affectionate persuasion of the being and attributes of God, is the foundation both of natural and revealed religion; and the root from whence all the branches of moral virtue, and evangelical faith and holiness, must spring.

2. Coming to God must also imply, "an earnest desire of a share in the divine favour, as our highest interest and happiness."

And methinks this is a necessary consequence of the former. We are indeed too apt to lift up our soul unto vanity, and to grow fond of these empty shadows: but it is because God is forgotten; as we admire the stars, because the sun is absent. But surely, when the mind is thus possessed with a sense of God, it will feel a kind of indignation, that any other object should have ever been compared with him, though it were only to be postponed, as inconceivably less valuable. Much more will it be displeased and ashamed to think, that it has ever preferred these to God. "Alas," will such a soul say, "whither have I wandered? Into what wilderness am I come? I look round about me on the creatures, and I see no shelter nor refreshment. They are like broken cisterns, or deceitful brooks, whose waters fail me when I need them most. What then, O Lord, do I wait for? my hope is in thee, for thou art the fountain of living waters, all-sufficient for my happiness, and only sufficient for it. If I were a poor abandoned outcast, if I had not a

friend or helper on earth, if I knew not where I should look for my next lodging, or my next meal: if at the same time my body were worn out with pining illness, and every member of it the seat of pain; yet if I could but look up, and see thy face through this cloud, if I could but call thee my Father and my God, I were happy still: and might pity the most prosperous monarch on earth, that was a stranger to thee, and thy love. There are many that say, Who will show us any good? O that thy Spirit may teach them truer wisdom! But as for me, I will still say, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." In consequence of this,

3. Coming to God implies, "a readiness to forsake every thing which can stand in opposition to him."

My brethren, what I have been describing is, in a good man, not merely a conviction of the understanding, but a sentiment of the heart. He would abhor the hypocrisy, the impiety, and the folly of owning the incomparable excellence of the divine Being, and yet practically choosing something else before him. "Lord," does he sometimes say, "I have often done it; and for ever blessed be thy name, that thou didst not finally choose those my delusions. It grieves me to think, how I injured thee, and dishonoured and wronged my own soul, when other lords had dominion over me: and they would detain me in their ignoble servitude; but in answer to all their unreasonable claims, I make mention of thy name. Thou requirest that I should give thee my very heart, and should be ready to leave all and follow thee. Lord, I would cheerfully consent; and hope that through grace I can say, None of these things move me; neither should I, in such a cause, count my life dear unto me."

4. Coming to God does further import, "a willing subjection to his service."

"Lord," does the Christian say, "I would come to thee, not to sit down under thy shadow indolent and unactive. My faculties were made for employment; and it is my joy to think, that they shall be employed for thee. I love thee with all my heart, and with all my soul; and therefore, by the aids of thy grace, I will serve thee with all my might, and with all my strength. I would gladly yield myself to thee, as alive from the dead, and use my members as instruments of righteousness. Thy promises are my delight, as I trust they are my portion; but, Lord, they are not the only part of thy word that I love; for I delight myself in thy statutes, and love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I account thy service mine honour and my happiness; I desire always to keep the eye of my soul directed towards thee, to wait the inimations of thy gracious pleasure; and if I am distinguished from others by any advantages of nature, or of circumstances, I would chiefly rejoice in them, as they are capable of being improved for thee."

5. Coming unto God does also imply, "the keeping up a constant correspondence with him."

I before observed, that this phrase, in the present connexion, seems particularly to refer to our approaching him in the solemnities of religious worship: and when it is spoken of as a part of the Christian's character, it plainly intimates a frequent and constant care in these duties. Thus good men under the old law are described, as a generation of them that seek God. "Lord," does every child of God often think and say, "it is indeed good for me to draw near unto thee. What is my great final hope, but to dwell in a state of everlasting nearness? In the mean time, the nearer I am to thee, the more of heaven is brought down to earth; the more I enjoy of thee, the more do I enjoy myself, and relish my being. I make my visits to thy throne, not merely to pay a homage which thou requirest, but to seek an entertainment which I prefer to any other. Far from looking upon it as a disagreeable condition, with which my expectations from thee are clogged, I count the opportunities of such converse, and my inclinations towards it, in the number of my greatest obligations to thy goodness." Should God say to the Christian, "I will for the future dispense with thine attendance; thou shalt retain thine interest in me, though thou shouldst call upon me no more; and shalt meet me as thy friend at death, though thou forgettest me in life;" the good man would not be able to bear such a dismission. He would rather say, "Lord, if I were to live only on these terms, it were much better for me to die. I should, with Moses, in another case, pray thee to kill me out of hand, rather than leave me here under such a burthen as life would seem, if it might not be sweetened by communion with thee, in the closet, in the family, and in public ordinances."

These, my brethren, are important parts of the Christian's character, yet they are far from being the whole of it. With this temper he comes to God; but how should he be encouraged to such an approach, if the great Redeemer were forgot? We add, therefore,

II. That all to whom salvation is promised in the gospel, "make their approach to God through Christ," or, as the text expresses it, they come unto God by him.

You will no doubt be willing that I should open this important article pretty largely; and I shall do it under the following particulars. Coming to God by Christ implies,—a deep sense of our need of a Mediator, in order to our comfortable intercourse with God:—a persuasion of the power of Christ,—

and a confidence in his grace;—a cordial approbation of the method in which he bestows salvation;—and a constant care to maintain proper regards to Christ, in the whole course of our walking with God. This is that evangelical faith, to which the promises of gospel salvation are appropriated, by the text before us, and the whole tenor of Scripture.

1. Coming to God by Christ implies, "a deep sense of our need of a mediator, in order to a comfortable intercourse with God."

Christianity is the religion of sinners; and it will never be really welcome to a soul that is not sensible of the evil and malignity of sin. The natural pride of our hearts would first lead us to forget God, and not to seek after him at all; but if conscience be in any measure awakened to see (what it is strange every rational creature should not always see) our dependence on him, and our need of an interest in his favour, pride finds a second refuge, in a fond conceit of bringing something of our own to recommend us to it. And if at length men are sensible they have nothing of this kind which they can call their own, they are ready to think of casting themselves immediately on the mercies of an offended God, rather than of multiplying their obligations and their dependence, by coming to him through a mediator. If we must own ourselves sinners, we are prone to extenuate our guilt; and if we cannot look upon it as an indifferent, would at least represent it as an excusable, thing, which is worthy of compassion, rather than of indignation. How difficult is it to view it in a true light! to see what insolence and baseness it carries in it, and what danger and ruin it exposes us to! But divine grace makes way for the gospel into our hearts, by displaying the justice and the holiness of God, as equally essential to his nature with his wisdom and goodness: and then, when we consider ourselves as appearing in his presence, convicted of ten thousand aggravated offences, we cry out from a deep and inward sense, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God! Surely I need some perfectly righteous Mediator, high in his favour, to introduce me to him, and to render my access safe and comfortable, by appearing as a days-man betwixt us, to lay his hand upon us both."

2. Coming to God by Christ further implies, "a full persuasion of his saving power."

We have been endeavouring to prove it at large; and the conviction of it enters deep into the believing soul. He assents to this most concerning truth with full satisfaction, though there be something in the foundation of it which feeble reason cannot fully comprehend. Important as he sees his everlasting concerns to be, he can courageously venture them here; he can cry out, "Lord, I believe," though a mixture of unbelief may cost him many a tear. "Lord," does he often say, "I am sure, that if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Though Jew and Gentile may reject thee, I humbly own thee, as the head-stone of the corner. O that I were but as sure of an interest in thee, as I might be of finding my security and my happiness in it."

3. It further implies, "a cheerful confidence in the grace of Christ," as well as a persuasion of his saving power.

Without this he would appear the object of terror, rather than of hope; or in the mildest view, but as a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed, to a traveller languishing and dying with thirst. But faith teaches the Christian firmly to rely on that kind and gracious invitation, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. "Yes," says the believer, "it is indeed so. The compassions of his heart are proportionable to the power of his hand; and I will cast my soul upon them. Blessed Jesus, I would throw myself at thy feet, though it were a supposable case, that I might perish there, and but an uncertain peradventure, that thou mightest pity and save me; for if thou shouldst not, I could but die; and I had rather die a humble penitent, than an obstinate rebel: but forgive that unworthy thought,—that thou shouldst leave a humble penitent to die before thee! Neither thy grace, nor thy truth, will permit it. Him that cometh to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out: and though I am a poor, weak, worthless creature, thou earnest not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; and thou callest them in so compassionate a manner, as to engage that thou wilt not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Let Christ be true, whoever is a liar." Thus do his doubts gradually disperse; thus does he rise to a joy and peace in believing. But it is always to be remembered,

4. That coming to God by Christ includes, "a cordial approbation and acceptance of the methods of his saving grace."

This is of the highest importance, if we would not deceive ourselves to our eternal ruin. Men may dress up an idol in their own minds, and call it by the name of Christ; and they may be as fond of it as pagans are of the works of their own hands: but can this save them, if it be found that the true Christ, as exhibited in the gospel, has been overlooked and rejected by them? A true believer impartially inquires after the way in which salvation is proposed in the word of God; and when he has discovered it, he entirely approves it, as a faithful saying, worthy of God to appoint, and most fit for him to accept. More particularly he views it, and acquiesces in it, as the way of faith, and the way of holiness. Each of these views of it will deserve our further attention.

The good man heartily desires to receive the

gospel salvation, "in the way of faith, or humble believing."

It is thus the word of God always exhibits it: the just shall live by faith; nor shall any flesh glory in his presence. And so entirely is every high thought reduced to the obedience of this blessed principle, in the heart of him that comes to God by Christ, that he is willing to do, what to so corrupt a nature as ours seems most expensive, to buy wine and milk without money and without price; willing to part with the very dearest of his idols, to renounce all dependence on himself, as to what is past, or what is yet to come; to trust no more in his own righteousness, or his own strength; and to say with the most joyful consent of soul, In the Lord have I both righteousness and strength. "Blessed Jesus, it is hard to my proud heart to say it; but it is therefore so much the more reasonable and necessary: for this cursed dependence on self has spoiled the best of my duties, and would betray me to guilt and ruin in many future instances, shouldst thou forsake me. How imperfect and sinful are my best days, and my holiest hours! how feeble and ineffectual my most vigorous and solemn resolutions, against so much inward corruption, and so many outward enemies and temptations! Lord, I am distressed, but I hope thou hast undertaken for me. I hope I may look on thee as my great surety and covenant-head, who didst, before the foundation of the world, engage to satisfy for my breaches of thy Father's law, to work out for me a perfect righteousness, and by thy always victorious power and grace, to conduct me to glory, in the midst of all opposition. Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; from his hand would I most thankfully receive this crown, and at his feet would I humbly lay it!" On the other hand,

It is to be remembered, That as Christ saves his people "in the way of holiness," the true believer most cordially falls in with this part of the scheme.

Indeed he could not otherwise be a believer in the gospel sense of the word; for saving faith is a principle of holy obedience; and a faith without works is expressly declared to be dead, as the body is dead when without the spirit. The Christian well knows, that it was the great design of his Lord's appearance and sufferings in the flesh, that he might bring us to God, that he might save his people from their sins, and purify them to himself, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And how reasonable is this part of the scheme! "Could I," says he, "have desired, that it should have been otherwise? that the Holy Jesus should have been the minister of sin? that he, whose great business it was to honour the law of God, should have dissolved our obligations to it, and have given a license to his followers to continue the servants of corruption, even while they call him their Lord? or could I ask it, or even so much as wish it, that he should distinguish me from others, by a dispensation of that kind? Unreasonable and detestable thought! Lord, I desire not, I understand not, a salvation, of which holiness shall not be an essential part. And though I well know, that many precepts of thy gospel are sublime, and difficult; and that they may be justly represented, by cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye; yet through thy grace I can say, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way. Blessed Jesus, thou art most welcome to my soul, as made of God unto me, sanctification, as well as righteousness and redemption. Give me thy Spirit to lead me, and I will follow with pleasure; draw me, and I will run after thee in the way which thou thyself hast traced; for thou who knowest all things, knowest that it is the desire of my soul, to be conformed to thee in holiness now, as well as in glory hereafter." I shall only add,

5. Coming to God by Christ does further express "a continual care to maintain proper regards to him, in the whole course of our walking with God."

He is not considered only as a Mediator to introduce us at first into the divine presence, and so to settle a correspondence, to be carried on afterwards without any further use of him; but as that blessed and important person, through whom we have continually access by one Spirit unto the Father. "Lord," does the Christian often say, not merely as a language learned from others, but as expressive of what he feels in his own soul, "thou art indeed my life. How should the branches grow, but by sap derived from the root? How should the members act, but by influences communicated from the head? Teach me by thy grace to say with thine holy apostle, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. And may I ever be found in the number of those, who, regarding thee as the living stone, are by a union with thee, as lively stones, builded up together for a habitation of God through the Spirit! Thus let me pass through the wilderness of life, leaning on thee as the beloved of my soul; and when I have finished my pilgrimage, may I lay down my weary head in thy gentle, faithful bosom, dying, as I have lived, in the exercise of faith, and commending my spirit into thy hands!"—This is the character of those, who come unto God by Christ; and in these respects may they say, with the beloved disciple, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

I shall not enter on a laboured argument to prove, that these particulars are comprehended in the words which the text uses, to describe those who are interested in the gospel salvation. It is a formality

which may well be spared, to those who consider the natural import of the phrase, and the general tenor of the word of God; and the scriptures which I have introduced under each head, will easily furnish out matter of proof, to those who are capable of judging of a more abstruse kind of argument than I here think it proper to enter upon.

I should rather choose to dilate on the practical improvements, which might naturally arise from this branch of my discourse; and address myself to you in such exhortations as these:—Let us adore the divine goodness, that such a salvation is offered to us, in so reasonable, so easy, and so gracious a way:—Let us examine by the hints which have now been proposed, whether we are in the number of those who are interested in it:—Let those who are convinced that they are not, be persuaded to reflect on their present circumstances: Let those who are alarmed with a sense of their present danger, be persuaded, in the strength of divine grace, to come unto God through Christ:—Let those who are sincerely desirous to do it, be encouraged to pursue so wise and necessary a purpose:—And let those who have been enabled to comply with the exhortation, be excited to peculiar thankfulness, and established in a cheerful hope of that salvation, which they are taught to expect. But that I may not be under a necessity of despatching these important heads in a few hasty words, or of swelling this discourse to an immoderate bulk, I choose to refer them to another opportunity, when I shall conclude what I have to offer from the text; nor would it have employed us so long, had it not contained a variety of very weighty and instructive matter. In the mean time, may the hints I have now been giving you, be so recollected and considered, as to prepare your hearts for what is further to be spoken!

SERMON XVI.

AN EXHORTATION TO SINNERS TO COME UNTO GOD BY CHRIST.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

At length, my friends, I am entering on the last discourse which I intend from these words. Our meditations upon them had been drawn to a close much sooner, had not many funeral discourses interrupted them; and you know, there were also others of that kind, which did not interrupt them, being preached on week days. But it is surely most fit, that those awful providences, which for awhile diverted our thoughts from this subject, should now awaken our more diligent and lively attention to it. It is not for mortal creatures to trifle with these important truths of Christianity, on which the life of their souls does so evidently depend: no, nor to rest in speculative views of them, while heart application is neglected. The dying, and the dead, look upon these things in another manner; and we shall shortly be numbered amongst them. The Lord awaken us now so to hear the conclusion of the whole matter, as we shall then wish we had heard it! I have already endeavoured,

I. To show you what we are to understand by Christ's being able to save to the uttermost.

II. To prove that he is so.

III. To open the doctrine of his intercession, and to consider what an argument it is of his saving power. And then,

IV. I have considered the character of those who shall be interested in this salvation, as described in the text by their coming to God by him.

Under each of the three former heads I have given you several reflections; and I am now to conclude with others, which more immediately arise from the fourth, especially when taken in connexion with the foregoing. May each of you know your own concern in them; and may the blessed Spirit of God apply them to your souls with divine efficacy and success! Suffer, I beseech you, this word of exhortation to address you in these six particulars.

1. "Let us adore the divine goodness, that such a salvation is offered us, in so reasonable, so easy, and so gracious a way."

Such a salvation in any method might have been joyfully welcome to us; and how much more in this! Let us call in our roving thoughts, and settle them for a while in this one point. Let us stand still, and see the salvation of God. Surely, when we consider our natural condition, in the view in which the gospel represents it; when we hear the law of God thundering out its curses against us; when we see his justice lifting up its sword to smite us, hell gaping to devour us, and its malicious fiends eying us as their sure prey, and impatient to begin our torment; in such a view, it must have appeared a great favour, had God heard the cry of our anguish and despair so far as to permit the rocks to fall upon us, and the mountains to cover us, though they had crushed us into atoms, and he had, at the same time, extinguished the thinking part of our nature, and reduced it to its original nothing. O how gladly would millions that were once the rich, the great, the learned, the victorious of the earth, meet such a fate as this; and perhaps be more thankful for the destruction of their beings than

they ever were for any of its enjoyments! But we hear of being saved,—of being saved to the uttermost;—hear of it, not merely as a favour conferred on others, but as an offer proposed to us; as a scheme not merely deliberated upon, or intended, but in a great measure already effected; and our eyes are directed to the regions of complete and eternal glory, as an abode purchased and prepared for such worthless and guilty creatures as we. "Blessed God, did our appointed way to it lie, not only through a wilderness of thorns, but through a sea of fire, how gladly might we accept the proposals! If the scheme had been to raise us to this heavenly paradise after the severest course of penance on earth, or even after we had tasted of the cup of thy wrath in hell, and suffered all but the despair of those doleful regions, for a long succession of years, or of ages; surely we must then have received the news of such a distant deliverance on our knees, and have mingled thy praises with those groans and tears which such intermediate discipline had extorted from us. And dost thou now offer us a complete pardon, in so easy a way, as only to say, Wash and be clean, as only to call us to come unto thee by Christ?"—Surely, Christians, instead of complaining of this as a hardship, we have reason to own it as a great additional favour. Whither indeed should we go but unto God? and where should we dwell safe and happy, but under the shadow of his wings? and how could we have presumed, or indeed how could we have borne, to have come to him otherwise than by Christ?—It is true indeed, that if we would enter into a treaty with this Prince of Peace, we must give up our sins: but what are these, but the tyrants of the mind, whose reign is our servitude, whose death is our deliverance?—And what though we must give up our own righteousness too? as to any dependence upon it for our justification before God, is there a soul among us that would dare to stand or fall according to the perfection of that? And is there an experienced Christian, that does not know there is a secret unutterable pleasure in submitting to the righteousness of God; and a wise and rational transport of soul, in receiving the rich grace given us in Christ, to make us complete in him; far beyond the vain joy of that distempered dream, which represented us to our own imagination as rich and honourable, righteous and happy, in the midst of poverty and shame, guilt and misery? Surely, if we should hold our peace, when such a salvation is proposed to us in such a method as this, it might almost be expected that the very stones would cry out, to upbraid our ingratitude.

2. "Let us seriously examine, whether we have come to God by Christ, and so are interested in this great salvation."

To each of you, my friends, that hear me this day, is the word of this salvation sent; and that you have received the offers of it, will, on the whole, be matter of everlasting joy, or of everlasting sorrow. The word of God assures us, that there are comparatively few that receive saving benefit by it; "many are called, but few are chosen." And does it not alarm you? Methinks, if there were only a few out of considerable numbers, that missed it, each of us should be ready to tremble for himself: if we knew, that but one soul in all this assembly should finally lose it, we might each of us cry out with great solicitude of spirit, if in any degree unassured with regard to ourselves, Lord, is it I? And how much more now? Are there any of you that must say, "I do not certainly know whether this salvation will be mine or not?" How can you bear the uncertainty? Let me charge it on your consciences that you enter into the inquiry. Have you come unto God by Christ? I ask not so much, whether you believe the existence of God, and the truth of Christianity? This is a faith which you may carry down with you to the habitation of devils, who themselves also believe and tremble.—I ask not so much, whether you have ever felt some desires after an interest in God through Christ? In this respect, as well as in others, there is a desire of the slothful that kills him, while it serves only to increase his present disquietude, and his after-punishment.—But I ask, What is on the whole your choice? What are your cares, your hopes, and your joys? do they centre in God? do they arise from communion with him through Christ? Do you experimentally know what it is to come to his throne, to submit your revolted souls to his government with delight? to wait the signal of his will, as the rule of your actions? to enjoy, or at least earnestly desire, the visits of his grace, the effusions of his love on your hearts? Is prayer your pleasure, or is it your burthen? Do you regard the word of God as an invaluable treasury, or is it to you as a sealed book? You have a thousand traces of the sublimest devotion and piety there; can you relish them? can you find any considerable resemblance between yourselves and those holy souls, whose characters are there recorded and approved? You call yourselves Christians; but do you know Christ, and do you love him, and do you cordially approve of the methods of his saving grace? Do you know what it is to come and lay down your guilty souls, as under the effusions of his blood? to strip yourselves of all the pride of nature, that your nakedness may be clothed with his glorious righteousness? to bow to his sceptre as his obedient subjects, and rejoice that you have such a governor? And do you feel the necessity of a daily application to him, as your great covenant-head, on whose influence you live, and by whose Spirit you must perpetually be actuated, to the purposes of a divine life?—These, these are

the decisive questions, and let me entreat you to hear what conscience has to reply to them.

And permit me once more to ask you, If you are yet uncertain as to this important article, how it is that this uncertainty sits upon your mind? Are you easy under it? Do you carelessly defer the inquiry from one day to another, or purposely decline it, because you are afraid of some consequences which may disturb you? or do you renew your examinations again and again, searching for those scriptures, and waiting for those parts of our public discourses, which may pierce deepest, and try your souls to the utmost; still, above all, begging that God would search them; and renewing your humble entreaties, that you may know the very worst of your state, and be at length brought unto him through Christ, though it were by the most painful way that any of his servants have ever trod?

As to some of you, perhaps, the case may require further discussion; but I believe there are others, to whom it would be no long labour. I fear, even while I am yet speaking, conscience must witness against some of you, that you are utter strangers to such a temper, and that you never came unto God by Christ. And therefore,

3. "Let those who are conscious to themselves, that they have never come unto God by Christ, be engaged seriously to reflect on the danger of their present condition."

I know the corruption of our hearts strongly inclines us to think as favourably as possible of ourselves, and eagerly to grasp the feeblest reed, which may give some present, though most precarious, support to our hope: and I know, Satan would favour the delusion to the utmost, because he is aware, there is but a short time in which he need labour to do it; so that if he can amuse you a few days, you are his prey for ever. It is our business, as ministers of the gospel, to counterwork these deceivers. O that God would teach us to do it effectually! Sinner, thou art convinced in thy conscience, that thou art a stranger to the temper and character described; that thou art the man, who hast sat, perhaps many years, under the sound of the gospel, and to this very day hast never come unto God by Christ. And dost thou hope for salvation by him, while this is the case? It is a most arrogant and pernicious hope. I solemnly declare unto thee this day, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter. Dost thou hope? On what foundation is it? Show me one promise in the whole book of God, that speaks pardon and peace to an impenitent unbelieving sinner. Wilt thou say, Christ is able to save to the uttermost? He is indeed so; and yet it is no contradiction to declare, that as things now stand, he cannot save thee: for he cannot deny himself; he cannot overthrow the whole tenor of his gospel, and make himself the minister of sin. You know he has expressly said, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins; nay, He that believeth not, shall be damned. You know, he has foretold, that he will another day publicly say, As for those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me: and that so much more dreadful condemnation awaits them, than fell on the transgressors of Moses's law, though they died without mercy, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such. And will your hopes still stand, while all this dreadful artillery is planted directly against them? shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and the rock be removed out of its place? Rocks should much sooner be removed, and all the earth left desolate, than the whole constitution of the gospel shall be overthrown, lest thou shouldst perish. You would not take poison, in hopes that God would work a miracle to preserve your life. Yet you might more reasonably expect this than the other; because it would not so directly contradict any of the perfections of God, or any of his declarations. The matter is brought to a very short issue; and it requires no penetration, or labour of thought, to see it. If the gospel be not true, there is no foundation for expecting this salvation at all; but if it be, you are cut off from any hope of it, while you continue thus; and you are, even whilst I speak, on the very borders of hell.

And now, disarmed as you are of all these unavailing hopes, sit down and enter deeply into your present circumstances. "The Son of God became incarnate, and lived and died to procure salvation for such guilty worms as I: and I have heard of this salvation; but I have no share in it. To this very hour, the wrath of God abideth on me. A storm of vengeance is rising around me, and I am excluded from the only ark in which I could be safe. Excluded by what? Why, to make it so much the more grievous, by my own folly." If we were to take upon us absolutely to pronounce concerning any of you, that you were excluded from the offers of gospel grace, you would no doubt resent it highly; as you reasonably might. Much more, were it in the power of a fellow-mortal to deprive you of all share in this great salvation, might you cry out of it as a most hellish cruelty. You would not for the world do this wrong to another, if it were in your power. What! murder an immortal soul? you would tremble at the thought. But you tremble not at the thing. It is what you are doing, while you are rejecting the gospel. And will you never have compassion on your own poor bleeding souls, until the last incurable wound is given? Yet a little, a very little, while, O sinners, and you will lift up your despairing eyes in the midst of your torments, and behold this salvation from afar. And alas, in

how different a view will it then appear, even to the most indolent and most presumptuous of you all! and how will it rend your very souls to think, "it was offered to me, and I would not accept it!" And what a doleful echo will there be amongst you, when you, and ten thousand more miserable creatures, are crying out, "There was an almighty Saviour provided for sinners, and yet we are lost for ever; and are sunk so much lower than others, because we heard of him, and despised him!"

4. "Let such sinners as are awakened to a sense of their danger be invited and persuaded, in the strength of divine grace, to come unto God by Christ."

All the awful and terrifying things we say are dictated by the sincerest and tenderest love to your souls; and nothing can be further from our intention, than to come to torment you before the time. Did we know that your day of grace was past, we would spare these unwelcome pains; and would rather permit you to sleep on and take your rest. But these are moments of hope, sinners, though you make them moments of extreme danger: and though there be no hope for you while you continue to reject Christ, yet if you accept him, you have nothing to fear; but this very day, if you this day entertain him, shall salvation come to your house. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation; and after so long a time, it is yet called to-day. Once more, and as to some of you it may be for the last time, is the proclamation again made amongst you, Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him; and those that come he will in no wise cast out. And do you not hear the proclamation with pleasure? and will you not obey it as worthy of all acceptation?

What if the scene were changed, and the proposals were addressed to those wretched creatures who are now in hell? What if God should send an ambassador to them, and give him authority to address them to some such purpose as this? "Despairing creatures, I am now come amongst you, not as a messenger of vengeance, but of peace. God has at length looked on your miseries with a compassionate eye; and there is a ray of mercy darting through this gloom from the throne of grace and from the Sun of righteousness. The proposals you so long heard with indifference, and which you have so much longer remembered in the bitterness of your souls, are once more renewed. If you cry unto him, even out of these depths, he will hear you; if you will submit your souls to his government and his grace, he will save you: and I am commissioned in his name to assure you, that not only shall these gates of hell be thrown open for your release, but those of heaven shall be opened likewise, for your admittance."

Sinners, let your own consciences say how you imagine at least, that such a proposal would be received by condemned spirits. Do you not think that (as one forcibly expresses it) they would even leap in their chains? Do you not think the marks of horror and despair would immediately vanish from their faces, that their eyes would sparkle with hope and joy, and that they would begin the work of praise even with their flaming tongues? But are not you yourselves in the same condemnation, though the sentence be not yet executed? Why then do you now despise those rivers of mercy, the smallest drop of which you will hereafter desire in vain?

Alas, what we have here described is merely an imaginary scene. Millions of ages shall roll away in a sad succession, and no such proposals be made to the inhabitants of hell; nor to you, sinners, if you come into that place of torment. But they are now made in good earnest; and, therefore, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Oh, force us not another day, for the deliverance of our own souls, to bear a dreadful testimony to the condemnation of yours; but hearken to these embassies of peace, and let us entreat and persuade you to be reconciled. This is still the message, the invitation, the charge, even the same that you heard from the beginning; Come unto God by Christ. Behold a gracious God stretching out his arms to receive you; behold a compassionate Redeemer yet waiting to introduce you to his favourable presence; and all the faithful subjects of his kingdom, here and above, are longing to see it erected in your souls. The thought even of our own salvation would be still sweeter to us, if we had a probable hope of sharing it with you. And shall earth and heaven expect and desire it in vain? And will you, as it were, grieve both; that hell may rejoice in your ruin, and that devils may insult over you, and upbraid you, as having with your own hands thrust away that salvation, of which all their malice and rage might in vain have attempted to deprive you? You will then, alas, find no place for repentance, though, like Esau, you seek it carefully with tears.

Alas, my friends, what more shall I say? Could I find out any more weighty arguments, any more plain, serious, and affecting forms of address, I would go on, though the discourse should swell beyond its due bounds; though my own strength were impaired by the earnestness of it; and though a vain, wretched, unbelieving world should deride that earnestness as enthusiasm and madness. Nay, who that knows the importance of immortal souls, would not go on to plead in such a cause, though minutes and hours were to be struck off from his life for every word that he utters in it, could even such an expensive service be secure of success? But that depends upon God, and to him we would

look for it. In the mean time, I dismiss you with this one word: Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, he in whose name I speak is witness, that the embassy is delivered; and such words as these will remain recorded in the book of his remembrance, and will sooner or later be brought to yours.

5. "Let such as are desirous of coming to God by Christ, take encouragement from the declaration in the text."

We are not altogether ignorant of the devices of Satan; we know, by frequent observation and experience, how soon he can turn the syren's song into the roaring of a lion; what efforts he makes, to drive the awakened soul into the agonies of despair, and to persuade him that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of mercy. But, if he be practising such cruel artifices on any soul in this assembly, I do, in the name of our Lord and Master, charge the lie on the father of falsehoods. You have perhaps a great many things to plead against yourselves; such as, the number, the enormity, and aggravation of your sins: you will say, they have been committed against the clearest light, against the tenderest love, against repeated admonitions, most serious resolutions, most solemn covenant engagements: but all these pleas, and a thousand more, are answered in this one word, He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. Is it still matter of doubt? Turn aside then, and more attentively view the trophies of his grace and power, erected in his word, erected on purpose for our encouragement, on whom the ends of the world are come.

Behold Paul in his unconverted state, a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. He appears to have divested himself, not only of that gentleness of manners, which might reasonably have been expected from a man of so liberal an education, but even of the sentiments of common humanity; furiously breathing out threatening and slaughter against the saints, without the least regard to innocence of life, or to tenderness of age or sex. Yet at the appearance of an Almighty Saviour, this furious barbarian was melted and subdued: in the full career of his blind and cruel rage, he falls down at the feet of that Jesus whom he persecuted, and cries out the very next moment, with the lowliest submission, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? By the power of Christ, the fiend was transformed into an angel; he preached the faith, which just before he endeavoured to destroy; and quickly learnt such language as this: Neither bonds nor imprisonments move me, nor do I count my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

The Corinthians were debauched and abandoned to a proverb, the scandal of their country, and the reproach of their nature. For when the apostle had been reckoning up a catalogue of the most infamous sinners; such as fornicators, and idolaters, and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners; he adds, surprising words! (and oh what surprising grace do they imply!) "such were some of you;" such, that one would almost have expected, that lightning from heaven should have blasted them, or that the earth should have opened them a passage into hell: but instead of this, says the apostle to these very men, ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The blessed Jesus did not upbraid them with their former crimes, but poured forth his Spirit upon them in so abundant a degree, that their faith was every where celebrated, and they came behind in no gift.

If we can yet imagine any crime more notorious than some of those which are charged on the Corinthian converts in their natural state, it must surely be that which the sun could not behold without horror, nor the earth sustain without trembling; the murder of our Lord Jesus Christ, that innocent, that holy, that divine person, with all the circumstances of the most inhuman cruelty. They had known his exemplary conversation, they had heard his heavenly discourses, they had seen his divine miracles; yet in spite of all these, the outrageous Jews seize him as a pest of human society, drag him before a heathen tribunal, extort a sentence of condemnation against him, and at length, after a thousand indignities and barbarities, nail him to the cross by the hands of the Romans. Yet would he show, that even these rebels were not beyond the reach of his power and grace; for no sooner was the dispensation of the Spirit opened, but three thousand of them were converted in one day; they gladly received the word, and were baptized in token of it; and notwithstanding all the efforts, which the subtilty or fury of their enemies could use to draw them away from it, they continued stedfast in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers: and they are now in heaven, rejoicing in the presence of that Jesus whom they murdered, and ascribing their eternal salvation to that blood which they themselves shed.

And now, methinks, I am at a loss to imagine, what unbelief can find to object against such instances and examples as these, especially when backed with so many encouraging promises. Can you say worse of yourselves, than that you are the chief of sinners? Paul will tell you, that he was so; and that for this cause, he obtained mercy, that

in him, as chief, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to those that should hereafter believe. And all the other examples are no doubt recorded for the very same purpose, that you through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Therefore when your hearts are overwhelmed within you, look unto the rock which is higher than you. Look unto Jesus, and you will be lightened; and your faces will not be ashamed. When Satan is plying you with his fiery darts, wield them off by the shield of faith, and, as it were, hurl them back into the face of the tempter. Let all his endeavours to deter you from it, engage you to adhere so much the more stedfastly to your resolution, of throwing yourselves at the feet of Christ: and let no one fear, that he should be the first sinner that ever perished there; for it cannot be, unless almighty power be weakened, and infinite compassions be exhausted.

6. Let those who have been enabled "to come unto God by Christ, be thankful, and courageous, in the views of the promised salvation."

My brethren, let me urge you to abound in the blessed work of praise, for which none on earth have so much reason as you. It is matter of thankfulness, only to hear of this salvation; how much more then, to have it brought home to our house, to our heart, so as to be able through grace to say, "This salvation is mine?" O remember, it was the same grace which first sent, that has rendered it effectual. Reflect, I entreat you, Sirs, on your own hearts: had you not once your prejudice against the gospel, as well as others? How unwilling were you to understand the method of salvation it taught! and when you did understand it, how much more unwilling were you to submit to it! yet now, those very parts of the scheme, which were once your peculiar aversion, are become your peculiar joy.

Adore the work of divine grace, and take encouragement from it. Remember the connexion which there is, between coming to God by Christ, and being saved by him to the uttermost. Your deliverance from the curse of the law, from the tyranny of Satan, and from the power of sin, is but the beginning of this salvation: but it will at length be accomplished; and you should triumph in the expectation of it. "Various enemies surround me," may the Christian say, "and they sometimes seem ready to swallow me up: the world besets me with innumerable snares; Satan is daily seeking by his crafty wiles to get advantage over me; the flesh is ever ready to betray me; and death is threatening to destroy me with its sting: but yet in all these things I am more than a conqueror, through him that hath loved me. Vain world, I shall quickly leave thee! wily, infernal serpent, the God of peace shall shortly bruise thee under my feet! corrupt deceitful flesh, I shall be happily delivered from thee! and death, thou king of terrors, I am assured, that thou shalt be swallowed up in victory! though thou mayst kill me, yet thou canst not hurt me: for I know that my Redeemer liveth; and because he liveth, I shall live also."——These are sentiments and views worthy our character as Christians, worthy of those who are saved of the Lord. Let us take for our helmet this hope of salvation, and it will guard our head in every danger of life and death; till at length we exchange that helmet for the celestial crown, which the Lord shall give us in that day, when in the completest sense he shall save all his people to the uttermost, and they shall all appear with him in the brightest glories of this great and perfect salvation.

SERMON XVII.

THE TENDERNESS OF CHRIST TO THE LAMBS OF HIS FLOCK

ISA. XL. 11.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

It is well known that there are three most illustrious offices, under which our Redeemer is often spoken of in Scripture; those of the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of his church. And there are several other characters, either coincident with those, or subservient to them, which are frequently mentioned, and are worthy of our regard; amongst which, that of a Shepherd is peculiarly remarkable, as often occurring in the word of God, and affording abundant matter, both for the instruction and the consolation of his people.

I shall not now enumerate all the passages in which our Lord is described under this character, both in the Old Testament and the New. It may be sufficient here to remind you, that he was plainly foretold by Ezekiel, as that one Shepherd, whom God would set over his people to feed them, even his servant David, i. e. the Messiah, David's Son: He, says the prophet, shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And Christ accordingly speaks of himself, as the good shepherd; and is spoken of by one and another of the apostles, as the great shepherd of the sheep, and the chief shepherd. So that, on the whole, if the words of the text had a more immediate reference to the Father, they might with great propriety be applied to Christ, by whom the Father exercises his pastoral care of his people

The chapter is opened with very reviving words: Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: and, to assure them that these consolations addressed to them were indeed glad tidings of great joy, and worthy to be introduced in a very pompous manner, mention is made of a very remarkable herald sent before, whose voice was to cry in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God; *i. e.* let every obstruction be immediately removed: a scripture so expressly applied to John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Christ, that it may be sufficient to fix the sense of the context, with those who have any regard to the authority of the New Testament, in explaining the Old.

To confirm the faith of Israel in this important message, a solemn proclamation is made, ver. 6. The voice (that is, the voice of God, speaking to me in this vision) said unto me, Cry; that is, raise thy voice as loud as possible: and I said, What shall I cry? The following words are evidently the answer, which God returns to this question of the prophet; *q. d.* "Proclaim this awful and seasonable truth, All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field, which is yet more frail and short-lived than the grass itself: the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever; *q. d.* Were it only the promise of a man, you might indeed doubt of its accomplishment; were it only the word of the mightiest prince on earth, it might give you but a trembling and precarious hope: man is a dying creature, and all the most cheerful hopes, which are built on him, may quickly perish; but the word of our God, even that word (as it is explained by the apostle Peter) which by the gospel is preached unto you, shall stand for ever, as the firm basis of your hope and confidence, and shall be certainly accomplished in the final redemption and salvation of his people."

The heavenly voice still continues to speak to the prophet, who was honoured with this happy message, and charges him to deliver it with the greatest cheerfulness and zeal. "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion," (for so I think the words should be rendered, as they are by some, and particularly in the margin of your Bibles,) "get thee up into the high mountain, some place of eminence from whence thou mayest be universally heard: O thou, that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up; and be not afraid, lest the event should not answer the promise; but say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God: for the Lord God will come with a strong hand; *i. e.* the kingdom of the Messiah shall be erected with a glorious display of the divine power: and his arm shall rule for him, as in former instances of most formidable opposition, his own right hand, and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory: his kingdom shall be administered with the exactest equity and wisdom; for his reward is with him, to render to every man according to his doings; and his work is before him; *i. e.* he has the completest view of it, and keeps his eye always fixed upon it."

Yet, (as it is added in the words of the text,) the authority of a Prince, and the dignity of a God, shall be attempered by the gentleness of a most compassionate Shepherd: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

You have already heard of that strong hand, with which Jesus our Lord is come, and of that victorious energy, with which his arm shall rule for him. His name has been proclaimed amongst you, as The Lord of Hosts, the Lord strong and mighty, able to save to the uttermost. Let us now consider him in this amiable character, in which our text describes him; for this renders those views of his almighty power delightful, which our guilt would otherwise render dreadful to us.

Christians, I would hope it is your desire, whenever you attend on the institutions of the gospel, to see Jesus. I may now say to you, (in the words of Pilate, on a very different occasion,) Behold the Man. He appears not indeed in his royal robes, or his priestly vestments; but he wears the habit of condescension and love; and is not the less amiable, though he may not seem equally majestic, while he bears the pastoral rod, instead of the royal sceptre, and feeds his flock like a shepherd, gathering up the feeble lambs in his arms, and bearing them in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young.

You will naturally observe,—that the text declares Christ's general care of all his people,—and bespeaks his peculiar gracious regard to those, whose circumstances require a peculiar tenderness.

1. We may observe "his general care of all his people."

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:—they may each of them therefore say, with David, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. The church is his fold; and ordinances are his pastures: and his sheep shall be nourished by them, till they grow up to that blessed world, where, in a much nobler sense than here, all the children of God that were scattered abroad shall be gathered together in one, and shall appear as one sheepfold under the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.* We have abundant reason to admire his condescension and love, in the view of

* Compare John x. 16 with 1 Pet. ii. 25.

these things, and to congratulate the happiness of his people, as under such pastoral care. But I will not enlarge on this general view, or on these reflections upon it; that I may leave room to insist on what I chiefly proposed in the choice of these words; that is,

2. "Christ's peculiar concern for those, whose circumstances require a peculiar tenderness."

This is expressed in those words; He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young, *i. e.* he will consider their weakness and infirmity, and conduct them as they are able to bear it: which is also implied in that nearly parallel text, in which we are told, He shall seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick.

This is the general import of the words; but for the fuller explication and improvement of them, give me leave,

I. To enumerate the cases and circumstances of some Christians, who may properly be considered as the lambs of the flock, or as those who are with young.

II. To consider what may be intimated concerning the Redeemer's tenderness to them, as it is expressed by his gathering them in his arms, and carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading them.

III. I will endeavour to show what abundant reason there is to depend upon it, that the great Shepherd will deal in a very tender manner with such. And then,

IV. I will endeavour to direct it to the proper improvement of the whole.

May he who hath said, Comfort ye my people, enable me to do it in the most effectual manner! may he give me the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them that are weary, and to appoint to the weeping and trembling soul, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!

I. I am to mention the case of some Christians, who may properly be considered as represented by the lambs of the flock, or by sheep that are with young.

Now in the general, you know, these expressions may signify all who are young and tender. You know, a young lamb is a very feeble creature, and when deserted by its dam, if not assisted by the shepherd, is in danger of perishing, and of breathing out its innocent life, almost as soon as it has received it: and, as Jacob observes, the sheep that are with young, or that have lately yeaned, are not capable of such fatigues as the other cattle; but if overdriven so much as one day, their tenderness is such, that they would die. And therefore when our Lord was spoken of under the character of a shepherd, it was very just, as well as very elegant, to use such figures as these, to represent all those of his people who stood in need of peculiar compassion and care. Now you may easily apprehend those are to be considered as included here,—who are of a tender age,—or but of little standing in religion,—or whose spirits are naturally feeble,—or whose circumstances are distressful and calamitous, on account of any peculiar affliction, either of body or of mind.

1. It is evident, that "they who are of a tender age," may with peculiar propriety be called the lambs of the flock.

They resemble lambs, in respect of their youth; and in some degree, likewise, on account of that innocence and simplicity, for which our Lord singled them out, to recommend them to the imitation of all his followers, and even of his apostles, assuring them that they must become like little children, if they would hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven. You, children, will therefore endeavour to mind what I say this day; for I am to speak to you; to speak to you about the kindness and care of Christ towards you. I assure you, I speak of it with pleasure: and surely you should hear it with pleasure; and your little hearts should leap for joy, to think that a minister should be sent to address himself to you, as the lambs of Christ's flock. O that every one of you may indeed be so! You will hear what a kind shepherd you have, and how graciously he will lay you in his bosom.

2. "They who are of late standing in religion," may also be called the lambs of Christ's flock.

Though perhaps they are more advanced in age than many others, they are but young in grace, and in Christian experience; they are in the lowest form in Christ's school, and perhaps have much of the infirmity and weakness of children. They have also some peculiar difficulties to struggle with from within, and often from without, which may render them more sensible of those infirmities. Such are therefore called babes in Christ; while Christians of greater growth and experience, are called strong men.

3. The language of the text may also with peculiar propriety be applied to "those, whose spirits are naturally very feeble and timorous."

The constitutions of different persons are most apparently various; and the infirmities which attend some, render them the objects of peculiar compassion. To them perhaps "the grasshopper is a burthen;" and what by others would hardly be felt at all, quite overloads and depresses them. While some of their fellow-christians are as bold as the lion, these, like the fearful lamb, start and tremble almost at the shaking of a leaf. This excessive tenderness of mind, which shows itself often on very

small occasions, is much more visible where their eternal interests seem to be concerned. The importance of those interests appears so great, that they are even terrified with the view. A sadness of soul, which often seizes them, disposes them to apprehend and suspect the worst of themselves. And hence it may so happen, that an incapacity to attend long to the exercises of devotion, arising from a natural weakness of nerves and spirits, shall appear to them as a black mark of a soul spiritually dead, and be thought a sufficient ground for applying to themselves all those awful things, which the hypocrites in Zion have so much reason to be afraid of. Or when they view the difficulties of the Christian life, they are ready to sink under the prospect, and to conclude, that they shall lose that little good they have attained, and shall surely and speedily fall by the hands of such formidable enemies. It is very probable, that the hearts of many who hear me, know, in this respect, their own bitterness and burthen: but let them remember, it is known also by the compassionate Shepherd of Israel; and shall be graciously remembered and considered by him.

4. The gracious promise in the text may be considered, as referring to "those, whose circumstances are peculiarly distressful, on account of afflictions, whether of body or of mind."

Who is there among you this day, that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant; and yet walketh in darkness, and hath no light? He is now called to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay himself upon his God. What Christians are there, whose days are spent in grief, and perhaps their years in sighing; so that, when their disappointments or maladies, their temptations or desertions, press hard upon them, they are scarce able to rise under the burthen, and to believe that they shall be any longer supported; but on the contrary are ready to cry out, Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?—To them does this compassionate Saviour appear, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees: to sweeten their sorrows and silence their fears, to confirm their hopes and awaken their joys. Let the young and the unexperienced, the timorous and the afflicted, whose desires are towards him, and their hearts waiting upon him, let them all hear it with pleasure: if they can be safe in the arms of Christ, if they can be easy in his bosom, if they can be cheerful under his gentlest conduct, they may dismiss their anxieties; for to them, and to such as they are, does he particularly speak in these gracious words of the text, assuring them, that he will gather them as the lambs in his arms, that he will carry them in his bosom, and that he will gently lead them, as ewes which are great with young. Which brings me,

II. To consider what may be intimated concerning the Redeemer's tenderness to them, as expressed by these pastoral phrases.

All the expressions do evidently speak a most affectionate care; and they do more particularly intimate,—that he will be ready to receive, protect,—and comfort them,—and that he will moderate their trials in proportion to their strength. The three former of these are implied, in gathering them in his arms, and laying them in his bosom; and the last, in his gently leading those that are with young.

1. The text evidently declares, "the readiness of the blessed Jesus to receive the weakest soul that applies to him."

He will gather them in his arms; i. e. at least his arms shall be open to them. For though the Lord be high, he hath respect unto the lowly, and he will not despise the humblest creature, that thinks himself most beneath his regards. Children, though they can do so little for his service, though they hardly know how to breathe out a prayer before him, or what blessings they should ask at his hands; yet they shall be welcome to him. He understands their poor broken language, and he hears it with pleasure. When the soul is but just setting out in religion, and seems, in a spiritual sense, as helpless as a new-born infant; when there is little knowledge, and little experience, and perhaps a very strong struggle between nature and grace, he will not despise the day of small things. When the Christian is ready to say the hardest things against himself, when a sense of former follies and of present defects, lays him even in the dust at the foot of a Redeemer, this gracious Shepherd will raise the drooping creature; and when he is ready to say, Lord, I am, as I deserve to be, cast out of thy sight, he will gather him among the lambs in his arms, he will open them wide to receive and embrace him.—Trembling souls, hear it to your comfort: In all your weakness, under all your guilt, in the midst of your fears, in the midst of your sorrows, you may come unto Jesus with a holy boldness, and assure yourselves that he will not cast you out, that he will in no wise, i. e. by no means, on no consideration whatsoever, do it. But,

2. The phrase further implies, "that he will provide for their safety."

And therefore it is added, that he will not only gather them in his arms, but carry them in his bosom; which expresses both the tenderness and the continuance of his care for this purpose. You know, when the poor trembling lamb is lodged, not only in the arms, but in the bosom, of the shepherd, while it remains there it is so secure, that the wild beast or the robber must conquer the shepherd before he can hurt the lamb. So when the feeble and fearful Christian hears the lions of hell, as it were, roaring around him, and sees them just ready to

devour him, he may fly to this sanctuary, and defy them all; for everlasting arms shall be underneath him, and shall compass him round for his defence and safety. I give unto my sheep eternal life, (says Christ, in the most resolute and determinate manner,) and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. "Reviving words!" may the believing soul say, "for they assure me, that if I am in that hand, to which I have been so frequently and so solemnly committing my eternal all, nothing can destroy me, that is not able to oppose, and even to conquer, Christ,—that Almighty Saviour,—whom, when he was on earth in feeble mortal clay, all the hosts of hell, with their united malice and rage, assaulted in vain, and were subdued and triumphed over by that very death which they so eagerly laboured to accomplish; for on the cross he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly."

It may properly be added here, that as the lamb cannot be destroyed, so neither can it be seduced, when in the shepherd's arms. The foolish creature, while at a distance from him, may wander it knows not whither, and lose itself in some barren wilderness, where it cannot subsist, and from whence it cannot return. And thus far the humble believer will own the parallel too just,—will own that he has again and again gone astray like a lost sheep; "Yet, Lord," may he add, "I adore thy faithful care in reducing me to thy fold again, and am encouraged this day to hope, thou wilt not suffer me to perish by my wanderings. Thine eye and thy hand are my security against the prevalency of inward corruptions, as well as outward temptations; and I trust, that neither the one nor the other shall be able finally to separate me from thy love, or to deprive me of the blessings which are connected with it."

3. The promise in the text further implies, "that Christ will consult the comfort of his people," as well as their safety.

He will carry the lambs in his bosom, when they are so weak as not to be able to walk, like the rest of the flock. Or rather, here may be a beautiful allusion to a circumstance, which must often occur in the place where Isaiah wrote; when a new-fallen lamb was exposed to the chillness of the morning or evening air, in a manner which might have been dangerous to its health or its life, that the shepherd, when he saw it lying in this weak and helpless condition, should take it up into his bosom, and fold about it part of his long garment, which most people wore in those eastern countries; and there the little helpless creature would lie, not only safe, but warm and easy, till it was revived and strengthened. So pleasantly and delightfully is the poor trembling soul lodged in the bosom of Christ. It is made to rejoice in his love, as well as his power, and to own him as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. You know, the Christian is described as rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and as glorying in him. The weary mariner does not rejoice so much, when the danger and fatigues of his voyage are over, and he sees himself safe at home, and meets the kindest of his long absent friends there, as the burthened soul rejoices, when by faith he is led to a Redeemer, and is received with the assurances of his love and grace. Nor would he exchange that soft compassionate bosom for the choicest and sweetest breasts of worldly consolation, of which the sinner may suck, but can never be satisfied from them.

4. The promise in the text must further intimate, "that Christ will accommodate the trials of the weak Christian to his strength," and will lay no more upon him than he shall be able to bear.

Therefore it is said, He will gently lead those that are with young; as the shepherd is careful, in such a circumstance, not to overdrive the cattle, lest both young and old be destroyed. God, says the apostle, is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above what ye are able; but will with the trial make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it. In this instance is the tenderness of Christ remarkable, and his wisdom too.—As a father would not crush his child by a heavy burthen, but lets him bear what is proportionable to his years and strength; till at last, by insensible degrees, he grows capable of carrying with ease and pleasure, what would before have overwhelmed him; thus does Christ deal with the feeble Christian. He calls him out to easier duties, to less formidable combats, to lighter afflictions, first; he stays his rough wind in the day of the east wind; and trains him up to pass, with fortitude and cheerfulness, through those more trying scenes, which he would before have trembled to behold in a distant prospect.

All these comfortable and important particulars seem naturally contained in the words of the text. You easily apprehend, that many of them, as applied to the great Shepherd of souls, might have been confirmed by reasonings and scriptures which I have here omitted: but I was anxious not too far to anticipate what is to be offered under the third general, where I am to show, "how much reason there is to expect, that the blessed Jesus will exercise this gentle and affectionate care towards the feeble of the flock." The subject is too copious to be discussed, or entered upon, in these few remaining moments. Let me therefore at present conclude with reminding you, that all is already proved by the authority of the text; and I hope, the truth of it has been sealed, by the experience of many that hear me this day. May it be sealed by the experience of us all! and all will then say, as surely

some of us can, that when we have heard the most that can be said of the grace of a Redeemer, and when the boldest or the softest figures are used to illustrate it, the half has not been told us. How much more shall we say it, when we come to the fold above! To which may his mercy at length conduct us, in such ways as his wisdom shall choose! And supported by his arms, and cherished in his bosom, we shall pursue them with pleasure. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

PROOFS OF CHRIST'S TENDERNESS, AND THE IMPROVEMENT WE SHOULD MAKE OF IT.

Isa. xl. 11.

He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

It should certainly be our care, when we are handling such figurative scriptures as these, that we do not offer violence to them, and force them, by a multitude of fanciful accommodations, to speak what it was by no means pertinent to the design of the sacred writer to have said. Yet on the other hand, it appears to me but a grateful return to the divine condescension in using such language, to dwell attentively on the images, with which God is sometimes pleased to clothe his addresses to us; that we may use them to such purposes, as seem to have been intended by them. Especially is such a care as this reasonable, when the figure is not expressed in a single word, but diversified and adorned with such a variety of expression and imagery, as we find in the text. In such a case, it is fit, that the beauties of every part should be traced: and there is this evident advantage in it, that it may not only make way for the easier entrance of important truths into the mind; but may give room to present the most familiar and accustomed thoughts, in such a diversity of dress, at different times, as may make them more pleasing to the mind, than they might probably be, if repeated in the plainest language, so often as the importance of them requires they should be insisted upon.

Perhaps it is for this reason, among others, that such a variety of metaphorical and allegorical language is used, both in the Old and New Testament, in describing the offices and characters of the great Redeemer. And for this reason also it is, that when such passages have occurred, as the subject of our public meditations, I have thought it more proper to dwell pretty largely on the various clauses of the text, than immediately to fix on some common place in divinity, which might easily have been introduced, and to treat it in a systematical form. I bless God, that the attention with which such discourses have generally been heard, and the good effects with which they have often been attended, have encouraged me to pursue this method myself, and to recommend it to others; though some may reckon it a part of a solid and rational taste, to think very meanly of it.

With these views I have entered on the subject in the following method: Having proved that the words refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, I have,

I. Enumerated the cases of various sorts of persons, whom we may suppose to be represented by the lambs of the flock, or by those that are with young, they being such as require peculiar tenderness.

And here I have mentioned,—those who are of a tender age,—or of a short standing in religion;—those whose spirits are naturally feeble;—and those whose circumstances are peculiarly calamitous, on account of any heavy affliction, either of body or mind, whether arising from providential dispensations, or from the hidings of God's face, or from the assault of spiritual enemies. So that Christians in such circumstances as these, will, I hope, consider themselves peculiarly interested in the comfortable things which are now further to be laid before them. And may the blessed Spirit apply the consolation to each of their souls!

II. I have also considered the Redeemer's tenderness to such, as expressed by gathering them with his arm, laying them in his bosom, and gently leading them.

And here I observed, that these gracious and affectionate words might be intended to express,—his readiness to receive,—to protect,—and to comfort them;—and his care to moderate their exercises and burthens in proportion to their strength. These are very important particulars, and most evidently suited to the necessities and desires of the feeble Christian. I hope, therefore, you will attend with pleasure, while I now proceed,

III. To show what abundant reason there is to believe that the great Shepherd will deal in this tender manner; that he will thus gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

As the lamb sometimes fears the Shepherd, and is ready to flee from him when he comes towards it with the kindest designs; so it is also evident from experience, that the comfort of the Christian is often much impaired, for want of that confidence in the care and tenderness of a Redeemer, which is so reasonable, as well as so delightful, that one would

wonder it should, after all, be so very deficient, even in the minds of those who are no strangers to his word, and who have themselves tasted of his grace. Permit me, therefore, at present to argue it,—from the general character under which he appears,—from the representations both of the prophets and apostles,—from his own declarations, as recorded by the evangelists,—and from the experience of those who have committed themselves to him.

1. We may argue this grace and tenderness of Christ, "from the general character under which he appears, as the Redeemer and Saviour of his people."

Is not this a character full of gentleness and goodness? Is it not instead of ten thousand arguments to prove, that if he pitied us in that low estate in which he at first found us, his mercy towards us will endure for ever? View our blessed Redeemer in the abasement of his abode among men; view him in the agonies in which he finished the last scene of his sorrows and sufferings; and then say, what but love brought him from heaven, and kept him on earth? What but love stretched him on the cross, and laid him in the grave? And can any expression of tenderness be too great to be expected after such amazing effects of it have already been experienced? Surely, as he himself argues, greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends: but, as the apostle justly observes, his love is commended towards us, it is set off by this important circumstance, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: and how cheerfully may we depend upon it, that if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death, we shall now, by his life, obtain complete salvation; and his living care will accomplish what his dying love has begun! All the blessed consequences I have already mentioned, and a long train of others, follow on this happy principle. He has graciously assumed the character and title of a Shepherd; and surely that name implies all the particulars which we have now been representing to you. His word, you know, sets a mark of infamy upon those shepherds that have not strengthened the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up that which was broken, nor brought again that which was driven away, nor sought that which was lost; but who have ruled with force or cruelty. Surely the good Shepherd will not be like these: surely, if he will feed his flock like such a Shepherd, he cannot fail of gathering the lambs with his arm, and carrying them in his bosom, and of being very tender of the lives of those for whom his own life was given.

2. We may argue the tenderness and grace of the Redeemer, "from those testimonies which are borne to it in the prophetic writings."

This is mentioned as a remarkable part of his character, when considered not only in his pastoral office, but also in his royal dignity. To him do those words of Zechariah refer, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; for behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding, not as other princes, perhaps on a managed horse, or in a splendid triumphal chariot; but according to the simplicity of more ancient days, when princes appeared amongst their subjects as fathers amongst their children; so shall he come, riding on an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass. Thus too Isaiah introduces God as speaking of him, in those remarkable words, (which are so applied to him by the evangelist Matthew, as the former are,) Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul is delighted:—he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets: a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he shall bring forth judgment unto truth, or victory; *i. e.* till he perfect his gracious design of making righteousness and truth victorious over all opposition. Therefore is he spoken of, as a most proper person to accomplish the most compassionate purposes of the divine goodness; and is represented as rejoicing in the thought of his bearing such a commission, in those gracious words, (which were the foundation of his first public discourse, and which he so solemnly applied to himself in the synagogue of Nazareth,) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. So exactly does our Lord answer the lovely character of a righteous and peaceful sovereign, drawn by David in those last words of his, (which many suppose ultimately to refer to the Messiah,) He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. And again, He shall judge the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy: and his people shall be so refreshed by his tender care, that he shall come down like rain upon the new-mown grass, and like showers that water the earth: he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper: he shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy: he shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight. Many parallel expressions

might be added to these; but the following heads are too copious to allow of a further enlargement upon this.

3. I might largely argue the tenderness and grace of Christ, "from his conduct on earth in the days of his flesh."

The time would fail me, should I attempt to enumerate half the particular circumstances of it, that tend to illustrate this part of his character: I must only select a few, which are the most remarkable. And judge you, whether all that is foretold of him in the text, and in the other prophetical passages I have been referring you to, was not amply and sweetly accomplished in them.

It is said, He will gather the lambs in his arms, *i. e.* (as I have been telling you above,) the young and the weak shall be welcome to him: and did not our Lord sufficiently show that they were so, when the little children were brought unto him? The disciples indeed forbad them, as thinking it was beneath the dignity of so great a prophet, as their Master was, to trouble himself about them. But observe it, children, (for I believe it was in part recorded for your sakes,) Jesus was greatly displeased with his disciples, that they should think he had no tenderness for such little creatures as you, and he said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God: and he took them upin his arms, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. Do you not here see the text most beautifully illustrated and fulfilled? do you not here see the great Shepherd gathering the lambs in his arms, and laying them in his bosom?—And does he not invite others also to that soft and pleasant repose, in those compassionate words, which surely none of you are such strangers in Israel as not to know? Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: and, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Did he not also express a very gracious regard to such, when he so peculiarly recommends the care of them to Peter, just when he was leaving the world, taking that peculiarly affecting opportunity of assuring him, not only that it was his will that they should be regarded, but also that an affectionate care of them was the most acceptable instance which Peter, and by a parity of reason his other ministers, could give of their love to him? Lovest thou me? if thou dost, feed my lambs, and feed my sheep. Can we then imagine, that he himself will fail in his care of any of them? especially when we consider the instances of his tenderness to some who were not of his fold, as well as to many who were to come, in whom though he saw only some feeble traces and images of goodness, yet it is said, that Jesus beholding him, loved him;—and to multitudes, over whom he wept, because they obstinately refused to be gathered in, and knew not the things belonging to their peace. Again,

The text tells us, He shall gently lead those that are with young; *i. e.* he shall accommodate his conduct to the weakness and infirmities of his people: and did not our Lord express this tenderness, when he taught his followers, as they were able to bear it; and was careful not to discourage them at first, by any unnecessary severities, lest it should be like putting new wine into old bottles, which might be easily broke by the fermentation of it?—and did not also this compassionate Shepherd appear ready to bind up the broken, and to heal the sick, when he so graciously excused the weakness of his disciples, though they fell asleep at a time, when one would have thought the agonies of their Lord should have turned them all into wakeful attention and affectionate sympathy? Yet, instead of severe reproaches, we find this kind apology in the mouth of their neglected, injured Master, The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. To add no more on this head, it is well worth our observation, that when Peter had so shamefully denied him, and all the rest of the apostles had forsaken him, even when he might most reasonably have expected their kindest assistance, he does not after his resurrection express any keen and passionate resentments, but on the contrary, all is mildness and sweetness. At his first appearance to Mary Magdalen, he says to her, Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. And a few moments after, when appearing to the other women on their return from the sepulchre, Go tell my brethren, says he that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. He does not say, "Go and tell those cowardly perfidious creatures, that God has not abandoned me, though they so meanly did it." He does not say, "Go tell that perjured traitor, who even in my very sight and hearing disowned me and abjured me:" but, "Go tell my brethren." And lest Peter should think himself excluded from the message, as peculiarly unworthy of so kind a name, the angel, no doubt by our Lord's particular direction, names that poor penitent expressly, and says, Go tell his disciples, and Peter, that he is risen; as if it had been said, "Let that humble mourner know, that his dear Master is risen, and in the midst of his triumphs graciously remembers him, and sends him these glad tidings thus early, as a token that all is forgiven." Gracious Shepherd! who would not love thee? who would not immediately cease his wanderings, to seek a retreat in thy compassionate bosom?

4. The compassion of our Redeemer is still further illustrated, "by those representations of it, which are made by the apostles, in what they have written since his ascension into glory."

You well know, they were under the direction of the Spirit of Jesus, and had the mind of Christ in so perfect a manner, that what they say is in effect spoken by Christ himself. Now there are many passages in their writings, which loudly speak, and tenderly illustrate, the compassion of his heart.

The apostles sometimes expressly assert it; and sometimes they write as taking it for granted, as a thing known, allowed, and indeed felt by every Christian.—It is frequently asserted by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in very expressive language. We are assured, that we have not a high priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was himself in all points tempted like as we are. And more than that, we are assured, that he submitted to the abasements of an incarnate state, on purpose that his sufferings might teach him a due sympathy: It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and a faithful high priest, in things pertaining unto God: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted: as the Jewish high priests, being themselves compassed with infirmities, could have compassion on the ignorant, and such as were out of the way.—In other places, the compassion of Christ is referred to, as universally known, and so great as to serve for a proverbial expression of the greatest kindness. Thus when conjugal affection is recommended from the consideration of both being one flesh, the apostle adds, No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: plainly intimating, that a man cannot have a more tender care of the members of his own body, than Christ has of his church and people. And elsewhere the apostle conjures Christians, by the bowels of Christ, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ; and pleads, if there be any consolation in Christ. We can hardly conceive any assertions so expressive, as such oblique insinuations and appeals as these.

Yet I cannot omit that engaging illustration of this compassionate care of the great Shepherd, which is to be found in those epistles which he sent to the churches in Asia, by the hand of John, after he was received to the glories of his exalted state. By these it appears, how distinctly he attended to the concerns of each of those churches, and therefore, no doubt, of each particular soul which constituted them; how diligently he observed, who were flourishing, and who were declining, that he might address them with encouragements, or admonitions, suited to their respective circumstances. It plainly appears, that notwithstanding all their peculiar advantages and obligations, there were many feeble and distempered souls among them, and some that were called out to very laborious services, and hazardous trials. Let me entreat you to observe, how the blessed Jesus lifts up the hands which were hanging down, and strengthens the feeble knees. He saw, that the church of Ephesus had left its first love;—that the church of Sardis had a name to live but was dead; yet that there was a little handful amongst them who had not defiled their garments;—that the church of Philadelphia had but a little strength;—and that of Laodicea was neither cold nor hot: yet a gracious Redeemer does not immediately disown them; but on the one hand, kindly admonishes them of the danger there was, lest growing apostasy and degeneracy should provoke him to remove their candlestick out of its place,—to cast them out as loathsome,—or to wound them with the sword of his mouth, *i. e.* his word;—and on the other hand, he encourages them to greater fidelity and zeal, by a promise of eating of the fruit of the tree of life,—of being clothed in white raiment,—of being confessed before the Father and his holy angels,—and of sitting down with him on his victorious throne.—And as for his faithful Smyrneans, he not only highly applauds their former conduct, but animates them against the terrors of imprisonment and other tribulation, by assuring them, he would give them a crown of life.—And he fails not to tell the Philadelphians, that since, weak as they were, they had kept his word, he also would keep them from the approaching hour of temptation, until at length he made them pillars in the house of God above, and gave them a new name in his holy city. You will please to take a more particular view of these epistles at your leisure; and you will see, in how amiable a manner the good Shepherd appears in them, laying the lambs in his bosom, and gently leading those that are with young.

5. I might further argue this grace and tenderness of our Lord Jesus, "from the experience of those, who have been thus gathered, and cherished, and conducted by him."

This being fact, ought certainly to have its weight; and how little soever it may be regarded by those who are strangers to it, yet to the happy soul, who has found and felt this care, and with the most delightful relish tasted that the Lord is gracious, it will be instead of ten thousand arguments. How many, when ready to sink under their sorrows and their fears, have looked unto him, and been lightened, have found their fears dispersed, and their hopes established, their strength renewed, and their joys enkindled! The effect is real, evident, and frequent; and if we inquire into the immediate cause, we shall often find it to be the promises of his word, uttered by Christ himself, or recorded by such as had their instructions and authority from him. But if it be demanded, whence it is that the promises do at some times impress the mind so much

more powerfully than at others, though as distinctly remembered, and as firmly believed? I will venture to say, how enthusiastical soever some may imagine it, that the most natural reason seems to me to be this: the blessed Spirit of God, whose office it is to show to believers the things of Christ, does sometimes display the promises before their eyes with uncommon sweetness and energy, at the same time sealing to the soul its own interest in them; and from hence arises so sublime and so holy a joy and strength, that the Christian observing its nature and tendency, cannot doubt its original. And I evidently see, and new instances of it are daily arising, that such secret communications from above are the most effectual support of many good men, under the greatest inward discouragements, and the most painful conflicts with their spiritual enemies. Now these supports being derived from the blessed Spirit, are to be considered as proceeding from Christ; since it is most evident from the whole tenor of Scripture, that Christ is the great head, from whom believers derive the influences of this Spirit, which are therefore called the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. So that every new instance of such refreshments and consolations as these, is an additional experimental proof of the tenderness and grace of a Redeemer.

Nor is there any just objection against it, arising from the many instances, in which he has permitted excellent persons to go on, for a considerable time, in the bitterness of their souls, without any sensible manifestations of his care and favour. We are to judge nothing before the time; and surely the fidelity and kindness of the blessed Jesus is sufficiently approved, if, though in the most secret and imperceptible manner, he supports his people in the midst of their greatest difficulties, so as to prevent their being separated from him, till he safely conducts them to the heavenly world, and there shows them the reasons of all their sorrows, and comforts them infinitely more than in proportion to them all. And that he does so, appears evident to me, not only from the promises and declarations of his word, which have been referred to under the former head, but also from the observation of facts, as far as it is possible for a train of particular observations, to confirm such a general assertion.

I must here take the liberty to say, (because I think it my duty on this occasion publicly to testify it,) that though for my age I have had a considerable opportunity of making my remarks on various cases of persons under spiritual distress, yet, excepting a very few instances of evident distraction, which none can reasonably imagine to have affected their eternal state, I cannot recollect any single instance, in which the humble soul has seemed to be finally deserted by the great Shepherd. Many who have been under strong convictions and agonies of mind, have indeed forgot their resolutions, taken up often in an apparent dependence on themselves, and have returned with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Many, who have talked loudly of their extraordinary communications from above, and despised others who have been less confident, have quickly appeared self-deceiving hypocrites, and have been left by foul miscarriages to bring a scandal on themselves, and on religion too. But I cannot remember, that I ever met with a single person, who appeared, as one of the lambs of Christ's flock, humble under a sense of sin, and cordially disposed to put himself under the care of Christ as the great Shepherd, who after seeking and waiting on him, has been either driven away by terror, or finally seduced into soul-ruining errors or crimes, even by the most artful deceivers. Many of them have perhaps for a considerable time gone on weeping and trembling; but they have kept their hold even to the last, and died with much more comfort than they lived. Others have, for a long course of afterlife, found their consolations as great as ever their sorrows had been: and, after all their fears, many are to this day going on in a steady calm, as knowing whom they have believed; while others, who I doubt not are equally safe, are saying, If we perish, we will perish at his feet: but so far as I can recollect, I have never myself seen any of such a character, who have fallen into a final apostasy, or died in such circumstances as to leave room to fear that their souls were lost; and I have heard of few cases, which bear such an appearance.——Let all these remarks and arguments be attentively considered; and then say, whether the grace and tenderness of a Redeemer be not as clearly proved, and as firmly established, as even the lambs of his flock could reasonably desire. And now,

IV. Let me conclude the discourse, with hinting at the purposes to which it may be improved.

And surely the survey we have been taking of the tenderness of Christ as a Shepherd, may naturally lead us to some such reflections as these.

1. "How amiable does our blessed Redeemer appear, when we contemplate him under such a character!"

Such sentiments of humanity are wrought into our very natures, that we cannot but love any person, especially one of distinction, who condescends to the weak and the helpless, and tenderly accommodates himself to their necessities and distresses. You honour, and you love, a man of genius, and learning, and eminence in life, who will lay aside other more splendid employments, that he may instruct children, or by kind and affectionate converse, even with the poorest creature that applies to him, may ease the burthens of the sorrowful spirit. If a minister of such a character has been

remarkable for his readiness to such services, and for his diligent and successful application to them, though it be plainly the peculiar duty of his office to abound in them, he is justly respected while he lives, and his name and memory are dear and precious to survivors: yet this is only the condescension of one worm to another. How much more reason have we to reverence and love the compassionate Jesus, the Prince of Glory, who has so long borne, and so tenderly and faithfully executed, this kind office, and bears and executes it to this day! how many diseased souls has he healed, how many weak hands has he strengthened, how many weeping eyes has he dried, how many trembling hearts has he supported and revived! Let our love and our praises ascend to this great common benefactor, for the share which others have had in his goodness.—But must the reflection stop here? Are not we ourselves in the number of those obliged creatures? and shall not we feel and own the obligation?—We should surely be a burthen to ourselves, if we had no sense of the kindness of those, who supported us in our feeble infancy; who then bore us in their arms, and cherished us in their bosoms; who watched over our slippery steps, and added the more important care of forming our opening minds to knowledge and virtue. And when we have felt the burthen of more advanced days pressing hard upon us, and heaviness in our hearts has made them stoop, if some cordial sympathizing friend has gladdened them with good and comfortable words, how kindly have we taken it, and how thankfully have we acknowledged it! But, O blessed Jesus, what were the guides of our infancy, or what the companions and comforters of our more advanced years, in comparison of what thou hast been to us? "Whatever I now am," may the soul say, "if I am thine, I was once a helpless lamb in thy flock; and how much am I indebted to that pastoral care of thine, of which I have now been hearing! Hadst thou not pursued me in my wanderings, I had been utterly lost: hadst thou not guarded me in thine arms, I had long since been devoured: hadst thou not cherished me in thy bosom, my very heart had been broken. And to this very day, what were I without thy care and favour?" Thus let us look back to former days, and the years of more ancient times; and as God reminds his people, how he took them by their arms, and taught them to go, as he mentions with an agreeable reflection, "the kindness of their youth, and the love of their espousals," let us this day gratefully commemorate his kindness to us in our youth, and when our souls were first espoused to him.

2. "How ready should we be, to imitate this amiable character of our Redeemer; and after his example, to show a tender regard to the feeble of the flock!"

We who are ministers should especially do it, if we would approve our fidelity to the great Shepherd, and finally stand accepted in his sight. Observe, I entreat you, my younger brethren, (for my relation to some of you not only allows, but requires me, to speak with peculiar freedom to you,) observe in how awful a manner the great God declares his displeasure against those shepherds, who had neglected the care which I now recommend. Behold, I am against those shepherds, saith the Lord; (i. e. as appears from the preceding verses, those shepherds who had not strengthened the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought again that which was driven away;) and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Did God so severely censure the Jewish shepherds for their neglect; and will he not disown and condemn us, if under all the greater engagements of such a dispensation as the gospel, and such an example as we have now been surveying, our flocks be neglected, or rather, his flock committed to our care? If you fear God, or love the Lord Jesus Christ, feed his sheep,—feed his lambs. Instruct children; though it be a difficult work, and may seem to ignorant and thoughtless people a mean work: yet do it, and you will probably find the comfort of it, even if they die young, as they perhaps may; and much more, if you see these tender plants growing up as cedars in Lebanon, and becoming pillars in the house of our God.—Tenderly comfort mourning souls. Let them have free access to you at proper times; hear their story patiently, though it be a very melancholy one; and though you have heard it over and over again, from others in the same circumstances, if not from themselves. Watch their tempers, observe the turn of their minds, and of their discourses; and endeavour to lay hold of some word of their own, that you may, if possible, graft comfort upon it. Mourn with them, while they mourn; and when your heart is impressed with their sorrowful case, go with them to the throne of grace, and spread it largely and particularly before the Lord, which you cannot so conveniently do in any other circumstance.—I know, there are a thousand gaieties of life, and amusements of literature, which make young persons especially averse to such work as this. But remember, you are ministers of Christ; and surely the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. You would think very ill of the shepherd, that was so charmed with the music of his pipe, as to forget his lambs, when they should be fed and tended. And I will venture to say, that as the case I now recommend is very necessary in order to the success of your ministry, so it may be a means of improving both your gifts and graces, and of forming you to a spiritual and experimental strain of preaching; which is a much more valuable

part of a minister's furniture, than classical or mathematical learning, or the critical study of the Scripture itself; though all these are desirable in their places, because all may be useful towards making the man of God perfect.

I would also from hence take occasion, to address an exhortation to you who are heads of families. To your more immediate and constant care the lambs of the flock are committed. Feed them diligently and affectionately. Without your concurrence, we cannot promise ourselves much from our more public attempts. Attend therefore to the religious concerns of your children and servants; and do it with a gentleness suited to their age and circumstances. Frighten them not with a rigorous and austere severity; but, as St. Paul expresses it with regard to himself, be gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. In short, let us all bear one another's burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; and let us candidly receive one another, as we hope that Christ with all our infirmities hath received us.

3. "What abundant encouragement is here for the feeblest soul, to commit itself to Christ!"

Let me now, on that encouragement, particularly address the exhortation to those, whose circumstances render it peculiarly their concern.

Let me address it to you, my younger friends, even to the *children* that hear me this day. We speak of the gentleness and goodness of Christ, on purpose to invite you to him. Go to him by faith and prayer, and say, "Blessed Jesus, I come to thee a poor weak tender creature; but it was in regard to such weakness, that thou hast been pleased to speak so graciously. I believe what I have heard, and I mean to venture my soul upon it. I flee to thee, as the helpless lamb to its shepherd, when hungry—that he may feed it, when pursued by wild beasts—that he may defend it. Lord, open thine arms, and thy bosom to me, though I am so inconsiderable a creature. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou ordainest praise. Fill my heart with thy love, and my mouth with thy praise; and lead me on, till I come to praise thee among the angels in heaven, and to serve thee as they do."

Let me address the exhortation, also, to the tempted and sorrowful soul. O thou afflicted, thou who art tossed with the tempest, and not comforted! look unto Jesus. Let thy conflicts and dangers drive thee to him; though Satan would thereby attempt to drive thee from him. Accustom not thyself to think of Christ as dreadful and severe. Terrify not thyself with the thought of the iron rod of vengeance, whilst thou feelest thyself disposed to submit to the golden sceptre of his grace, to the pastoral rod by which he guides his sheep. And when thou findest thy doubts arising, flee to the representations and assurances of his word, so largely insisted on above; and pray, that the influences of his Spirit may strengthen thy faith in them.

Nor let me neglect so proper an occasion, of addressing myself to aged Christians. You, my friends, though not the lambs of the flock, are, on some account, the feeble of it. Though I hope, and believe, that many of you are strong in grace; yet the outer man is decaying, and sensible comfort often decays with it. Yet be not discouraged; but remember your Shepherd. You have not only heard of his grace, but you have long experienced it. Be cheerful in it, and remember, that as all your experiences will not secure you otherwise than as in the bosom of Christ, so all your infirmities and trials cannot endanger you while you are there. He has led you on gently and safely through the wilderness; a few steps more will finish your journey, and bring you to the ever-blissful pastures of Canaan.

Once more, let me address the exhortation to those who have gone astray from this blessed Shepherd, and invite them to return to him. May I not appeal to your own consciences to witness, that it was never better with you than when you kept nearest to him; and that while at a distance from him, you are exposed to want, and danger, and bitter regret? Has not your heart melted within you, while I have been speaking? and have you not been ready to say, "O that I were once more lodged in those gracious arms, in that compassionate bosom!" And what hinders it? Does he not assure you, that he will yet be willing to receive you? nay, that he will rejoice over you, on some accounts even more than over those who never wandered? Return then, in the strength of divine grace, to the duties you have neglected, to the ordinances you have forsaken; and may your souls find refreshment in them, that with firmer purpose of heart you may for the future cleave unto the Lord. And now,

Lastly, "What a delightful idea does it give us of the mutual endearments, which shall pass between Christ and his people, when they are brought to the world of glory!"

There they shall be no longer exposed to necessities and alarms; but all the purposes of his love shall be completed in their everlasting security and joy. And surely the gracious Redeemer must be inconceivably delighted, when he there sees of the travail of his soul. When he has with a gentle and gracious hand conducted his sheep through the dark valley of the shadow of death, with what joy will he open to them those better pastures! with what congratulations will he receive them to a state of inseparable nearness to him, and administer unto them an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of their

Lord and Saviour! Therefore it is beautifully represented in the book of the Revelation, as the business and joy of Christ, even on the throne of his glory, to lead on his saints to the various scenes of divine pleasure and enjoyment, which are provided for them there: The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters.

And, O gracious Redeemer, what will the joy of thy flock then be, when thus fed and conducted by thee! If it be so delightful at this humble distance, to believe ourselves the objects of thy care and favour, and to taste of these little streams which thou art causing to flow in upon us here in the wilderness, what will that river of life be! If it be now the joy of our hearts, awhile to forget our cares and our fears, when we are perhaps at thy table, and to lean our weary heads for a few moments on thy dear breast; what will it be, for ever to dwell in thine embrace, and to say once for all, Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee! Bountifully indeed! when they who were brought out with weeping, and led on with supplication, shall, as the redeemed of the Lord, come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

In the mean time, we rejoice in hope of this blessed scene, and would raise such feeble praises, as earth will admit, to this great Shepherd, whose arm is so strong to guard us; whose bosom is so soft to cherish us; and whose heart is so compassionate, notwithstanding all our unworthiness, as to exert that arm for our protection, and to open that bosom for our repose. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY BRIEFLY STATED, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT PROVED TO BE GENUINE.

2 Pet. i. 16.

—— *We have not followed cunningly devised fables.*

It is undoubtedly a glory to our age and country, that the nature of moral virtue has been so clearly stated, and the practice of it so strongly enforced, by the views of its native beauty, and beneficial consequences, both to private persons and societies. Perhaps, in this respect, hardly any nation or time has equalled, certainly few, if any, have exceeded, our own. Yet I fear I might add, there have been few ages or countries, where vice has more generally triumphed, in its most audacious, and in other respects most odious, forms.

This may well appear a surprising case; and it will surely be worth our while to inquire into the causes of so strange a circumstance. I cannot now enter into a particular detail of them. But I am persuaded, none is more considerable than that unhappy disregard, either to the gospel in general, or to its most peculiar and essential truths, which is so visible among us, and which appears to be continually growing. It is plain, that like some of old, who thought and professed themselves the wisest of mankind, or in other words, the freest thinkers of their age, multitudes among us have not liked to retain God and his truths in their knowledge: and it is therefore the less to be wondered at, if God has given them up to a reprobate mind; to the most infamous lusts and enormities; and to a depth of degeneracy, which, while it is in part the natural consequence, is in part also the just but dreadful punishment of their apostasy from the faith. And I am persuaded, that those who do indeed wish well to the cause of public virtue, as every true Christian most certainly does, cannot serve it more effectually, than by endeavouring to establish men in the belief of the gospel in general, and to affect their hearts with its most distinguishing truths.

The latter of these is our frequent employment, and is what I have particularly been attempting in the preceding discourses on the power and grace of the Redeemer: the former I shall now, by the divine assistance, apply myself to in those that follow. And I have chosen the words now before us, as a proper introduction to such a design.

They do indeed peculiarly refer to the coming of our Lord, which the apostle represents as attested by that glory, of which he was an eye-witness on the mount of transfiguration, and by that voice from heaven which he heard there: but the truth of these facts is evidently connected with that of the gospel in general. I am persuaded therefore, you will think they are properly prefixed to a discourse on the general evidences of Christianity. And I hope, by the divine assistance, to propose them at this time in such a manner, as shall convince you, that the apostles had reason to say, and that we also have reason to repeat it, We have not followed cunningly devised fables.

I have often touched on this subject occasionally: but I think it my duty at present to insist something more largely upon it. You easily apprehend, that it is a matter of the highest importance, being indeed no other than the great foundation of all our eternal hopes. While so many are daily attempting to destroy this foundation, it is possible, that those of you especially, who are but entering on the world, may be called out to give a reason of the hope that is in you: I would therefore, with the apostle, be concerned, that you may be ready to do it. It may fortify you against the artifices by

which the unwary are often deceived and insnared, and may possibly enable you to put to silence their foolishness. At least it will be for the satisfaction of your minds, to have considered the matter seriously, and to be conscious to yourselves, that you are not Christians merely by education, or example, as (had you been born elsewhere) you might have been pagans or Mahometans; but that you are so upon rational evidence, and because (as the sacred historian expresses it) you know the certainty of those things in which you have been instructed.

To open and vindicate the proof of Christianity in all its extent, would be the employment of many discourses; nor would it, on the whole, be proper to attempt it here. All that I now intend here is, to give you a summary view of the most considerable arguments, in that which seems to me their most proper and natural connexion; that so you may be able to judge of them better than you can possibly do by a few scattered remarks, or by the most copious enlargement on any single branch of them alone. I shall endeavour to dispose these hints so, as that they may be some guide to those, whose leisure and abilities may lead them to a more ample and curious inquiry; that they may not be entangled in so complex an argument, but may proceed in an orderly manner. And if any of you, my friends, desire a more particular information on any of those heads, which I now but briefly suggest, you may depend upon it, that faithful ministers of every denomination will think it an important part of their duty, to give you all the private assistance they can. It is my hearty prayer, that God would enable me to plead his cause with success; that he would open your understandings to receive these things, and strengthen your memories to retain them; that you may not, like children, be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but may be strong in faith, giving glory to God; that, your faith being more and more established, it may appear, that the tree is watered at the roots, and all your other graces may grow and flourish in an equal proportion.

But before I proceed, I must desire you to observe, that there is no proof in the world so satisfactory to the true Christian, as to have felt the transforming power of the gospel on his own soul. As that illiterate man, whose eyes were miraculously opened by Christ, when he was questioned by the Jewish sanhedrim, who endeavoured with all their sophistry to prove Christ an impostor, answered with great steadiness and constancy, and with a great deal of reason too, This one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see: so the most unlearned of the disciples of Jesus, having found his soul enlightened and sanctified, and felt his heart so effectually wrought upon, as to bring him home to his duty, his God, and his happiness, by the constraining power of the gospel, will despise a thousand subtle objections which may be urged against it; and though the cross of Christ be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, yet with this experience of its saving energy, he will honour it in the midst of all their contempt and ridicule, as the power of God, and the wisdom of God. In this sense, though the miraculous communication of the Spirit be ceased, he that believes hath still the witness in himself; and while the Spirit beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God, he cannot doubt, but that the word, by which he was, as it were, begotten unto him, is indeed a divine and incorruptible seed. And perhaps there are certain seasons of pressing temptation, in which the most learned, as well as the most illiterate, Christian, will find this the surest anchor of his hope.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, that this glorious kind of evidence is like the white stone, mentioned in the Revelation, in which there was a new name written, which no man knew but he who received it. God has therefore made other provision for the honour and support of his gospel, by furnishing it with a variety of proof, which may with undiminished, and indeed with growing, conviction, be communicated from one to another. And we should be greatly wanting in gratitude to him, in zeal for a Redeemer's kingdom, and in charitable concern for the conversion of those who reject the gospel, as well as for the edification of those who embrace it, should we wholly overlook these arguments, or neglect to acquaint ourselves with them. This is the evidence which I am now to propose; and I desire you would hear it with a becoming attention. I speak to you as to rational creatures: judge ye of the reasonableness of what I shall say.

In prosecution of this great design, I shall endeavour more particularly to show you,—that if we take the matter on a general survey, it will appear highly probable, that such a scheme of doctrines and precepts, as we find Christianity to be, should indeed have been a divine revelation;—and then, that if we examine into the external evidence of it, we shall find it certain in fact, that it was so, and that it had its original from above.

First, Let me show, "that taking the matter merely in theory, it will appear highly probable, that such a system as the gospel should be indeed a divine revelation."

To evince this, I would more particularly prove, —that the state of mankind was such, as greatly to need a revelation;—that there seems from the light of nature, encouragement to hope that God should grant one;—that it is reasonable to believe, if any

were made, it should be so introduced and transmitted, as we are told Christianity was; and that its general nature and substance should be such, as we find that of the gospel is. If these particulars are made out, here will be a strong presumptive evidence, that the gospel is from God; and we shall have opened a fair way toward that more direct proof, which I principally intend.

1. "The case of mankind is naturally such, as greatly to need a divine revelation."

I speak not here of man in his original state; though even then, as many have largely shown, some instruction from above seemed necessary to inform him of many particulars, which it was highly expedient that he should immediately know: but I speak of him in the degenerate condition in which he now so evidently lies, by whatever means he was brought into it. It is an easy thing to make florid encomiums on the perfection of natural light, and to deceive unwary readers with an ambiguous term;* (which shall sometimes signify all that appears even to the divine understanding, and sometimes no more than the meanest of the human race may, or than they actually do, attain;) but let fact speak, and the controversy will soon be determined. I appeal to all, that are acquainted with the records of antiquity, or that have any knowledge of the most credible accounts of the present state of those countries where Christianity is unknown, whether it is not too obvious a truth, that the whole heathen world has lain, and still lies, in wickedness. Have not incomparably the greater part of them been perpetually bewildered in their religious notions and practices, vastly differing from each other, and almost equally differing on all sides from the probable appearances of truth and reason? Is any thing so wild as not to have been believed, any thing so infamous as not to have been practised, by them, while they have not only pretended to justify it by reason, but have consecrated it as a part of their religion? To this very day, what are the discoveries of new nations in the American or African world, but, generally speaking, the opening of new scenes of enormity? Rapine, lust, cruelty, human sacrifices, and the most stupid idolatries, are, and for ought I can find, always have been, the morality and religion of almost all the pagan nations under heaven: and to say, that there have still been some smothered sparks of reason within, which, if cherished, might have led them to truth and happiness, is only saying, that they have been so much the more criminal, and therefore so much the more miserable.

But you live at home, and hear these things only by uncertain report. Look then around you within the sphere of your own observation, and see the temper and character of the generality of those, who have been educated in a Christian, and even in a protestant, country. Observe their ignorance and forgetfulness of the divine Being, their impieties, their debaucheries, their fraud, their oppression, their pride, their avarice, their ambition, their unnatural insensibility of the wants, and sorrows, and interests of each other; and when you see how bad they generally are in the midst of so many advantages, judge by that of the probable state of those that want them. Judge upon these views, whether a revelation be an unnecessary thing.

2. "There is, from the light of nature, considerable encouragement to hope, that God would favour his creatures with so needful a blessing as a revelation appears."

That a revelation is in itself a possible thing, is evident beyond all shadow of a doubt. Shall not he that made man's mouth, who has given us this wonderful faculty of discovering our sentiments, and communicating our ideas to each other, shall not he be able to converse with his rational creatures, and by sensible manifestations, or by inward impressions, to convey the knowledge of things which lie beyond the ken of their natural faculties, and yet may be highly conducive to their advantage? To own a God, and to deny him such a power, would be a notorious contradiction.—But it may appear much more dubious, whether he will please to confer such a favour on sinful creatures.

Now I acknowledge, that we could not certainly conclude he would ever do it, considering, on the one hand, how justly they stood exposed to his final displeasure, and on the other, what provision he had made by the frame of the human mind, and of nature around us, for giving us such notices of himself, as would leave us inexcusable, if we either failed to know him or to glorify him as God; as the apostle argues at large. Nevertheless, methinks we should have had something of this kind to hope, from considering God as the indulgent Father of his creatures; from observing the tender care which he takes of us, and the liberal supply which he grants for the support of the animal life; especially, from the provision which he has made for man, considered as a guilty and calamitous creature, by the medicinal and healing virtues which he has given to many of the productions of nature, which in a state of perfect rectitude and happiness man would never have needed. This is a circumstance, which seemed strongly to intimate, that he would some time or another graciously provide some remedy to heal men's minds; and that he would interpose to instruct them in his own nature, in the manner in which he is to be served, and in the final treatment which they may expect from him. And I think,

* This Dr. Tyndal has done in so gross and palpable a manner, that it is surprising that fallacy alone should not have exposed his "Christianity as Old as the Creation," to the immediate contempt of every intelligent reader.

such an apprehension seems very congruous to the sentiments of the generality of mankind: as appears from the many pretences to divine revelation which have often been made, and the readiness of multitudes to receive them on very slender proofs: this shows how naturally men expect some such kind interposition of the Deity; a thought which might further be confirmed by some remarkable passages of heathen writers, which I have not now time particularly to mention.

3. We may easily conclude, "that if a Revelation were given, it would be introduced and transmitted in such a manner as Christianity is said to have been."

It is exceeding probable, for instance, that it should be taught, either by some illustrious person sent down from a superior world, or at least by a man of eminent wisdom and piety, who should himself have been, not only a teacher, but an example, of universal goodness. In order to this it seems probable, that he should be led through a series of calamity and distress; since otherwise he would not have been a pattern of the virtues which adorn adversity, and are peculiar to it. And it might also have been expected, that in the extremity of his distress, the blessed God, whose messenger he was, should in some extraordinary manner have interposed, either to preserve or to recover him from death.

It is moreover exceeding probable, that such a person, and perhaps also they who were at first employed as his messengers to the world, should be endowed with a power of working miracles; both to awaken men's attention, and to prove a divine mission, and the consequent truth of their doctrines; some of which might perhaps not be capable of any other kind of proof; or if they were, it is certain that no method of arguing is so short, so plain, and so forcible, and on the whole, so well suited to the conviction, and probably the reformation, of mankind, as a course of evident, repeated, and uncontrolled miracles. And such a method of proof is especially adapted to the populace, who are incomparably the greater part of mankind, and for whose benefit, we may assure ourselves, a revelation would chiefly be designed.—I might add, it was no way improbable, though not in itself certain, that such a dispensation should open gradually on the world; and that the most illustrious messenger of God to men should be ushered in by some predictions, which should raise a great expectation of his appearance, and have an evident accomplishment in him.

As for the propagation of a religion so introduced, it seems no way improbable, that having been thus established in its first age, it should be transmitted to future generations by credible testimony, as other important facts are. It is certain that affairs of the utmost moment, which are transacted amongst men, depend on testimony: on this voyages are undertaken, settlements made, and controversies decided: controversies, on which not only the estates but the lives of men depend. And though it must be owned, that such an historical evidence is not equally convincing with miracles which are wrought before our own eyes; yet it is certain it may rise to such a degree as to exclude all reasonable doubt. And I know not why we should expect that the evidence of a revelation should be such, as universally to compel the immediate assent of all to whom it is offered. To me it seems much more likely that it should be so adjusted, as to be a kind of touchstone to the tempers and characters of men; capable indeed of giving ample satisfaction to the diligent and candid inquirer, yet attended with some circumstances, from whence the captious and perverse might take occasion to cavil and object. Such might we suppose the evidence of a revelation would be; and such, it is maintained, that of Christianity is. The teachers of it say, and undertake to prove, that it was thus introduced, thus established, and thus transmitted; and we trust that this is a strong presumption in its favour: especially as we can add,

4. "That the main doctrines contained in the gospel, are of such a nature as we might in general suppose those of a divine revelation would be, rational, practical, and sublime."

One would imagine, that in a revelation of a religion from God, the great principles of natural religion should be clearly asserted, and strongly maintained: such, I mean, as the existence, the unity, the perfection, and the providence of God; the essential and immutable difference between moral good and evil; the obligation we are under to the various branches of virtue, whether human, social, or divine; the value and immortality of the soul; and the rewards and punishments of a future state. One would easily conclude, that all these particulars must be contained in it; and that, upon the whole, it should appear calculated to form men's minds to a proper temper, rather than to amuse them with curious speculations.

It might indeed be further supposed, and probably concluded, that such a revelation would contain some things which could not have been learned from the highest improvements of natural light: and considering the infinite and unfathomable nature of the blessed God, it would be more than probable that many things might be hinted at and referred to which our feeble faculties should not be able fully to comprehend. Yet we should expect to find these introduced in a practical view, as directing us to duties before unknown, or suggesting powerful motives to make us resolute and constant in the discharge of the rest.* As for

* Particularly on what terms, and to what degree, pardon and [illegible] may [illegible] be expected by sinful creatures.

ceremonial and positive institutions, we should imagine, at least in the most perfect state of the revelation, that they should be but few, and those few plainly subservient to the great purposes of practical religion.

I shall only add, that forasmuch as pride appears to be the most reigning corruption of the human mind, and the source of numberless irregularities, it is exceeding probable, that a divine revelation should be calculated to humble the fallen creature, and bring it to a sense of its guilt and weakness; and the more evidently that tenderness appears, other things being equal, the greater reason there is to believe that the original of such a scheme is from above.

Your own thoughts have undoubtedly presented me in the application of these characters to the Christian revelation. The justice of that application I must not now illustrate at large. But I must beg leave to advance one remark, which will conclude what I have to say on this general: which is, that as the Christian system is undoubtedly worthy of God, so, considering the manner in which it is said to have been introduced, (separate from the evidence of these facts, which is afterwards to be considered,) it is extremely difficult to imagine from whom else it could have proceeded.

I will readily allow, that neither the reasonableness of its doctrines, nor the purity of its morals, will alone prove its divine original; since it is possible the reason of one man may discover that, which the reason of another approves, as being, in itself considered, either true in theory, or useful in practice. But this is not all; for in the present case it is evident, that the first teachers of Christianity professed, that they were taught it by divine revelation, and that they were empowered by God with miraculous endowments for the confirmation of it. Now if it were not indeed so as they professed, how can we account for so strange a phenomenon, as such a doctrine introduced with such pretences? If it were not from God, whence was it? from good or from evil angels or men? Wicked creatures, as our Lord strongly intimates, would never contrive and propagate so excellent a scheme; nor can we imagine that holy angels, or righteous men, would thus be found false witnesses of God, or have attempted to support the cause of religion and truth, by such impious and notorious falsehoods, as their pretensions must have been, if they were falsehoods at all.

And thus much for the first branch of the argument: If you consider the Christian scheme only in theory, it appears highly probable; since a revelation was so much needed, might so reasonably be expected, and if it were ever given, would, so far as we can judge, be thus introduced, and be in the main attended with such internal characters. And though we have not as yet expressly proved, that the gospel was introduced in such a manner, as the defenders of it assert; yet it would be strangely unaccountable, that so admirable a system of truth and duty should be advanced by the prince of darkness, and the children of wickedness; as it must have been, if the persons first employed in the propagation of it were not endowed with power from on high.

To embrace the gospel is so safe, and on the whole so comfortable, a thing, that I think a wise man would deliberately and resolutely venture his all upon it, though nothing more could be offered for its confirmation. But, blessed be God, we have a great deal more to offer in this important cause; and can add, with still greater confidence, that it is not only in theory thus probable, but,

Secondly, "That it is in fact certain, that Christianity is indeed a divine revelation."

Here I confess the chief stress is to be laid; and therefore I shall insist more largely on this branch of the argument, and endeavour, by the divine assistance, to prove the certainty of this great fact. You will naturally apprehend, that I speak only of what is commonly called a moral certainty;* but I need speak of no more; for in many cases, such kind of evidence gives the mind as ample and as rational a satisfaction, as it may find even in some supposed mathematical demonstration; since there it is possible, at least in a long deduction of particulars, for the most sagacious of mankind to fall into a mistake.

Now in order to settle this grand point as clearly as I can, I think it may be proper to prove,

I. That the books of the New Testament, as they are now in your hands, may be depended upon as written by the first preachers and publishers of Christianity. And,

II. That from hence it will certainly follow, that what they assert is true, and that the religion they teach brings along with it such evidences of a divine authority, as may most justly recommend it to our acceptance.

Each of these heads might furnish out matter for many volumes; but it is my business to hint at the most obvious and important thoughts, by which they may briefly be illustrated and confirmed.

I. I am to prove to you, "that the books of the New Testament, now in your hands, were written by the first preachers and publishers of Christianity."

You see I confine the present proof to the New Testament. Not that I think the authority of the Old to be suspected, or the use of it by any means to be despised. God forbid! It is an invaluable

* Which though it amount not to strict demonstration, is every kind of evidence as suits past matters of fact, and is sufficient to make a candid and rational inquirer easy in his assent.

treasure, which demands our daily delightful and thankful perusal, and is capable of being defended in a manner which I am persuaded its subtlest enemies will never be able to answer. But the nature of my present argument, and the limits of my time, oblige me at present to wave the proof of it, any further than as it is implied in, and dependent upon, what I have more immediately in view.

In the process of the discourse, though I shall studiously avoid any vain ostentation of learning, yet it will be absolutely necessary to assert some things, which cannot certainly be known, without some little acquaintance with the ancient writers. You cannot, most of you, be supposed to have formed such an acquaintance; but I take it for granted you will readily believe, that I will not "lie for God, nor talk deceitfully for him." I shall say nothing of this kind, but what I know to be contained in those writings; and you may assure yourselves, that no man of common sense, whatever his moral or religious character were, would venture in such an age as this, publicly to cite passages, as from authors in every one's hands, which he cannot prove to be contained in them.

Having premised these things, I go on to the argument; and shall advance in it by the following degrees. I shall prove,—that Christianity is an ancient religion;—that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, crucified at Jerusalem about seventeen hundred years ago;—that the first preachers of his religion wrote books, which went by the name of those that now make up the volume of our New Testament;—that they are preserved in the original to the present times;—and that the translation of them, which you have, is in the main such as may be depended upon as faithful. And then I shall have clearly made out what I proposed in this first part.

1. It is certain, "that Christianity is not a new religion, but that it was maintained by great multitudes, quickly after the time in which Jesus is said to have appeared."

That there was, considerably more than sixteen hundred years ago, a body of men, who went by the name of Christians, is almost as evident, as that a race of men was then existing in the world; nor do I know, that any have ever been wild and confident enough to dispute it. If any should for argument sake question it, they might quickly be convinced by a considerable number of Christian writers, who lived in the same or in the next age,* and mention it as a thing notoriously certain, that Christianity was then of some standing in the world; some of them giving directions and exhortations to their brethren, and others forming apologies to their enemies, for which there could not otherwise have been the least foundation. We might have acquiesced in their testimony, had it been alone, but it is confirmed by that of Jews and heathens, who, by their early invectives against the Christians, do most evidently prove, that there was such a body of men in the world.—The most considerable Roman historians, who lived in this age, and wrote of it, are Tacitus and Suetonius, who both published their writings above sixteen hundred years ago; and they are always, and very justly, appealed to, as pregnant witnesses upon this occasion.—For Tacitus assures us, "that in Nero's days," who begun his reign about twenty years after the death of Christ, "there was a vast multitude of Christians, not only in Judea, but at Rome too; against whom Nero raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty, as moved the compassion even of their enemies;" of which number this historian evidently was.† Nay, he plainly intimates, this was not the first attempt which had been made to crush them; though this attempt was so early as we have heard.—His contemporary Suetonius, in his more concise manner, attests the same.‡—And Pliny, the intimate friend and correspondent of both, being employed in Trajan's time to persecute the Christians, writes an account of them to that emperor, which, though commonly known, must be mentioned, as it is so highly important. After having spoken very favourably of their moral character, he adds, "that many of both sexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this superstition;" as he thinks fit to express it; "that it was got into the villages, as well as the cities; and that till he begun to put the laws in execution against them, the temples of the heathen deities were almost deserted, and hardly any could be found who would buy victims for them."§—It might be added, that Marcus Antoninus,‖ who wrote a few years after Pliny, mentions the Christians, "as examples of a resolute and obstinate contempt of death:" and it is generally supposed they are the Galileans, whom Epictetus

* Such as Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Hermias. All these were certainly before the year 200, and some in the first century; and Barnabas and Hermas are to mention any of those called the Fathers, whose books are all lost except some fragments, preserved chiefly by that excellent writer

† Neronem subdidit, quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat.—Repressa in præsens exitiabilis superstitio, rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam, originem ejus malum, sed per urbem etiam, &c.—Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde ingens multitudo, haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt, et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, &c. Tac. Annal. Lib. xv. c. 44

‡ Afflictis suppliciis Christianis, genus hominum superstitionis novæ ac maleficæ. Sueton. Nero. cap. xvi.

§ Multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. Neque enim civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quæ templa jam prope deserta incipiebant coli, et sacra solemnia diu intermissa repetebantur, et victimæ passim venire cœperant, quarum adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Plin. Epist. Lib. x. Epist. 97.

‖ [illegible] Marc. Antonin. Lib. xi. c. 3. See also Lib. [illegible] Christians and the Constancy of Asia, as asserted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, Lib. v. cap. 1. in which he [illegible] persecuting the Christians to death, and speaks of those persecutions as having continued a considerable time. N. B. Jesus was asserted by Mr. Jos. Ayscough to be Christianus vetus, in a sermon preached at Bristol, 1762. [illegible] origin, so that there cannot be the least doubt of its being genuine

speaks of,* "as those whom practice had taught to despise the rage of their armed enemies." †

I shall dismiss this head with observing, that it tends greatly to the confirmation of Christianity, that each of these celebrated and ancient writers, at the same time that they attest the existence of such a body of men professing it, inform us of those extreme persecutions which they underwent, in the very infancy of their religion! a fact further apparent from the apologies addressed to their persecutors, which, whatever imperfections may attend the manner in which some of them are written, appear to me some of the most valuable remains of antiquity, (the sacred records only excepted,) especially all those of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix. This fundamental point is then abundantly made out; that there were vast numbers of men, very quickly after the time when Jesus is said to have appeared on earth, who professed his religion, and chose to endure the greatest extremities, rather than they would abandon it. From hence it will be easy to show,

2. "That there was certainly such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem, when Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor there."

It can never be imagined, that multitudes of people should take their name from Christ, and sacrifice their lives for their adherence to him, even in the same age in which he is said to have lived, if they had not been well assured, there was such a person. Now several of the authors I have mentioned plainly assert, that the Christians were denominated from Christ; nay, Tacitus expressly adds, "that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate, who was procurator of Judæa, in the reign of Tiberius."‡ And it is well known, that the primitive Christian apologists often appeal to the acts of Pilate,§ or the memoirs of his government, (which he, according to the custom of the procurators, transmitted to Rome,) as containing an account of these transactions: and as the appeal was made to those who had the command of public records, we may assure ourselves such testimonies were then extant. But it is a fact, which our enemies never denied; they owned it, they even gloried in it. The Jews, therefore, in some of their earliest writings since those times, call Jesus by the ignominious name of "the Man who was hanged, or crucified;" and his followers, "the servants of the crucified person."‖ And Lucian rallies them for deserting the pompous train of the heathen deities, to worship one whom he impiously calls "a crucified impostor."¶ [Spartian also assures us, that the Emperor Alexander Severus entertained such high thoughts of Christ, "that he would have admitted him into the number of his deities, and have built a temple to him, had not his pagan subjects opposed it."** And Porphyry, though an inveterate enemy to Christianity, not only allowed there was such a person, but honoured him "as a most wise and pious man, approved by the gods, and taken up to heaven for his distinguished virtues."††] I might add a great deal more on this head;‡‡ but it already appears as certain as ancient history can make it, and incomparably more certain than most of the facts which it has transmitted to us, that there was at the time commonly supposed such a person as Christ, who professed himself a divine Teacher, and who gathered many disciples, by whom his religion was very soon afterwards published in the world.

3. It is also certain, "that the first publishers of this religion wrote books, which contained an account of the life and doctrine of Jesus their Master, and which went by the name of those that now make up our New Testament."

It was in the nature of things exceeding probable, that what they had seen and heard, they would declare and publish to the world in writing; considering, how common books were in the age and countries in which they taught; and of how great importance an acquaintance with the history and doctrine of Christ was, to the purposes which they so strenuously pursued. But we have much more than such a presumptive evidence.

The greatest adversaries of Christianity must grant, that we have books of great antiquity, written, some fourteen, others fifteen, and some sixteen hundred years ago;§§ in which mention is made of

* Vocationem nos Asiarum sic non accipiebamus, ut [illegible] sed ut [illegible] Vid. Tertull. Apolog. cap. 7. pag. 400.

† This would be the proper place to mention the passage said to be in Philo Judæus, who was contemporary with the apostles, relating to the Christians in his days, and for [illegible] from Jerusalem to prevent the progress of their religion. But I am very willing to believe the fact to have been true, I find it, as is observed by the reader will find an [illegible] of the [illegible] Some other passages of [illegible] writers, which might be very pertinent here, I reserve to be [illegible] Books, and particularly where I shall speak of the Miraculous Preparation of the Gospel.

‡ Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Tacit. ubi supra.

§ Vid. Justin. Mart. Apolog. Oper. page 76. et Tertul. Apol. cap. xxi.

‖ Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmud. in Voce [illegible]

¶ [illegible] Mort. Peregr. Oper. Tom. II. page 408. [illegible] a great many other heathen philosophers have [illegible] Christ, [illegible] Epictetus, Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and many others, [illegible] Christ, [illegible] Lucian, [illegible] Christians, [illegible] Christ, [illegible] Christ, [illegible] Christ

the life of Christ, as written by many, and especially by four of his disciples, who, by way of eminence, are called the Evangelists. Great pains have indeed been taken to prove, that some spurious pieces were published under the names of the apostles, containing the history of these things: but surely this must imply, that it was a thing known and allowed, that the apostles did write some narrations of this kind; as counterfeit coin implies some true money, which it is designed to represent. And I am sure, he must be very little acquainted with the ancient ecclesiastical writers, who does not know, that the primitive Christians made a very great difference between those writings, which we call the Canonical Books of the New Testament, and others: which plainly shows, that they did not judge of writings, merely by the names of their pretended authors, but inquired with an accuracy becoming the importance of those pretences. The result of this inquiry was, that the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, one of Peter, and one of John, were received upon such evidence, that Eusebius, a most accurate and early critic in these things, could not learn that they had ever been disputed;* and afterwards the remaining books of the New Testament, Hebrews, James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, Jude, and the Revelation, were admitted as genuine, and added to the rest; though some circumstances attending them rendered their authority for a while dubious. On the whole it is plain, the primitive Christians were so satisfied in the authority of these sacred books, that they speak of them, not only as credible and authentic, but as equal to the oracles of the Old Testament, as divinely inspired, as the words of the Spirit, as the law and organ of God, and as the rule of faith which cannot be contradicted without great guilt: with many other expressions of the like kind, which often occur in their discourses. To which I may add, that in some of their councils the New Testament was placed on a throne, to signify their concern, that all their controversies and actions might be determined and regulated by it.

On the whole then, you see, that the primitive church did receive certain pieces, which bore the same titles with the books of our New Testament. Now I think it is evident they were as capable of judging whether a book was written by Matthew, John, or Paul, as an ancient Roman could be of determining whether Horace, Tully, or Livy wrote those which go under their names. And I am sure the interest of the former was so much more concerned in the writings of the apostles, than that of the latter in the compositions of the poets, orators, or even their historians, that there is reason to believe, they would take much greater care to inform themselves fully in the merits of the cause and to avoid being imposed upon by artifice and fiction. Let me now show,

4. "That the books of the New Testament have been preserved in the main uncorrupted, to the present time, in the original language in which they were written."

This is a matter of vast importance, and blessed be God, it is attended with proportionable evidence; an evidence, in which the hand of Providence has indeed been remarkably seen; for I am confident, that there is no other ancient book in the world, which may so certainly, and so easily, be proved to be authentic.

And here, I will not argue merely from the piety of the primitive Christians, and the heroic resolution with which they chose to endure the greatest extremities, rather than they would deliver up their Bibles; (though that be a consideration of some evident weight;) but shall entreat you to consider the utter impossibility of corrupting them. From the first ages, they were received, and read in the churches, as a part of their public worship, just as Moses and the Prophets were in the Jewish synagogues; they were presently spread far and wide, as the boundaries of the church were increased; they were early translated into other languages, of which translations some remain to this day. Now when this was the case, how could they possibly be adulterated? Is it a thing to be supposed, or imagined, that thousands and millions of people should have come together from distant countries; and that with all their diversities of language, and customs, and I may add, of sentiments too, they should have agreed on corrupting a book, which they all acknowledged to be the rule of their faith, and their manners, and the great charter by which they held their eternal hopes. It were madness to believe it; especially when we consider what numbers of heretics appeared in the very infancy of the church, who all pretended to build their notions on Scripture, and most of them appealed to it as the final judge of controversies: now it is certain, that these different parties of professing Christians were a perpetual guard upon each other, and rendered it impossible for one party to practise grossly on the sacred books, without the discovery and the clamour of the rest.

Nor must I omit to remind you, that in every age, from the apostles' time to our own, there have been numberless quotations made from the books of the New Testament; and a multitude of commentaries in various languages, and some of very ancient date, have been written upon them; so that if the books themselves were lost, I believe they might in a great measure, if not entirely, be recovered from the writings of others. And one might venture to say, that if all the quotations, which have ever been

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. vi. cap. 25.

made from all the ancient writings now remaining in Europe, were to be amassed together, the bulk of them would be by no means comparable to that of the quotations taken from the New Testament alone. So that a man might with a much better face dispute, whether the writings ascribed to Homer, Demosthenes, Virgil, or Cæsar, be in the main such as they left them; than he could question it concerning those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul, whether they are in the main so.

I say, in the main, because we readily allow, that the hand of a printer, or of a transcriber, might chance in some places to insert one letter or word for another; and the various readings of this, as well as of all other ancient books, prove, that this has sometimes been the case. Nevertheless, those various readings are generally of so little importance, that he who can urge them as an objection against the assertion we are now maintaining, must have little judgment, or little integrity; and, indeed, after those excellent things which have been said on the subject by many defenders of Christianity, if he have read their writings, he must have little modesty too.

Since then it appears, that the books of the New Testament, as they now stand in the original, are, without any material alteration, such as they were, when they came from the hands of the persons whose names they bear; nothing remains to complete this part of the argument, but to show,

b. "That the translation of them, now in your hands, may be depended upon, as in all things most material agreeable to the original."

This is a fact, of which the generality of you are not capable of judging immediately, yet it is a matter of great importance. It is therefore a very great pleasure to me to think, what ample evidence you may find another way, to make your minds as easy on this head, as you could reasonably wish them. I mean, by the concurrent testimony of others, in circumstances in which you cannot imagine they would unite to deceive you.

There are, to be sure, very few of us, whose office it is publicly to preach the gospel, who have not examined this matter with care, and who are not capable of judging in so easy a case. I believe you have seen few in the place where I now stand, that could not have told you, as I solemnly do, that on a diligent comparison of our translation with the original, we find that of the New Testament (and I might also add, that of the Old) in the main faithful and judicious. You know, indeed, that we do not scruple on some occasions to animadvert upon it; but you also know, that these remarks affect not the fundamentals of religion, and seldom reach any further than the beauty of a figure, or at most the connexion of an argument. Nay, I can confidently say, that, to the best of my knowledge and remembrance, as there is no copy of the Greek, so neither is there any translation of the New Testament which I have seen, whether ancient or modern, how defective or faulty soever, from which all the principal facts and doctrines of Christianity might not be learnt, so far as the knowledge of them is necessary to salvation, or even to some considerable degrees of edification in piety. Nor do I except from this remark, even that most erroneous and corrupt version, published by the English Jesuits at Rheims, which is undoubtedly one of the worst that ever appeared in our language.

But I desire not, that with respect to our own translation of the New Testament, a matter of so great moment as the fidelity of it should rest on my testimony alone, or entirely on that of any of my brethren, for whose integrity and learning you may have the greatest and justest esteem. I rejoice to say, that this is a head on which we cannot possibly deceive you, if we were ever so desirous to do it. And indeed in this respect that is our advantage, which in others is our great calamity,—I mean the diversity of our religious opinions. It is certain that, wheresoever there is a body of dissenters from the public establishment, who do yet agree with their brethren of that establishment in the use of the same translation, though they are capable of examining it, and judging of it; there is as great evidence as could reasonably be desired, that such a translation is, in the main, right; for if it were in any considerable article corrupted, most of the other debates would quickly lose themselves in this: and though such dissenters had all that candour, tenderness, and respect for their fellow-christians, which I hope we shall always endeavour to maintain; yet they would, no doubt, think themselves obliged in conscience to bear a warm and loud testimony against so crying an abomination, as they would another day appear free from the guilt of a confederacy to poison the public fountains, and destroy the souls of men. But we make no complaint on this subject: we all unite in bearing our testimony to the oracles of God, as delivered in our own language. O that we were equally united in regulating our doctrine and our discipline, our worship and our practice, by them!

You see then, on the whole, how much reason there is to believe, "That the books of the New Testament, as they are now in your hands, were written by those whose names they bear, even the first preachers and publishers of Christianity." This is the grand point; and from hence it will follow by a train of easy and natural consequences, that the gospel is most certainly true: but that is a topic of argument abundantly sufficient to furnish out matter for another discourse. May God command his blessing on what has been already laid before us,

that through the operation of his Spirit, it may be useful for establishing our regard to the Scripture, and for confirming our faith in that Almighty Redeemer, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; whom to know is life everlasting, and in whom to believe is the great security of our eternal salvation! Amen.

SERMON XX.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY DEDUCED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ALLOWED TO BE GENUINE.

2 Pet. i. 16.

—*We have not followed cunningly devised fables.*

When we are addressing ourselves to an audience of professing Christians, I think we may reasonably take it for granted in the main course of our ministry, that they believe the truth of the gospel, and may argue with them on that supposition. To be ever laying the foundation would be the part of an unwise builder, and be greatly detrimental to your edification and comfort, and, I may add, to our own. Nevertheless, Christians, we do not desire that you should take it merely upon our word, that your religion is divine, and your Scriptures inspired. We desire, that your faith, as well as your worship, should be a reasonable service; and wish that in this respect, all the Lord's people were as prophets; that as every Christian is in his sphere set for the defence of the gospel, each might in some measure be able to assert its truth, and, if possible, to convince gainsayers. Therefore, as we are often hinting at the chief arguments on which this sacred cause is established, (established, I trust, so firmly, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it,) so I thought it might be agreeable and useful, on this occasion, to state them a little more largely, in their proper connexion, and mutual dependence. And I choose the rather to do it, as these Sermons are especially intended for young people, who, in an age in which infidelity so much abounds, can hardly expect to pass through the world, if they are called to converse much in it, without some attacks on their faith; which may be very dangerous, if they are not provided with some armour of proof against them. It is, indeed, (as I before observed,) above all things to be desired, that the heart may be established with grace; for we are then most secure from the danger of forgetting God's precepts, when they have been the blessed means of quickening us to a divine life. Yet as other arguments have their use, and in some degree their necessity too, I shall go on briefly to propose them.

I beg therefore, that you would renew your attention, while I resume the thread of my discourse, in an entire dependence on the blessed Spirit, by whom the gospel was at first revealed and confirmed, to add success to this humble attempt for its service, and for your edification.

I am now showing you, that Christianity, which before appeared in theory probable and rational, has in fact a convincing evidence: not only that it may be, but that it certainly is, true;—as it is certain, that the New Testament, as now in your hands, is genuine;—and as it may with great evidence be argued from thence, that the gospel is a revelation from God. The first of these points I have endeavoured to prove at large; and without repeating what I said in confirmation of it, I now proceed to show,

II. "That from allowing the New Testament to be genuine, it will certainly follow, that Christianity is a divine revelation."

And here a man is, at first, ready to be lost in the multiplicity of arguments which surround him. It is very easy to find proofs; but difficult to range and dispose them in such an order, as best to illustrate and confirm each other. Now I choose to offer them in the following series, which seems to me the most natural, and perhaps may be most intelligible to you.

The authors of the books contained in the New Testament were capable of judging concerning the truth of the facts they attested;—their character, so far as we can judge of it by their writings, renders them worthy of regard;—and they were under no temptation to attempt to impose on the world by such a story as they have given us, if it had been false: so that, considering all things, there is no reason to believe they would attempt it:—but if they had, they must probably have perished in the attempt, and could never have gained credit in the world, had their testimony been false.—Nevertheless, it is certain in fact, that they did gain credit, and succeed in a most amazing manner against all opposition.—It is certain, therefore, that the facts they assert were true; and if they were true, then it was reasonable for their contemporaries, and is reasonable for us, to receive the gospel as a divine revelation;—especially, if we consider what has happened in the world for the confirmation of it, since it was first propagated by them. This is the conclusion to which I was to lead you; and I beg you would seriously consider each of the steps by which we arrive at it.

1. It is exceedingly evident, "that the writers of the New Testament certainly knew, whether the facts they asserted were true or false."

And this they must have known for this plain reason; because they tell us, they did not trust merely to the report, even of persons whom they

thought most credible; but were present themselves when several of the most important facts happened, and so received them on the testimony of their own senses. On this St. John in his Epistle lays a very great and reasonable stress: That which we have seen with our eyes, and that not only by a sudden glance, but which we have attentively looked upon, and which even our hands have handled of the word of life, i. e. of Christ and his gospel,—declare we unto you.

Let the common sense of mankind judge here. Did not Matthew and John certainly know, whether they had personally and familiarly conversed with Jesus of Nazareth, or not? whether he had chosen them for his constant attendants and apostles? whether they had seen him heal the sick, dispossess devils, and raise the dead? and whether they themselves had received from him such miraculous endowments, as they say he bestowed upon them? Did not they know, whether he fell into the hands of his enemies, and was publicly put to death, or not? Did not John know, whether he saw him expiring on the cross or not? and whether he received from him the dying charge which he records? Did he not know, whether he saw him wounded in the side with a spear, or not? and whether he did, or did not, see that effusion of blood and water, which was an infallible argument of his being really dead! concerning which, it being so material a circumstance, he adds, "he that saw it bare record, and he knoweth that he saith true;" i. e. that it was a case in which he could not possibly be deceived. And with regard to Christ's resurrection, did he not certainly know, whether he saw our Lord again and again? and whether he handled his body, that he might be sure it was not a mere phantom! What one circumstance of his life could he certainly know, if he were mistaken in this?

Did not Luke know, whether he was in the ship with Paul, when that extraordinary wreck happened, by which they were thrown ashore on the island of Malta? Did he not know whether, while they were lodged together in the governor's house, Paul miraculously healed one of the family, and many other diseased persons in the island, as he positively asserts he did.

Did not Paul certainly know, whether Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus, or not! whether he was blind, and afterwards on the prayer of a fellow-disciple received his sight! or was that a circumstance in which there could be room for mistake? Did he not know, whether he received such extraordinary revelations, and extraordinary powers, as to be able, by the imposition of his hands, or by the words of his mouth, to work miracles, and even to convey supernatural endowments to others!

To add no more, did not Peter know, whether he saw the glory of Christ's transfiguration, and heard that voice to which he so expressly refers, when he says in the text, We have not followed cunningly devised fables,—but were eye-witnesses of his majesty,—when there came such a voice to him;—and this voice we heard.

Now Matthew, John, Luke, Paul, and Peter, are by far the most considerable writers of the New Testament; and I am sure, when you reflect on these particulars, you must own, that there are few historians, ancient or modern, that could so certainly judge of the truth of the facts they have related. You may perhaps think I have enlarged too much in stating so clear a case: but you will please to remember, it is the foundation of the whole argument; and that this branch of it alone cuts off infidels from that refuge, which I believe they would generally choose, that of pleading the apostles were enthusiasts; and leaves them silent, unless they will say they were impostors: for you evidently see, that could we suppose these facts to be false, they could by no means pretend an involuntary mistake, but must, in the most criminal and aggravated sense, as Paul himself expresses it, be found false witnesses of God. But how unreasonable it would be to charge them with so notorious a crime, will in part appear, if we consider,

2. "That the character of these writers, so far as we can judge by their works, seems to render them worthy of regard, and leaves no room to imagine they intended to deceive us."

I shall not stay to show at large, that they appear to have been persons of natural sense, and at the time of their writing, of a composed mind; for I verily believe no man that ever read the New Testament with attention, could believe they were idiots or madmen. Let the discourses of Christ in the Evangelists, of Peter and Paul in the Acts, as well as many passages in the Epistles, be perused; and I will venture to say, he who is not charmed with them, must be a stranger to all the justest rules of polite criticism: but he who suspects, that the writers wanted common sense, must himself be most evidently destitute of it; and he who can suspect, they might possibly be distracted, must himself, in this instance at least, be just as mad as he imagines them to have been.

It was necessary however just to touch upon this; because unless we are satisfied, that a person be himself in what he writes, we cannot pretend to determine his character from his writings. Having premised this, I must entreat you, as you peruse the New Testament, to observe what evident marks it bears, of simplicity and integrity, of piety and benevolence; which when you have observed, you will find them pleading the cause of its authors, with a resistless, though a gentle, eloquence, and powerfully persuading the mind, that men who were

capable of writing so excellently well, are not, without the strongest evidence, to be suspected of acting so detestably ill, as we must suppose they did, if in this solemn manner they were carrying on an imposture, in such circumstances as attended the case before us. For,

(1.) The manner in which they tell their amazing story, is most happily adapted to gain our belief. For as they tell it with a great detail of circumstances, which would by no means be prudent in legendary writers, because it leaves so much the more room for confutation; so they also do it in the most easy and natural manner. There is no air of declamation and harangue; nothing that looks like artifice and design; no apologies, no encomiums, no characters, no reflections, no digressions: but the facts are recounted with great simplicity, just as they seem to have happened; and those facts are left to speak for themselves, and their great Author. It is plain, that the rest of these writers, as well as the apostle Paul, did not affect excellency of speech, or flights of eloquence, (as the phrase signifies,) but determined to know nothing, though amongst the most learned and polite, save Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified: a conduct that is the more to be admired, when we consider how extraordinary a theme theirs was, and with what abundant variety of most pathetic declamation it would easily have furnished any common writer; so that one would really wonder how they could forbear it. But they rightly judged, that a vain affectation of ornament, when recording such a story as of their own knowledge, might perhaps have brought their sincerity into question, and so have rendered the cross of Christ of none effect.

(2.) Their integrity does likewise evidently appear in the freedom with which they mention those circumstances, which might have exposed their Master and themselves to the greatest contempt, amongst prejudiced and inconsiderate men; such as they knew they must generally expect to meet with.—As to their Master, they scruple not to own, that his country was infamous, his birth and education mean, and his life indigent; that he was most disdainfully rejected by the rulers, and accused of sabbath-breaking, blasphemy, and sedition; that he was reviled by the populace as a debauchee, a lunatic, and a demoniac; and at last, by the united rage of both rulers and people, was publicly executed as the vilest of malefactors, with all imaginable circumstances of ignominy, scorn, and abhorrence: nor do they scruple to own that terror and distress of spirit into which he was thrown by his sufferings, though this was a circumstance at which some of the heathens took the greatest offence, as utterly unworthy so excellent and divine a person. —As to themselves, the apostles readily confess, not only the meanness of their original employments, and the scandals of their former life; but their prejudices, their follies, and their faults, after Christ had honoured them with so holy a calling: they acknowledge their slowness of apprehension under so excellent a teacher, their unbelief, their cowardice, their ambition, their rash zeal, and their foolish contentions. So that, on the whole, they seem every where to forget, that they are writing of themselves, and appear not at all solicitous about their own reputation, but only that they might represent the matter just as it was, whether they went through honour or dishonour, through evil report or good report. Nor is this all; for,

(3.) It is certain, that there are in their writings the most genuine traces, not only of a plain and honest, but a most pious and devout, a most benevolent and generous, disposition. These appear especially in the epistolary parts of the New Testament, where indeed we should most reasonably expect to find them: and of these I may confidently affirm, that the greater progress any one has made in love to God, in zeal for his glory, in a compassionate and generous concern for the present and future happiness of mankind; the more humble, and candid, and temperate, and pure, he is, the more ardently he loves truth, and the more steadily he is determined to suffer the greatest extremity in its defence; in a word, the more his heart is weaned from the present world, and the more it is fired with the prospects of a glorious immortality, the more pleasure will he take in reading those writings, the more will he relish the spirit which discovers itself in them; and find, that as face answers to face in water, so do the traces of piety and goodness which appear there, answer to those which a good man feels in his own soul. Nay, I will add, that the warm and genuine workings of that excellent and holy temper which every where discovers itself in the New Testament, have for many ages been the most effectual means of spreading a spirit of virtue and piety in the world; and what of it is to be found in these degenerate days, seems principally owing to these incomparable and truly divine writings.

Where then there are such genuine marks of an excellent character, not only in laboured discourses, but in epistolary writings, and those sometimes addressed to particular and intimate friends, to whom the mind naturally opens itself with the greatest freedom, surely no candid and equitable judge would lightly believe them all to be counterfeit; or would imagine, without strong proof, that persons who breathe such exalted sentiments of virtue and piety, should be guilty of any notorious wickedness; and in proportion to the degree of enormity and aggravation attending such a supposed crime, it may justly be expected, that the evidence of their having really committed it, should be unanswerably strong and convincing.

Now it is most certain, on the principles laid down above, that if the testimony of the apostles was false, they must have acted as detestable and villanous a part as one can easily conceive. To be found (as the apostle with his usual energy expresses it) false witnesses of God in any single instance, and solemnly declare him miraculously to have done, what we know in our consciences was never done at all, would be an audacious degree of impiety, to which none but the most abandoned of mankind could arrive. Yet, if the testimony of the apostles was false, as we have proved they could not be themselves mistaken in it, this must have been their conduct; and that, not in one single instance only, but in a thousand. Their life must, in effect, be one continued and perpetual scene of perjury; and all the most solemn actions of it, (in which they were speaking to God, or speaking of him as the God and Father of Christ, from whom they received their mission and powers,) must be a most profane and daring insult on all the acknowledged perfections of his nature.

And the inhumanity of such a conduct would, on the whole, have been equal to its impiety. For it was deceiving men in their most important interests, and persuading them to venture their whole future happiness on the power and fidelity of one, whom, on this supposition, they knew to have been an impostor, and justly to have suffered a capital punishment for his crimes.

It would have been great guilt, to have given the hearts and devotions of men so wrong a turn, even though they had found magistrates ready to espouse and establish, yea, and to enforce, the religion they taught. But to labour to propagate it in the midst of the most vigorous and severe opposition from them, must equally enhance the guilt and folly of the undertaking: for by this means they made themselves accessary to the ruin of thousands; and all the calamities, which fell on such proselytes, or even on their remotest descendants, for the sake of Christianity, would be chargeable on these first preachers of it. The blood of honest, yea, and (supposing them, as you must, to have been involuntarily deceived,) of pious, worthy, and heroic persons, who might otherwise have been the greatest blessings to the public, would, in effect, be crying for vengeance against them; and the distresses of the widows and orphans, which those martyrs might leave behind them, would join to swell the account.

So that, on the whole, the guilt of those malefactors, who are from time to time the victims of public justice, even for robbery, murder, or treason, is small, when compared with that which we have now been supposing: and corrupt as human nature is, it appears to me utterly improbable, twelve men should be found, I will not say, in one little nation, but even on the whole face of the earth, who could be capable of entering into so black a confederacy, on any terms whatsoever.

And now, in this view of the case, make a serious pause, and compare with it what we have just been saying of the character of the apostles of Jesus, so far as an indifferent person could conjecture it from their writings; and then say, whether you can in your hearts believe them to have been these abandoned wretches, at once the reproach and astonishment of mankind? You cannot surely believe such things of any; and much less of them, unless it shall appear, they were in some peculiar circumstances of strong temptation; and what those circumstances could be, it is difficult even for imagination to conceive.

But history is so far from suggesting any unthought-of fact to help our imagination on this head, that it bears strongly the contrary way; and hardly any part of my work is easier, than to show,

3. "That they were under no temptation to forge a story of this kind, or to publish it to the world, knowing it to be false."

They could reasonably expect no gain, no reputation, by it: but on the contrary, supposing it an imposture, they must, with the most ordinary share of prudence, have foreseen infamy and ruin, as the certain consequences of attempting it. For the grand foundation of their scheme was, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem by the Jewish rulers, was the Son of God, and the Lord of all things. I appeal to your consciences, whether this looks at all like the contrivance of artful and designing men. It was evidently charging upon the princes of their country the most criminal and aggravated murder, indeed, all things considered, the most enormous act of wickedness which the sun had ever seen. They might therefore depend upon it, that these rulers would immediately employ all their art and power to confute their testimony, and to destroy their persons. Accordingly one of them was presently stoned; and another quickly after beheaded; and most of the rest were scattered abroad into strange cities, where they would be sure to be received with great prejudices, raised against them amongst the Jews by reports from Jerusalem,* and vastly strengthened by their ex-

* I do not here mention Philo Judæus, as speaking of "an embassy from the Jews in his early days, to their brethren in all quarters of the world, exhorting them to resist the progress of Christianity." For though Bishop Atterbury asserts, that there is such a passage, Serm. vol. i. p. 112. I have never been able to find or to hear of it, and therefore am ready to believe, it was a very pardonable error in his Lordship's memory, and that the passage he intended to refer to, was a very celebrated one in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew; in which he expressly asserts such a fact, as a thing about the integrity and good sense would never have committed, had he not certainly known it to be true. For he addresses the learned Jew, with whom he was disputing, in these memorable words, "You were so far from repenting of the crime you had committed, in crucifying Christ, that you sent chosen men of the most distinguished character all over the world, representing the Christians as an atheistical sect, and charging us with those things which the ignorant heathens object against us." Justin Mart. Dialog. cum Tryph. pag. 171. Thus ——Eusebius, and Origen, have both mentioned the same fact, which is in itself very probable, and there may possibly be some reference to it Acts xxviii.

pectations of a temporal Messiah, expectations, which as the apostles knew by their own experience, it was exceeding difficult to root out of men's minds; expectations, which would render the doctrine of Christ crucified, an insuperable stumbling-block to the Jews.

Nor could they expect a better reception amongst the Gentiles, with whom their business was to persuade them to renounce the gods of their ancestors, and to depend on a person who had died the death of a malefactor and a slave; to persuade them to forego the pompous idolatries in which they had been educated, and all the sensual indulgences with which their religion (if it might be called a religion) was attended, to worship one invisible God, through one Mediator, in the most plain and simple manner; and to receive a set of precepts, most directly calculated to control and restrain, not only the enormities of men's actions, but the irregularities of their hearts. A most difficult undertaking! And to engage them to this, they had no other arguments to bring but such as were taken from the views of an invisible state of happiness or misery, of which they asserted their crucified Jesus to be the supreme disposer; who should another day dispense his blessings, or his vengeance, as the gospel had been embraced or rejected. Now, could it be imagined that men would easily be persuaded, merely on the credit of their affirmation, or in compliance with their importunity, to believe things, which to their prejudiced minds would appear so improbable, and to submit to impositions, to their corrupt inclinations so insupportable? And if they could not persuade them to it, what could the apostles then expect? What, but to be insulted as fools or madmen, by one sort of people; and, by another, to be persecuted with the most savage and outrageous cruelty, as blasphemers of the gods, as seducers of the people, and as disturbers of the public peace? All which we know accordingly happened: nay, they assure us, that their Lord had often warned them of it; and that they themselves expected it, and thought it necessary to admonish their followers to expect it too: and it appears, that far from drawing back upon that account, as they would surely have done if they had been governed by secular motives, they became so much the more zealous and courageous, and encouraged each other to resist even to blood. Now, as this is a great evidence of the integrity and piety of their character, and thus illustrates the former head; so it serves to the purpose now immediately in view, *i. e.* it proves how improbable it is, that any person of common sense should engage in an imposture, from which (as many have justly observed) they could, on their own principles, have nothing to expect, but ruin in this world, and damnation in the next. When, therefore, we consider and compare their character and their circumstances, it appears utterly improbable on various accounts, that they would have attempted in this article to impose upon the world. But suppose, that in consequence of some unaccountable, as well as undiscoverable, frenzy, they had ventured on the attempt, it is easy to show,

4. "That, humanly speaking, they must quickly have perished in it, and their foolish cause must have died with them, without ever gaining any credit in the world."

One may venture to say this in general, on the principles which I before laid down. But it appears still more evident, when we consider the nature of the fact they asserted, in conjunction with the methods they took to engage men to believe it: methods which, had the apostles been impostors, must have had the most direct tendency to ruin both their scheme and themselves.

(1.) Let us a little more particularly reflect on the nature of that grand fact, the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ; which as I observed, was the great foundation of the Christian scheme, as first exhibited by the apostles.—The resurrection of a dead man, and his ascension into, and abode in, the upper world, was so strange a thing, that a thousand objections would immediately be raised against it; and some extraordinary proof would justly be required as a balance to them. Now I wish the rejecters of the gospel would set themselves to invent some hypothesis, which should have any appearance of probability, to show how such an amazing story should ever gain credit in the world, if it had not some very convincing proof. Where, and when, could it first begin to be received? Was it in the same, or a succeeding, age? Was it at Jerusalem, the spot of ground on which it is said to have happened, or in Greece, or Italy, or Asia, or Africa? You may change the scene, and the time, as you please; but you cannot change the difficulty.

Take it in a parallel instance. Suppose twelve men in London were now to affirm, that a person executed there as a malefactor in a public manner, a month or six weeks ago, or if you please a year, or five, or ten years since, (for it is much the same,) was a prophet sent from God with extraordinary powers, that he was raised from the dead, that they conversed with him after his revival, and at last saw him taken up into heaven: would their united testimony make them be believed there?—Or suppose them, if you please, to disperse, and that one or two of them should come hither, and go on to more distant places, suppose Leicester, Nottingham, or York, and tell their story there: and that others were to carry it over to Paris, or Amsterdam, or to Vienna, or Madrid: could they expect any more

22. where the Jews at Rome say, "As concerning this sect, we [illegible] we know that it is every where spoken against."

credit with us, or with them; or hope for any thing better, than to be looked upon as lunatics, and treated as such?—And if they should go into other places, and attempt to mend their scheme, by saying their master was put to death one hundred, or two hundred, years ago, when there could be no historical evidence of it discovered, and no proof given but their own confident assertion; would they remove, or would they not rather increase, the difficulty?—Or would they, in any of these cases, gain credit by the most dexterous tricks of legerdemain, of which you cannot suppose them masters? Especially if they should undertake, in consequence of such supposed facts, to engage men to renounce the religion in which they had been educated; to deny themselves in their dearest passions, and most important worldly interests; and even, probably, to hazard their liberties and their lives, in dependence on a future reward, to be received in a place and state, which no man living on earth had ever seen or known? You would readily allow this to be an unsupposable case: and why should you suppose it to have happened sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago? You may assure yourselves, that the reason and the passions of mankind were then as strong as they are now.—But let us a little more particularly consider,

(2.) The manner in which the apostles undertook to prove the truth of their testimony to this fact; and it will evidently appear, that instead of confirming their scheme, it must have been sufficient utterly to have overthrown it, had it been in itself the most probable imposture that the wit of man could ever have contrived.—You know, they did not merely assert, that they had seen miracles wrought by this Jesus, but that he had endowed themselves with a variety of miraculous powers. And these they undertook to display, not in such idle and useless tricks as sleight of hand might perform, but in such solid and important works, as appeared worthy a divine interposition, and entirely superior to human power: restoring, as they pretend, sight to the blind, soundness to lepers, activity to the lame, and in some instances, life to the dead. Nor were these things undertaken in a corner, in a circle of friends or dependants; nor were they said to be wrought on such, as might be suspected of being confederates in the fraud: but were done often in the public streets, in the sight of enemies, on the persons of such, as were utter strangers to the apostles, but sometimes well known to neighbours and spectators, as having long laboured under these calamities, to human skill utterly incurable. Would impostors have made such pretensions as these? or if they had, must they not immediately have been exposed and ruined?

Nor is there any room at all to object, that perhaps the apostles might not undertake to do those things on the spot, but only assert they had done them elsewhere: for even then, it would have been impossible they should have gained credit; and they would have seemed the less credible, on account of such a pretence. Whatever appearances there might have been of gravity, integrity, and piety, in the conversation of Peter, (for instance,) very few, especially few that had known but little of him, would have taken it upon his word, that he saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead at Bethany: but fewer yet would have believed it upon his affirmation, had it been ever so solemn, that he had himself raised Dorcas at Joppa; unless he had done some extraordinary work before them, correspondent at least, if not equal, to that. You will easily think of invincible objections, which otherwise might have been made; and undoubtedly, the more such assertions had been multiplied, every new person, and scene, and fact, had been an additional advantage given to the enemy, to have detected and confuted the whole scheme, which Peter and his associates had thus endeavoured to establish.

But to come still closer to the point: If the New Testament be genuine, (as I have already proved it,) then it is certain, that the apostles pretend to have wrought miracles in the very presence of those to whom their writings were addressed; nay more, they profess likewise to have conferred those miraculous gifts, in some considerable degrees, on others, even on the very persons to whom they write; and they appeal to their consciences as to the truth of it. And could there possibly be room for delusion here? It is exceedingly remarkable to this purpose, that Paul makes this appeal to the Corinthians, and Galatians, when there were amongst them some persons disaffected to him, who were taking all opportunities to sink his character, and destroy his influence: and could they have wished for a better opportunity than such an appeal? an appeal, which, had not the fact it supposed been certain, far from recovering those that were wavering in their esteem, must have been sufficient utterly to disgust his most cordial and steady friends.—And the same remark may be applied to the advices and reproofs, which the apostle there gives, relating to the use and abuse of their spiritual gifts; which had been most notoriously absurd, and even ridiculous, had not the Christians to whom he wrote been really possessed of them. And these gifts were so plainly supernatural, that (as it has often been observed) if it be allowed, that miracles can prove a divine revelation, and that the first epistle to the Corinthians be genuine, (of which, by the way, there is at least as pregnant evidence, as that any part of the New Testament is so,)* then it follows by a sure and easy consequence, that Chris-

* I cannot but look upon it as a kind and remarkable [illegible]

tianity is true. Nevertheless, other arguments are not to be forgot in this survey.—And therefore, as I have proved under this head, that had the testimony of the apostles been false, it is not to be imagined that they could have gained credit at all; and especially, when they had put the proof of their cause on such a footing as we are sure they did; I am now to show you,

5. "That it is certain in fact, that the apostles did gain early credit, and succeeded in a most wonderful manner;" from whence it will follow, that their testimony was true.

That the apostles did indeed gain credit in the world, is evident, from what I before offered to prove the early prevalence of Christianity in it; and may further be confirmed, from many passages in the New Testament. And here, I insist not so much on express historical testimonies, though some of them are very remarkable; especially that of the brethren at Jerusalem, who speak of many myriads of believing Jews assembled at the feast of Pentecost: but I argue from the epistles written to several churches, which plainly prove, that there were congregations of Christians in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philippi, Laodicea, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Crete, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, and many other places; insomuch that one of the apostles could say, that Christ had so wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient, not only in word or profession, but in deed too, that from Jerusalem, even round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ, or as the word imports,* had accomplished the purposes of it. And there is a great deal of reason, both from the nature of the thing, and from the testimony of ancient history, to believe, that others of the apostles had considerable success elsewhere: so that Paul might with reason apply to them and their doctrine, what is originally spoken of the luminaries of heaven, and the instruction they communicate, "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

So great was the number of those, who were proselyted to Christianity by the preaching of the apostles: and we have all imaginable reason to believe, that there were none of all these proselytes, but what were fully persuaded of the truth of the testimony they bore; for otherwise, no imaginable reason can be given for their entering themselves into such a profession. The apostles had no secular terrors to affright them, no secular rewards to bribe them, † no dazzling eloquence to enchant them: on the contrary, all these were in a powerful manner pleading against the apostles; yet their testimony was received, and their new converts were so thoroughly satisfied with the evidence which they gave them of their mission, that they encountered great persecutions, and cheerfully ventured estate, liberty, and life itself, on the truth of the facts they asserted; as plainly appears from many passages in the epistles, which none can think the apostles would ever have written if these first Christians had not been in a persecuted condition.

Nor will it signify any thing to object, that most of these converts were persons of a low rank, and ordinary education, who therefore might be more easily imposed upon than others: for (not to mention Sergius Paulus, Dionysius the Areopagite, or the domestics of Cæsar's household, with others of superior stations in life) it is sufficient to remind you that, as I have largely shown, the apostles did not put their cause on the issue of laboured arguments, in which the populace might quickly have been entangled and lost, but on such plain facts, as they might judge of, as easily, and surely, as any others; indeed on what they themselves saw, and in part, too, on what they felt.

Now I apprehend, this might be sufficient to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. You have seen, that as there is no reason to believe, that the apostles, who certainly knew the truth, would have attempted a fraud of this kind;—so if they had attempted it, they could not possibly have succeeded;—nevertheless, they did succeed in a very remarkable manner;—from whence it plainly follows, that what they testified was true.

And now then, after this, the reasonableness of receiving the gospel, on admitting the truth of what they testified concerning Christ, is an easy consequence. Yet some things are to be offered under this head, which are of great weight, and would not so conveniently have fallen under any of the former; and some considerable additional evidence to the truth of Christianity arises, from what has happened in the world since its first propagation. And therefore I choose rather to make a discourse on these, with the improvement of the whole, than to throw together the hints of them, in so hasty a manner as I must do, should I attempt to despatch the subject in this discourse, the just limits of which I have already transgressed, lest the great chain of the argument should be broken.

this purpose, that there is still extant an Epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Church at Corinth, probably written before the year of Christ 70, in which he plainly refers to 1 Cor. i. 12. in what he cites from "an epistle of Paul written to them by the Spirit at his first preaching the gospel among them." Clem. Epist. 1 ad Cor. § 47.

* Rom. xv. 19.

† As for the distribution of goods in Judea, it is plain it was peculiar to that time and country, and the extraordinary possessions, which from the very infancy of Christianity prevailed there, was more than an equivalent for any advantage, which the poorer of the people could gain by it. I did not therefore think it necessary to mention it.

SERMON XXI.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, AND REFLECTIONS ON THE WHOLE.

2 Pet. i. 16.

——*We have not followed cunningly devised fables.*

As I had before proved the books of the New Testament to be genuine, I proceeded in my last discourse to argue from thence the certain truth of the Christian revelation; and we have made some considerable progress in the argument.

The matter in short stands thus:—The authors of the New Testament certainly knew whether the facts they asserted were true or false; so that they could not themselves be deceived:—neither can we think they would attempt to deceive others, since they appear by their manner of writing, to have been persons of great integrity and goodness;—and it is likewise evident, they could have no temptation to attempt a fraud of this nature:—however, if they had attempted it, we cannot imagine they could have gained credit in the world, if the facts they asserted had not been true:—nevertheless they did gain credit in a very remarkable manner; from whence it plainly follows, that those facts were true.—Now I am to show further, to complete the proof of our grand proposition,

6. "That admitting the facts which they testified concerning Christ to be true, then it was reasonable for their contemporaries, and is reasonable for us, to receive the gospel which they have transmitted to us, as a divine revelation."

The great thing they asserted was, that Jesus was the Christ, and that he was proved to be so,—by prophecies accomplished in him,—and by miracles wrought by him, and by others in his name. Let us attend to each of these, and I am persuaded we shall find them no contemptible arguments: but must be forced to acknowledge, that the premises being established, the conclusion most easily and necessarily follows: and this conclusion, that Jesus is the Christ, taken in all its extent, is an abstract of the gospel revelation, and therefore is sometimes put for the whole of it.

The apostles, especially when disputing with the Jews, did frequently argue from "the prophecies of the Old Testament;" in which, they say, many things were expressly foretold, which were most literally and exactly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Now, greatly to the evidence, confirmation, and advantage of Christianity, so it is, that these prophecies are to this day extant in their original language: and this, in the hands of a people most implacably averse to the gospel: so that an attentive reader may still, in a great measure, satisfy himself as to the validity of the argument drawn from them.

On searching these ancient and important records, we find, not only in the general, that God intended to raise up for his people an illustrious deliverer, who, amongst other glorious titles, is sometimes called the Messiah, or the Anointed One; but we are more particularly told, that this great event should happen before the government ceased in the tribe of Judah; while the second temple was standing; and a little before its destruction, about four hundred and ninety years after a command given to rebuild Jerusalem; which was probably issued out in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, or at least within a few years before or after it. It is predicted, that he should be the seed of Abraham, born of a virgin, of the house of David, in the town of Bethlehem; that he should be anointed with an extraordinary effusion of the divine Spirit, in virtue of which, he should not only be a perfect and illustrious example of universal holiness and goodness, but should also perform many extraordinary and beneficial miracles; nevertheless, that, for want of external pomp and splendour, he should be rejected and insulted by the Jews, and at length be cut off and slain by them. It is added, that he should arise from the dead before his body should be corrupted in the grave; and should be received up to heaven, and there seated at the right hand of God; from whence he should in a wonderful manner pour out his Spirit on his followers; in consequence of which, though the body of the Jewish people perished in their obstinate opposition to him, yet the Gentiles should be brought to the knowledge of the true God, and a kingdom established amongst them, which from small beginnings should spread itself to the ends of the earth, and continue to the remotest ages.

Besides these most material circumstances, there were several others relating to him, which were either expressly foretold, or at least hinted at; all which, with those already mentioned, had so evident an accomplishment in Jesus, (allowing the truth of the facts which the apostles testified concerning him,) that we have no reason to wonder that they should receive the word with all readiness, who searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so predicted there, as the apostles affirmed. For I am persuaded, that no wise and religious person could imagine, that God would permit an impostor to arise, in whom so great a variety of predictions, delivered by so many different persons, and in so many distant ages, should have an exact accomplishment.

When the apostles were preaching to heathens, it is indeed true, that they generally waved the argument from prophecy, because they were not capa-

ble judges of it: but then they insist on another, which might as soon captivate their belief, and as justly vindicate it, I mean "the miracles performed by Christ, and those commissioned and influenced by him." Many of these were of such a nature as not to admit of any artifice or deceit, especially that most signal one of his resurrection from the dead, which I may call a miracle performed by, as well as upon, Christ; because he so expressly declares, that he had himself a power to resume his life at pleasure. The apostles well knew this was a fact of such a nature, that they who believed this would never doubt of the rest: they therefore often single this out, and lay the whole stress of their cause upon it. This they proved to be true, by their own testimony miraculously confirmed; and in proving this they established Christianity on an impregnable rock. For I may safely refer it to any of you to judge, whether it is an imaginable thing that God should raise the dead body of an impostor; especially when he had solemnly appealed to such a resurrection, as the grand proof of his mission, and had expressly fixed the very day on which it was to happen.

I persuade myself you are convinced by all this, that they who on the apostles' testimony believed, that the prophecies of the Old Testament were accomplished in Jesus, and that God bore witness to him by miracles, and raised him from the dead, had abundant reason to believe, that the doctrine which Christ taught was divine, and his gospel a revelation from heaven. And if they had reason to admit this conclusion, then it is plain that we, who have such satisfactory evidence, on the one hand, that the testimony of the apostles was credible, and on the other, that this was the substance of it, have reason also to admit this grand inference from it, and to embrace the gospel as a faithful saying, and as well worthy of all acceptation. This is the thing I was attempting to prove; and here I should end the argument, were it not for the confirmation it may receive from some additional considerations, which could not properly be introduced under any of the preceding heads. I add therefore,

7. In the last place, "that the truth of the gospel has received further, and very considerable, confirmation, from what has happened in the world since it was first published."

And here I must desire you more particularly to consider,—on the one hand, what God has been doing to establish it,—and on the other, the methods which its enemies have been taking to destroy it.

(1.) Consider, "what God has been doing to confirm the gospel since its first publication;" and you will find it a further evidence of its divine original.

I might here argue at large, from its surprising propagation in the world;—from the miraculous powers, with which not only the apostles, but succeeding preachers of the gospel, and other converts, were endowed;—from the accomplishment of prophecies recorded in the New Testament;—and from the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, notwithstanding the various difficulties and persecutions through which they have passed.

I might particularly urge, in confirmation of the truth of Christianity, "the wonderful success with which it was attended, and the surprising propagation of the gospel in the world."

I have before endeavoured, under a former head, to show you, that the gospel met with so favourable a reception in the world as evidently proved, that its first publishers were capable of producing such evidence of its truth, as an imposture could not admit. But now I carry the remark further, and assert, that considering the circumstances of the case, it is amazing that even truth itself, under so many disadvantages, should have so illustrious a triumph; and that its wonderful success does evidently argue such an extraordinary interposition of God in its favour, as may justly be called a miraculous attestation to it.

There was not only one of a family, or two of a city, taken, and brought to Zion; but so did the Lord hasten it in its appointed time, that "a little one became a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." And as the apostles themselves were honoured with very remarkable success, so this divine seed was propagated so fast in the next age, that Pliny testifies "he found the heathen temples in Achaia almost deserted:"* and Tertullian afterwards boasts, "That all places but those temples were filled with Christians; so that, were they only to withdraw, cities and provinces would be depopulated."† Nor did the gospel only triumph thus within the boundaries of the Roman empire; for long before Tertullian was born, Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, which seems to have been written not much above one hundred years after Christ's death, declares, "That there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or barbarians, not excepting those savages that wandered in clans from one region to another, and had no fixed habitation, who had not learned to offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Maker of all, in the name of Jesus who was crucified."‡

Now how can we account for such a scene as this, but by saying, that the hand of the Lord was with the first preachers of the gospel, and therefore such multitudes believed and turned unto the Lord! How had it been possible that so small a fountain should presently have swelled into a mighty river, and even have covered the face of the earth, had it not sprung from the sanctuary of God, and

* Plin. Epist. x. 97. † Tertul. Apolog. cap. xxxvii.
‡ Justin. Mart. pag. 308. Edit. Thirlb.

been rendered thus triumphant by his almighty arm?

Had this new religion, so directly contrary to all the prejudices of education, been contrived to soothe men's vices, to assert their errors, to defend their superstitions, or to promote their secular interests, we might easily have accounted for its prevalence in the world. Had its preachers been very profound philosophers, or polite and fashionable orators, many might have been charmed, at least for a while, to follow them: or had the princes and potentates of the earth declared themselves its patrons, and armed their legions for its defence and propagation, multitudes might have been terrified into the profession, though not a soul could by such means have been rationally persuaded to the belief of it. But without some such advantages as these, we can hardly conceive how any new religion should so strangely prevail; even though it had crept into the world in its darkest ages and most barbarous countries; and though it had been gradually proposed in the most artful manner, with the finest veil industriously drawn over every part which might at first have given disgust to the beholder.

But you well know that the very reverse of all this was the case here. You know, from the apparent constitution of Christianity, that the lusts and errors, the superstitions and interests, of carnal men, would immediately rise up against it as a most irreconcilable enemy. You know, that the learning and wit of the Greeks and the Romans were early employed to overbear and ridicule it. You know that, as all the herd of heathen deities were to be discarded, the priests, who subsisted on that craft, must in interest find themselves obliged to oppose it. You know, that the princes of the earth drew the sword against it, and armed torments and death for the destruction of its followers. And yet you see that it triumphed over all, though published in ages and places of the greatest learning and refinement; and proposed, not in an ornamental and artificial manner, but with the utmost plainness; the doctrines of the cross being always avowed as its grand fundamentals, though so notorious a stumbling-block both to Jews and Gentiles; and the absolute necessity, not only of embracing Christianity, but also of renouncing all idol-worship, being insisted on immediately, and in the strongest terms, though it must make the gospel appear the most singular and unsociable religion that had ever been taught in the world.

Had one of the wits or politicians of these ages seen the apostles, and a few other plain men, who had been educated amongst the lowest of the people, as most of the first teachers of Christianity were, going out armed with nothing but faith, truth, and goodness, to encounter the power of princes, the bigotry of priests, the learning of philosophers, the rage of the populace, and the prejudices of all; how would he have derided the attempt, and have said with Sanballat, What will these feeble Jews do? But had he seen the event, surely he must have owned, with the Egyptian Magi, in a far less illustrious miracle, that it was the finger of God; and might justly have fallen on his face, even amongst those whom he had insulted, with a humble acknowledgment that God was in them of a truth.

I might here further urge "those miracles, which were wrought in confirmation of the Christian doctrine, for a considerable time after the death of the apostles."

The most signal and best attested of these, was the dispossession of devils; whom God seems to have permitted to rage with an unusual violence about those times, that his Son's triumph over them might be so much the more remarkable, and that the old serpent might be taken in his own craftiness. I doubt not but many of you have heard, that more than two hundred years after the death of Christ, some of the most celebrated defenders of the gospel, which the church has in any age produced,—I mean Tertullian,* and Minutius Felix,†—do not only challenge any of their heathen enemies and persecutors, to bring them a demoniac, engaging, at the hazard of their lives, to oblige the evil spirit, in his name, and by the authority of Christ, to quit his possession; but do also appeal to it, as a fact publicly known, that those who were agitated by such spirits, stood terrified, and amazed, in the presence of a Christian, and that their pretended gods were compelled then to confess themselves devils.

I wave the testimony of some later writers of the Christian church, lest the credulity of their temper, joined with the circumstances attending some of the facts they record, should furnish out objections against their testimony; though I think we cannot, without great injustice to the character of the learned and pious Augustin, suspect the truth of some amazing facts of this kind, which he has attested as of his own personal and certain knowledge ‡

Nor must I, on this occasion, forget to mention "the accomplishment of several prophecies recorded in the New Testament, as a further confirmation given by God to the gospel.

The most eminent and signal instance under this head, is that of our Lord's prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as it is recorded by St. Matthew, in his twenty-fourth chapter. The tragical history of it is most circumstantially described by Josephus, a Jewish priest, who was an eye-witness of it; and the description he has given of this sad calamity, so exactly corresponds to the

* Tertul. Apolog. cap. xxv. † Minut. Fel. cap. xxvi.
‡ Augustin. de Civit. Dei. Lib. xxii. cap. 8.

prophecy, that one would have thought, had we not known the contrary, that it had been written by a Christian on purpose to illustrate it: [And one can never enough admire that series of amazing providences, by which the author was preserved from most imminent danger, that he might leave us that invaluable treasure which his writings contain.*

We have no need of any further evidence, than we find in him, of the exactest accomplishment of what was prophesied concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: but our Lord had also foretold the long continued desolation of their temple; and I cannot forbear reminding you of the awful sanction which was given to that part of the prediction: for it is well known, that a heathen historian has assured us, that when Julian the apostate, in deliberate contempt of that prediction, solemnly and resolutely undertook to rebuild it, his impious design was miraculously frustrated again and again, and the workmen consumed by globes of fire, which broke out continually from the foundations.†]

The prediction of St. Paul concerning the man of sin, and the apostasy of the latter times, is also well worthy of our remark. And though a great deal of the book of Revelation be still concealed under a dark veil; yet the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, the usurpation, persecution, and idolatry of the Romish church, and the long duration of the papal power, with several other extraordinary events, which no human prudence could have foreseen, and which have happened long since the publication of that book, are so clearly foretold there, that I cannot but look on that part of Scripture as an invaluable treasure; and think it not at all improbable, that the more visible accomplishment of some of its other prophecies may be a great means of reviving the Christian cause, which is at present so much on the decline.

"The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people," is another particular under this head, which well deserves our attentive regard.

It is plain they are vastly numerous, notwithstanding all the slaughter and destruction of this people, in former and in later ages. They are dispersed in various most distant nations, and particularly in those parts of the world where Christianity is professed: and though they are exposed to great hatred and contempt, on account of their different faith, and in most places subjected to civil incapacities, if not to unchristian severities; yet they are still most obstinately tenacious of their religion: which is the more wonderful as their fathers were so prone to apostatize from it; and as most of them seem to be utter strangers either to piety or humanity, and pour the greatest contempt on the moral precepts of their own law, while they are so attached to the ceremonial institutions of it, troublesome and inconvenient as they are. Now seriously reflect, what an evident hand of Providence is here; that by their dispersion, preservation, and adherence to their religion, it should come to pass, that Christians should daily see the accomplishment of many remarkable prophecies concerning this people;‡ and that we should always have amongst us such a crowd of unexceptionable witnesses to the truth of those ancient Hebrew records, on which so much of the evidence of the gospel depends: records, which are many of them so full to the purpose for which we allege them, that (as a celebrated writer very well observes §) "had the whole body of the Jewish nation been converted to Christianity, men would certainly have thought they had been forged by Christians, and have looked upon them, with the prophecies of the sybils, as made many years after the events they pretend to foretell." And to add no more here, the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, evidently leaves room for the accomplishment of those Old and New-Testament promises, which relate to their national conversion and restoration: whereas that would be impossible in itself, or at least be impossible to be known, if they were promiscuously blended with other people. On the whole, it is such a scene in the conduct of Providence, as I am well assured cannot be paralleled in the history of any other nation on earth, and affords a most obvious and important argument in favour of the gospel.

Thus has Christianity been further confirmed, since its first publication, by what God has done to establish it. It only remains that we consider,

(2.) What confirmation it receives, "from the methods which its enemies have taken to destroy it."

And these have generally been, either persecution, or falsehood, or cavilling at some particulars in the revelation, without entering into the grand argument on which it is built, and fairly debating what is offered in its defence. Now who would not think the better of a cause, for being thus attacked?

At first you know, that the professors, and especially the preachers of the gospel, were severely persecuted. In every city bonds and imprisonments awaited them. As soon as ever the apostles began to preach Jesus and his resurrection, the Jewish rulers laid hold on them, and having confined and scourged them, strictly prohibited their speaking

* Lowth's Boyle Lect. Lect. 10. vol. 2.

† [illegible] Ammian. Marcell. Lib. xxiii. edited by Gronovius, and in the Bibliotheca Patrum. Theodoret. Lib. iii. cap. 20. Sozomen. Lib. v. cap. 22. Philostorgius, Lib. vii. cap. 14. Basnage, Annal. Polit. Eccles. Ann. 363. n. 2. Dr. Lardner, Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. 3. p. 124. Dr. Sykes's Connection, p. 2. c. 2. p. 107. Dr. Chandler's Vindication of the Antiquities of the Jewish Temple

any more in that name. A little while after, Stephen was murdered; and afterwards James, and some other of the apostles. Now certainly such a conduct did evidently show a consciousness, that they were not able to answer the apostles, and to support their own cause by the fair methods of reason and argument; to which, so far as the history informs us, they made no pretence; but attempted to bear them down by dint of authority, and to silence them by brutal force.

The time would fail me, should I attempt particularly to show, how these unrighteous methods were pursued in succeeding ages, and distant countries. The savage cruelties of Nero to these innocent and holy men were such, as raised the pity even of their enemies;* yet this was one of the least extensive and destructive of the ten general persecutions, which arose in the Roman empire, besides several others in the neighbouring countries, of which ecclesiastical history informs us.

These early enemies of the gospel added falsehood and slander to their inhumanities. They endeavoured to murder the reputation of Christians, as well as their persons, and were not ashamed to represent them as haters of the whole human species,† for no imaginable reason, but because they would not associate themselves in their idolatrous worship, but with regard to charity and truth, were strongly bearing their testimony against it:‡ nay, they charged them with human sacrifices, incest, idolatry, and all the crimes, for which themselves and their foolish gods were indeed justly detestable; but from which the Christians knew how to vindicate themselves, highly to their own honour, and to the everlasting reproach of these malignant and pestilent accusers: and they have not failed to do it in many noble apologies, which through the divine providence are transmitted to us, and are incomparably the most valuable of any ancient uninspired writings.

Such were the infamous and scandalous methods, by which the gospel was opposed in the earliest ages of the church; and I cannot forbear adding, "that the measures more lately taken to subvert it, especially amongst ourselves, seem to me rather to reflect a glory upon it." Its unhappy enemies have been told again and again, that we put the proof of it on plain fact. They themselves do not and cannot deny, that it prevailed early in the world, as we have shown at large. There must have been some man, or body of men, who first introduced it: they generally confess, that Christ and his apostles were the persons: and these apostles (on whose testimony what we know of Christ chiefly depends) must have been enthusiasts, or impostors, if their testimony was false. Now which of these schemes will the unbeliever take? It seems, that the deists of the present age fix on either, as being secretly conscious they can support neither; but they content themselves with cavilling at some circumstances attending the revelation, without daring to encounter its grand evidence, *i. e.* they have been laboriously attempting to prove it "to be improbable, or absurd, to suppose that to have been, which nevertheless plainly appears to have been, fact." One most weakly and sophistically pretends to prove, in defiance of the common sense of mankind, that the light of nature is a perfect rule, and therefore that all revelation is needless, and indeed impossible. Another disguises the miracles of Christ by false and foolish representations of them, and then sets himself to ridicule them as idle tales. And a third takes a great deal of fruitless pains to show, that some prophecies referred to in the New Testament are capable of another sense, different from that in which the apostles have taken them. These things have been set in a very artful and fallacious light by persons, whose names will be perhaps transmitted to posterity, with the infamous glory of having been leaders in the cause of infidelity; but not a man of them undertakes directly to answer, what has been said to ascertain the grand fact. Nay, they generally take no more notice of the positive evidence, by which it is even demonstrated, than if they had never heard it proposed; though they cavil at incidental passages in those books, in which it is most clearly stated. And as for what they have urged, though perhaps some, who were before weary of Christianity, may have taken occasion from their writings to reject it; and others, for want of consulting the answers to them, may have been unwarily insnared; yet the examination of these points has been greatly for the honour and vindication of the truth, which seems on this occasion to have been set in a clearer and stronger light than ever, at least in these latter ages.

The cause of Christianity has greatly gained by debate, and the gospel comes like fine gold out of the furnace, which the more it is tried, the more it is approved. I own, the defenders of the gospel have appeared with very different degrees of ability for the work; nor could it be otherwise amongst such numbers of them: but on the whole, though the patrons of infidelity have been masters of some wit, humour, and address, as well as of a moderate share of learning, and generally much more than a moderate share of assurance; yet so great is the force of truth, that (unless we may except those writers who have unhappily called for the aid of

* This a harshly and cruel enemy confesses, even while he blasphemes the religion of these glorious confessors. Quæsitum adversus sontes, et novissimè exempla meritos, miscratio oriebatur. Tacit. Annal. Lib. xv. § 44.

† Odio humani generis convicti sunt. Tacit. ubi supra.

‡ This matter is set in the clearest and most beautiful light, by the sagacious Mr. Warburton, in his "Divine Legation of Moses," vol. i. pag. 292—295. to whose labours the learned and Christian world are indebted beyond expression, for as great a number of original thoughts as are perhaps any where to be found in an equal compass.

the civil magistrate in the controversy) I cannot recollect, that I have seen any defence of the gospel, which has not, on the whole, been sufficient to establish it, notwithstanding all the sophistical arguments of its most subtle antagonists.

[This is an observation, which is continually gaining new strength, as new assaults are made upon the gospel. And I cannot forbear saying, that as if it were by a kind of judicial infatuation, some who have distinguished themselves in the wretched cause of infidelity, have been permitted to fall into such gross misrepresentations, such senseless inconsistencies, and such palpable falsehoods,* and in a word, into such a various and malignant superfluity of naughtiness; that to a wise and pious mind they must appear like those venomous creatures, which are said to carry an antidote in their bowels against their own poison. A virtuous and well-bred deist must turn away from some modern pieces of this kind with scorn and abhorrence; and a Christian might almost be tempted to wish, that the books, with all their scandals about them, might be transmitted to posterity, lest when they come to live, like the writings of some of the ancient heathens, only in those of their learned and pious answerers, it should hardly be credited, that ever the enemies of the gospel in such an enlightened age should be capable of so much impiety and folly.]

Thus I have given you a brief view of the chief arguments in proof of Christianity; and the sum of the whole is this:

The gospel is probable in theory; as considering the nature of God, and the circumstances of mankind, there was reason to hope a revelation might be given; and if any were given, we should naturally apprehend its internal evidence would be such as that of the gospel is, and its external, such as it is said to be. But it is also true in fact; for Christianity was early professed, as it was first introduced by Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and doctrines were published by his immediate attendants; whose books are preserved still in their original language, and in the main are faithfully translated into our own: so that the books of the New Testament now in your hands may be depended upon, as written by the persons whose names they bear. And admitting this, the truth of the gospel follows by a train of very easy consequences; for the authors certainly knew the truth of the facts they relate; and considering what appears of their character and circumstances, we can never believe they would have attempted to deceive us; or if they had, they could not have gained credit in the world; yet they did gain it in a remarkable manner; therefore the facts they attested are true: and the truth of the gospel evidently follows from the certainty of those facts, and is much confirmed by what has happened in the world since the first publication of it.

I shall conclude what I have to say on this subject, with a few words by way of reflection.

1. Let us gratefully acknowledge the divine goodness, in favouring us with so excellent a revelation, and confirming it to us by such ample evidence.

We should be daily adoring the God of nature, for lighting up the sun, that glorious, though imperfect, image of his own unapproachable lustre; and appointing it to gild the earth with its various rays, to cheer us with its benign influences, and to guide and direct us in our journeys and our labours. But how incomparably more valuable is that Day-spring from on high which has visited us, that Sun of righteousness which is risen upon us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace! O Christians, (for I now address myself to you, whose eyes are so happy as indeed to see, and your ears as to hear,) what reason have you for daily and hourly praise! When your minds are delighted with contemplating the riches of gospel grace, when you view with wonder and joy the harmonious contrivance of our redemption, when you feel the burthen of your guilt removed, the freedom of your address to the throne of grace encouraged, and see the prospect of a fair inheritance of eternal glory opening upon you; then, in the pleasing transport of your souls, borrow the joyful anthem of the Psalmist, and say, with the humblest gratitude and self-resignation; God is the Lord, who hath given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar. Adore God, who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that by the discoveries of his word, and the operations of his Spirit, he has shined in your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, as reflected from the face of his Son. Let us all adore him, that this revelation hath reached us, who live in an age and country so distant from that in which it first appeared; while there are to this day, not only dark corners, but regions of the earth, which are full of the habitations of idolatry and cruelty.

Let me here peculiarly address myself to those, whose education and circumstances of life have given them opportunities of a fuller inquiry into the state of those ancient or modern nations, that have been left merely to the light of unassisted reason; even to you, Sirs, who are acquainted with the history of their gods, the rites of their priests, the tales, and even the hymns, of their poets; (those beautiful trifles:) nay, I will add, the reasonings of their sagest philosophers, all the precarious and

* [I mention not here that mean buffoonery and scurrility, that industrious, though awkward, disguise, and murderous mixture of the sceptic and dogmatist, which the learned and ingenious Mr Warburton has animadverted upon with such justice and spirit, in his Par Deals edition to the Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated.]

all the erroneous things they have said, where religion and immortality are concerned.* I have sometimes thought, that God gave to some of the most celebrated pagan writers that uncommon share of genius and eloquence, that they might, as it were, by their art embalm the monsters of antiquity; that so succeeding ages might see, in a more affecting view than we could otherwise have done, how weak the human mind is in its best estate, and the need which the greatest as well as the meanest of mankind have, of being taught by a revelation from above. Permit me to remind you, that while you are daily conversing with such monuments as these, (as I know some of you are,) and are also surveying the evidences of Christianity in a larger and more distinct view than it was proper for me here to propose them, you are under peculiar obligations to be very thankful for the gospel yourselves, as well as to compassionate the case of those to whom it has never been offered, or by whom it is slighted. And this leads me to another reflection;

2. What reason have we to pity those, who reject this glorious gospel, even when they have opportunities of inquiring into its clearest evidences!

Such undoubtedly there are in our own age and nation; and surely we should sometimes bestow a compassionate thought upon them, and lift up a humble prayer for them; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are now led captive by him at his pleasure. We should pity heathens and Mahometans, under their darkness and errors: but how much more deplorable is the case of those, who, though they dwell in Emanuel's land, and in the valley of vision, turn it into the valley of the shadow of death, by closing their eyes against so bright a lustre, and stopping their ears against the voice of the charmer? They are indeed in their own conceit the only people, and wisdom will die with them; so that, to be sure, they will scorn our pity: but who can forbear it? Is there a more melancholy thought than this, that the Son of God should have done so much to introduce and establish the gospel, and his Spirit so much to perpetuate and increase its evidence, and that after all, it should be contemptuously despised, even by creatures who are perishing without it? That the blessed Jesus, instead of being received with open arms as the great deliverer, should either be treated as an empty name; or if acknowledged to be a real person, should then be represented as a visionary enthusiast, or a wicked impostor; for there is no other alternative? And this, not only (though I believe most frequently) by men of profligate and abandoned lives, but sometimes by persons of external morality and decency, of great humanity and sweetness of temper, (for such I know are to be found amongst them,) as well as men of wit and genius, of politeness and learning, of human prudence and experience in affairs. I may also add, that it is the case of some, who were the children of pious parents, who were trained up in religious exercises, who once discovered serious impressions, and gave very encouraging hopes. Alas, whither have they fallen? and whither have we reason to fear, they will at length fall? How shall we shelter those, that were once our brethren, that are perhaps still our friends, from the awful sentence, which the gospel denounces against all that reject it without any exception? As to the wretches, that add insult and derision to their infidelity, I tremble to think of that load of guilt which they are bringing on themselves, and how near they approach to the unpardonable sin, if they have not already committed it. For the rest, who behave in a more modest and decent manner, it will no doubt be a very difficult task to convince them; and so much the rather, as some of them, by too easy a transition, have renounced many of the most important principles of natural religion, nay, I might add, even the whole of it, together with the Christian revelation. But the influences of divine grace are almighty; let us recommend them to these, and omit no other proper method, either of recovering those who are already seduced, or at least of securing those who are not yet infected, but may be (as most of the youth are, especially in the most populous places) in imminent danger of the contagion. To this end let me add,

3. How reasonable is it that Christians should form a familiar acquaintance with the great evidences of our common faith!

It is what we so apparently owe to the honour of God, to the interest of Christ, to the peace of our own souls, and the edification of others, that I hope I need not urge it at large; especially considering what was said in the introduction to these discourses. In consequence of all, let it be your care to make the evidences of Christianity the subject of your serious reflections, and of your frequent converse: especially, study your Bibles, where there are such marks of truth and divinity to be found, that I believe, few that have familiarly known them, and have had a relish for them, were ever brought to make shipwreck of the faith as it is in Jesus. Above all, let it be your care to act on the rules which are there laid down; and then you

* The great author I mentioned before (pag. 693. note:) has shown in a most convincing manner, that the whole body of the Greek philosophers disbelieved the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, though they popularly taught it, as necessary to society, and held no other immortality of the soul, than what was the result of a most atheistical notion, modernly known by the name of Spinozism, that the universe was God. (See Mr Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, book iii. sect. 2, 3, 4.) Which surely is one of the strongest proofs of the need of a revelation, that the world ever saw, and the most affecting comment on the words of the learned apostle, 1 Cor. i. 21. The world by wisdom knew not God, but professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom. i. 22.

will find your faith growing in a happy proportion, and will experience the truth of our Saviour's declaration, that if any man will resolutely and faithfully do his will, he shall know of the Christian doctrine whether it be of God. I verily believe, it is the purity of its precepts which lies at the bottom of most men's opposition to it; or a natural pride of heart, which gives them an aversion to so humbling a scheme; or a fond affectation of seeming wiser than others, in rejecting what most of their neighbours do at least profess to believe. When these unhappy prejudices and conceptions are by divine grace conquered and rooted out, the evidences of truth will daily appear with an increasing lustre; as the light of the sun does to an eye recovering from a film with which it had been overgrown, and which before had veiled it with the darkness of midnight in the midst of noon. Once more,

4. How solicitous should we be to embrace and obey that gospel, which comes attended with such abundant evidences!

I may undoubtedly address myself to most of you, my friends, and say, as Paul did to king Agrippa, Believest thou the prophets, and I may add, the evangelists and the apostles? Yes, I know that you believe them; yet let me entreat and charge you not to rest here, but attentively to examine, how far your hearts are affected, and your lives regulated, by such a belief. The Christian revelation is a practical thing, and it is heard, it is believed, it is professed, and even defended, in vain, if it be not obeyed. Therefore do we so frequently read of obeying the truth, and obeying the gospel, as a matter of so great importance.

In this gospel, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; but it is revealed with redoubled terror against that audacious sinner who holds the truth in unrighteousness. In this gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted both a Prince and a Saviour; and it is not with impunity that the impenitent rebel can reject his yoke, and trample on his blood: for if he that despised Moses's law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment than even a capital execution, must they be thought worthy, who have poured contempt on such a Sovereign, and on such a Redeemer?

O let it be most seriously and frequently recollected, that this gospel is the touchstone by which you are another day to be tried; the balance in which an impartial judge will weigh you; and must on the whole prove your everlasting triumph, or your everlasting torment. The blessed God did not introduce it with such solemn notice, such high expectations, such pompous miracles, such awful sanctions, that men might reject or dishonour it at pleasure; but it will certainly be found, to the greatest and the meanest of those that hear it, a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death.

Let it therefore be your immediate care to inquire, which of these it is like to prove to your souls; since it is so far from being a vain thing, that it is your very life. If it has hitherto been despised, and that blessed Redeemer, in whom it so apparently centres, has been neglected; remember, that all which has been said in confirmation of its truth, does but in effect prove, that the hand-writing of God himself is set to the sentence of your eternal condemnation. Oh therefore allow not yourselves a moment's rest, until you have with humble submission applied to his throne, while yet there is hope that it may be reversed.

And as for you, my brethren, who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be exhorted to walk in him; since it is the design of his gospel to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and this not only as you have so comfortable an assurance, that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, but as it will be, on the whole, the most effectual method you can take in your respective stations to promote the gospel. If you indeed honour it and love it, and desire it may be propagated in the world, let it be your care, not only to defend it by your tongues, but to adorn it by your lives: and, in the words of that great champion in this sacred cause, be blameless and harmless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shining amongst them as lights in the world, and so holding forth the word of life; and perhaps it may serve, not only to entertain their eyes with wonder and glory, but to guide their feet into the way of peace, and may engage them also to join with you in glorifying your Father which is in heaven. Amen!

SERMONS

ON REGENERATION.

PREFACE.

It is undoubtedly the duty of every wise and good man, to be forming schemes for the service of God and his fellow-creatures in future years, if he be continued to them; and it will be his prudence to do it early in life, that he may be gradually preparing to execute them in the most advantageous manner he can. But while a man's heart is thus devising his way, the Lord directeth his steps. And as many such schemes will probably be left unfinished at death, which will quickly come to break off our purposes and the thoughts of our hearts: so it is not improbable, that they who humbly and obediently follow the leadings of divine providence and grace, may often find themselves called out on a sudden to services which, but a little before, were quite unthought of by them.

This has been the case with me in most of the Sermons I have published, of which very few were composed with any view to the press; and it is most remarkably so with respect to these on Regeneration. Besides many other excellent persons, my much honoured friend Dr. Wright has handled the subject in so judicious and lively a manner, and through the great goodness of God to us, so many thousands of his treatise upon it are dispersed in all parts of our land, that I could hardly have believed any one who had told me I should thus have resumed it; nor had I the least intention of doing it, when I began that course of Lectures which I now offer to my reader's perusal.

I did indeed think it necessary last year to treat the subject more largely than I had ever done before, knowing in the general how important it is, and observing that several controversies had about that time been raised concerning it, which (though I do not judge it necessary to mention the particulars of them) I was ready to fear might have had an ill influence to unsettle men's minds, and either to lead them into some particular errors, or into a general apprehension that it was a mere point of speculation, about which it was not necessary to form any judgment at all.*

That these Discourses might be more generally useful, I determined to preach them on Lord's-day evenings, that those of my neighbours who were not my stated hearers might, if they thought proper, have an opportunity of attending them: and accordingly they were attended to the last with uncommon diligence; a great many such persons, of different persuasions and communions, making up a part of the auditory. As practical instruction and improvement was the main thing I had in view, I knew it was necessary to make my Discourses as plain, as free, and as serious as I could. But before I had finished near half of my scheme, several of my hearers earnestly requested that the Sermons might be published: and the request grew more extensive and importunate every week, with this additional circumstance, (which I much regarded,) that some very pious and judicious friends at a distance, being providentially brought to the hearing of some of these Lectures, strongly concurred in the desire; expressing a very cheerful hope, that the reading of what they had heard might be useful in distant parts of the land, to which they assured me they would endeavour to spread them as opportunity might offer. As the advice of several of my brethren in the ministry was joined with all this, I thought myself bound in duty at length to comply; which I was the rather encouraged to do, from the several instances in which I had reason to believe the divine blessing had in some measure attended these Sermons from the pulpit, and had made them the means of producing and advancing the change they described and enforced.

On these considerations, as soon as I returned from that long journey, in which I set out the day after these Lectures were concluded, I applied myself to recollect the substance of them as well as I could, from the short hints I had written of them, with the assistance of those notes which some of my friends had taken after me in characters. Some things are perhaps omitted, though I believe but very few; some contracted, and some enlarged; but my hearers will find them in the main what they heard. It cost me more labour than I was aware, from such materials, to reduce them into their present form; and I hope the multitude of my other business will be allowed as an apology, if I proceeded in them slower than some might expect.

I shall leave it to my reader to observe for himself the manner and method in which I have handled my subject, without giving him a particular view of it here; only must beg leave to tell him in the general, that I hope he will find I have not presumed so far on the sublimity of my subject, as to talk without

* See Mr. Hebden's Appendix to his late Discourse on Regeneration.

determinate ideas; for which reason I have omitted many phrases, used particularly of late by some pious and worthy persons, because I freely own, that as I cannot find them in my Bible, so neither can I understand their exact meaning; and it seems very improper to embarrass such plain Discourses as these with a language, which, not being thoroughly master of, I may chance to misapply, supposing those phrases to be really more proper than I can at present apprehend they are. I have endeavoured to keep to one idea of regeneration, which I take to be that which the Scripture suggests: by regeneration I mean "a prevailing disposition of the soul to universal holiness, produced and cherished by the influences of God's Spirit on our hearts, operating in a manner suitable to the constitution of our nature, as rational and accountable creatures." If this be (as I think I have proved at large that it is) the Scriptural notion of it, it will follow, that nothing which may be found where this is not, or which may not be found where this is, can be regeneration in the Scripture sense, which is that sense in which we are much more concerned than we are in that to which any human writers, whether ancient or modern, may think proper to apply it.

If the doctrine which I have endeavoured, in the whole course of these Sermons, to confirm and illustrate by the word of God, be in one form or another generally taught by my brethren in the ministry, of whatever denomination, I rejoice in it for their own sakes, as well as for that of the people under their care. I am very little inclined to contend about technical phrases of human invention, which have, with equal frailty, been idolized by some and anathematized by others. We shall, I hope, learn more and more to bear one another's burthens, and to study the kindest interpretations which the words of each other will admit. But I must take the liberty to say, I am in my conscience persuaded that this view of things which is here proposed, though perhaps not very fashionable, is in the general so edifying, and so naturally leads to the frequent review of many other important doctrines of Christianity, which are closely connected with it, that I am well satisfied it will be our wisdom to adhere to it, and to make it very familiar to our own minds, and to those of our hearers. Nor can I imagine that any variety in the idioms of different languages, or the customs of different ages and nations, can be a sufficient reason for bringing Scripture phrases into disuse, while we keep to the original ideas signified by them. There seems to be a peculiar felicity in them to express divine truth; and they will undoubtedly be found the safest vehicle of religious knowledge, and the surest bond of union among Christians; while, however we may differ in other matters, we so generally agree in acknowledging that our Bibles contain the oracles of God.

Let us therefore, who under different denominations are honoured with the ministry of the everlasting gospel, agree, for a while at least, to suspend our debates upon less necessary subjects, that we may, with united efforts, concur in prosecuting that great design for which the gospel was revealed, the Spirit given, and our office instituted. And since it is so evident that irreligion has grown upon us while we have been attending to other, and to be sure smaller, matters, let us by a plain, serious, and zealous way of preaching the most vital truths of Christianity, joined with a diligent inspection of the souls committed to our care, try what can be done towards preventing the progress of this growing apostasy, and recovering the ground we have already lost. Ignorant and prejudiced people may perhaps accuse us of bigotry or enthusiasm; but let us do our best to convince them of their error, by the candour of our temper, and the prudence of our conduct; and remember that, as Chrysostom excellently speaks in these lively words, "It is a sufficient consolation for our labours, and far more than an equivalent for all, if we may have a testimony in our consciences, that we compose and regulate our discourses in such a manner as may be approved by God, in whose name we speak."

Northampton, Nov. 7, 1741.

POSTSCRIPT.

To what I have said in the conclusion of the first Sermon concerning the proper import of the word Regeneration, I beg leave to add the following remarks for the further satisfaction of some worthy persons, who think it may be convenient to state the matter a little more particularly.

I acknowledge that many learned and pious divines have taught and contended, that Regeneration does, in the strictest propriety of speech, signify Baptism. So that no unbaptized person, how well disposed soever, can properly be said to be regenerated; whereas that title may justly be given to all who have been baptized, how destitute soever they might have been of Christian faith and holiness when they received the ordinance, or how grossly soever they may since have forfeited the final blessings of a regenerate state. Dr. Waterland has stated this matter at large in his laboured and ingenious treatise on the subject, which is the best I know on this side of the question. And though this would be a very improper place to enter on a critical examination of that piece, I will briefly touch on the chief arguments which he, or others in his sentiments, have urged in vindication of this favourite notion. So far as I can recollect, what they say is capable of being reduced to two heads;—that Christian antiquity uses the word in this sense;—and that there are passages of Scripture which authorize such an application of it.

As to the first of these, I readily own that the word has this sense in the generality of the Christian writers, from about the middle of the second century, though I think not so universally as some have concluded:* but I think it easy to account for such a use of it among them. For in the earliest ages of the church, persons were generally baptized as soon as they were converted to the cordial belief of Christianity; and therefore the time of their conversion, and that of their baptism, might naturally enough be spoken of as one: and as this was a period when they did, as it were, come into a new world, it is no wonder that the action by which they testified a change so lately made, should be put for that change itself. Just as illumination also among the ancients signifies baptism: not to intimate that the grand illumination of the mind was made by this rite, or at the time of it; for that would be supposing the person in darkness when he embraced the gospel, and determined to be baptized, but because it was taken for granted, and that very justly, in those days, that every one savingly enlightened would soon be baptized, that so he might be regularly joined to the society of enlightened or regenerated persons, that is, to the Christian church: which no doubt had the best right of any body of men in the world to that title, though in its purest state it contained some ignorant and wicked members. In a word, a man by baptism solemnly professed himself a Christian; and as it was generally the first overt-act by which his believing the gospel could be publicly and generally known, and was also supposed to be very near the time of his inward conversion, they dated his regeneration, that is, his happy change, (as that word used to signify, even among the heathen,†) from that time. We own therefore that these ancient Christians (of whom I always think and speak with great respect) had a very good excuse for this method of speaking; but whether they were perfectly accurate in this, and whether they did not recede from the Scripture use of the word, may be matter of further inquiry.

As to the arguments from Scripture in support of the interpretation I oppose, they are taken partly from particular places; but chiefly, as I apprehend, from the general tenor of it, in which Christians are spoken of as regenerated.

The particular texts are, John iii. 5. and Tit. iii. 5. on which much of the stress of this controversy is laid; but on considering them attentively, I find nothing in either of them to lead us to think baptism the regeneration spoken of there.

As to the former of them, John iii. 5. when our Lord says, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" it is (after all the contempt with which that interpretation has been treated) very possible he may mean, by a well-known figure, to express one idea by both those clauses, that is, the purifying influences of the Spirit cleansing the mind, as water does the body: as elsewhere, to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, (Matt. iii. 11.) signifies to be baptized by the Spirit operating like fire. But if there is indeed a reference to baptism in these words, (which I own I am much inclined to believe,) it will by no means follow that baptism is regeneration. On that supposition, I still think the sense of the passage must be that which I have given in my paraphrase on it, (Fam. Expos. vol. i. p. 148.) "Whosoever would become a regular member of the kingdom of God, must not only be baptized, but as ever he desires to share in its spiritual and eternal blessings, must experience the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit on his soul, to cleanse it from the power of corruption, and to animate and quicken it to a spiritual and divin life." It is granted therefore, that how excellent soever any man's character is, he must be baptized before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ; and that, in general, being born of the Spirit, he will also be solicitous that he may be born of water, and so fulfil all righteousness. But it will never follow from hence, that being born of water and born of the Spirit are the same thing. The text rather implies they are different; and I think every body must own, they may be actually separate. Nothing therefore can be more absurd than to infer from this text, that if there be two persons, one of which is born of the Spirit, and not of water; another of water, and not of the Spirit; the latter, that is, the wicked man who has perhaps with some iniquitous design been baptized, may properly be said to be regenerated, or born of God, and consequently to be an heir of God, (Rom. viii. 17.) rather than a truly religious man who has not yet been baptized, either through want of opportunity, or through some unhappy mistake, as to the nature and design, or the perpetuity and obligations, of that ordinance. Now this I take to be precisely the question, and must declare, that when a baptized person is destitute of true religion, that birth which he had by water, seems to me as it were an evanescent thing, or a thing which disappears as unworthy the mention; and that it must be therefore most safe and advisable, as well as most agreeable to the Scripture sense, to appropriate the title of regenerate persons to those sanctified by divine grace, rather than to use it of all who are baptized.

As to the text in Titus, (chap. iii. 5.) where God is said to save us by the washing of regeneration, or, as some earnestly contend it should be rendered, "by the laver of regeneration:" I might answer, that as that interpretation is by no means necessary,‡ it cannot be proved that baptism is here designed, though

* Clemens Alexandrinus, so often, and to be sure reasonably, quoted on the other side, plainly uses the word for "a change of character by true repentance," (Strom. lib. ii. page 429.) where, speaking of "a penitent harlot," he says, "that being born again by conversion, of a change in her temper and behaviour, she has the regeneration of life." [illegible] Compare also Strom. lib. iii. page 448.

† It is well known that Cicero expresses "the happy change" made in his state, when restored from his banishment, by this word. Cic. ad Attic. lib. iv. Epist. 6. The Greeks expressed by it "the doctrine of the Brachmans," in which they affirmed our entering on a new state of being after death. (Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iii. page 450.) And the Stoics used it to denote their expected renovation of the world after successive conflagrations. Marc. Antonin. Medit. lib. xi. § 1. v. 12. x. 7. See Lactan. oper. pag. 582. Euseb. Præp. Evang. ex mumen. lib. xv. cap. 19. Phil. Jud. de Mundi Immort. pag. 940, 951. and in many other places. And so the fathers often use it to signify the resurrection which Christians expect. See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. v. cap. 1. in fin. Compare Matt. xix. 28. and the note there. Fam. Expos. Vol. II. page 238.

‡ The original is λουτρου παλιγγενεσιας. Now it is certain, the Seventy use another word, that is λουτρον, to signify laver. Exod. xxx. 18, 28.; xxxi. 9. and I think (so far as I have observed) every where else. and λουω St. Paul's word here is used where it cannot signify laver, for the water in which sheep are washed, Cant. iv. 2. and for a large quantity of water in which an adult person was washed or bathed, Eph. v. 26. And this remark quite overthrows all the argument from this text, if any argument would follow from rendering it laver, but I think I need not urge this.

I acknowledge there may be a graceful allusion to it: the apostle may mean, we are saved by God's washing our hearts by his sanctifying Spirit, (a phrase so often used in the Old Testament,) and thereby making us his children: and in this sense it might have been used, though baptism had never been instituted. But granting (as I have done in the beginning of the seventh Sermon) that λουτρον may be rendered laver, and that baptism may be the laver referred to; and that "there is indeed an allusion to the washing new-born children;" (as Mr. Mede in his diatribe on this text contends;) I think this text will be so far from proving that St. Paul meant to call baptism regeneration, that it will prove the contrary: for regeneration itself, and the laver of regeneration, cannot be the same thing: and whatever Tertullian and other ancients may fancifully talk of our being generated like fishes in the water, in a weak allusion to the technical word ΙΧΘΥΣ, common sense will see how absurd it would be to apply this to a child, and will teach us rather to argue, that as children must be born before they can be washed, so they must be regenerated before the washing of regeneration (that is, the washing which belongs to their new birth) can be applied to them. But on the whole, as washing an infant refers to its pollution, and no pollution attends our regeneration as such, I am more and more inclined to think there is no reference at all to a laver, or the washing new-born children; and therefore, that this washing and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are exegetical, and that the latter clause might be rendered, even the renewing, &c. which makes the text decisive for the sense in which I use the word.

After all then, if any argument can be deduced from Scripture in favour of the manner of speaking now in debate, it must be from the general tenor of it; according to which it seems that all who are members of the visible church are spoken of as regenerate; from which it may be inferred, with some plausible probability at least, that baptism, by which they are admitted into that society, may be called Regeneration: and I am ready to believe, as I hinted above, that this was the chief reason why the ancients so often used the word in the sense I am now opposing.

Now with relation to this, I desire it may be recollected, that when Christianity first appeared in the world, it was attended with such discouragements, as made the very profession of it, in a great measure, a test of men's characters. The apostles therefore, knowing the number of hypocrites to be comparatively very small, generally take no notice of them, but address themselves to whole bodies of Christians, as if they were truly what they professed to be. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ, though he knew the wickedness of Judas, often addresses himself to the whole body of his apostles, as if they were all his faithful servants, and makes gracious declarations and promises to the whole society, which could by no means be applicable to this one corrupt and wretched member of it, telling them, for instance, that they should share in his final triumph, and sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Matt. xix. 28.

This is therefore the true key to all those passages in which Christians are, in the general, said to be adopted, sanctified, justified, &c. as well as regenerated. The apostles had reason in the judgment of charity, to think thus of by far the greatest part of them: and therefore they speak to them all, as in such a happy state. And agreeably to this, we find not only such privileges, but also such characters, ascribed to Christians in general, as were only applicable to such of them as were Christians indeed. Thus all the Corinthians are spoken of by the apostle Paul as waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Cor. i. 7.) and all the Ephesians, and all the Colossians, as having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints, (Eph. i. 15. Col. i. 4.) and all the Philippians, as having a good work begun in them, which Paul was persuaded God would perfect, (Phil. i. 6.) and all the Thessalonians, as remarkable for their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, (1 Thess. i. 3.) though it evidently appears there were persons in several of these churches who behaved much amiss, and to whom, had he been particularly addressing to each of them alone, he could not by any means have used such language. On the like principles Peter, when addressing all the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, speaks of the whole aggregate of them, (1 Pet. i. 8.) as loving an unseen Saviour, and amidst all their tribulations, rejoicing in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory; though probably there were some weak and dejected Christians among them, and undoubtedly in so large an extent of country, in which there were such a vast number of churches, not a few, who (as our Lord afterwards expresses it of some of them) had only a name to live, while they were dead. (Rev. iii. 1.) in which passage, by the way, our Lord uses the same figure, and describes the whole body by the character of those who made the greater part of it.

I state the matter thus particularly, because I think this obvious remark is a sufficient answer to what is most peculiar and important in a late Discourse, consisting of near 130 quarto pages, and entitled, A Key to the Apostolic Writings, &c. prefixed by the Rev. Mr. Taylor of Norwich to his late Paraphrase and Notes on the Romans. I think what I have briefly advanced here, will much more effectually answer the end of fixing the true sense of the Scripture phrases in question. And I cannot forbear saying, that to determine the sense of the words, called, redeemed, sanctified, &c. when applied to the Christian church, by that in which they are used in Moses and the prophets with respect to the whole people of Israel, seems to me as unreasonable, as it would be to maintain, that the dimensions, the strength, and the beauty of a body are to be most exactly estimated by looking on its shadow.

Yet on this evidently weak and mistaken principle, the learned and ingenious author referred to above, ventures not only to attempt an entire alteration in the generally received strain of theological discourses, but to throw out a censure, which considering its extent and its severity, must either be very terrible, or very pitiable. He not only seems to think, if I understand him right, that we were all regenerated, (if at all,) as well as justified, in those of our parents who were first converted from idolatry to Christianity, (Key, 81, 82, and 246.) as indeed he expressly says, "that we are born in a justified," and therefore undoubtedly (if the word is to be retained) in a regenerate, "state;" but he presumes to say, that such doctrines as have been almost universally taught and received among Christians, concerning

"justification, regeneration, redemption, &c. have quite taken away the very ground of the Christian life, the grace of God, and have left no object for the faith of a sinner to work upon." (p. 357.) And here upon, lest it should be forgot, he repeats it in the same section, that to represent it as "the subject of doubtful inquiry, trial, and examination, whether we have an interest in Christ, whether we are in a state of pardon, whether we be adopted," (and by consequence, to be sure, whether we be regenerated,) "is" (as the Antinomians I imagine would also say) "to make our justification, as it invests us in those blessings, to be of works, and not by faith alone:" and (as was just before said in the same words) "to take away the very ground of the Christian life, the grace of God, and to leave no object for the faith of a sinner to act upon." And this way of stating things, which has so generally prevailed, is joined with the wickedness and contentions of professing Christians, as a third cause of that distegard to the gospel which is so common in the present day.

Now as no book can fall more directly under this censure, than this of mine, in which it is the business of the three first Sermons to direct professing Christians in an inquiry, whether they be or be not in a regenerate state; I thought it not improper, in this postscript, briefly to acquaint my reader with the principles on which I continue to think the view, in which I have put the matter, to be rational and Scriptural,* and do still in my conscience judge it far preferable to what the advocates of baptismal regeneration on the one hand, or Mr. Taylor on the other, would introduce. It seems to me, that the points in dispute with him are much more important than our debates with them, as a much greater number of scriptures are concerned, and the whole tenor of our ministerial addresses would be much more sensibly affected. Had I leisure to discuss the matter more largely with this gentleman, I should think it might be an important service to the gospel of Christ. I hope it will be undertaken by some abler hand; and shall, in the mean time, go on preaching and writing in the manner so solemnly condemned, with no apprehension from the discharge of all this overloaded artillery, except it be what I feel for the zealous engineer himself, and a few other friends who may chance to stand nearer him than in prudence they ought.

Northampton, June 13, 1745.

SERMON XXII.

THE CHARACTER OF THE UNREGENERATE.

EPHES. ii. 1, 2.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

AMONG all the various trusts which men can repose in each other, hardly any appears to me more solemn and tremendous, than the direction of their sacred time, and especially of those hours which they spend in the exercise of public devotion. These seasons take up so small a part of our lives, when compared with that which the labours and recreations of them demand; and so much depends upon their being managed aright, that we, who are called to assist you in the employment and improvement of them, can hardly be too solicitous, that we discharge the trust in a manner which we may answer to God and to you. If this thought dwell upon the mind with due weight, it will have some sensible influence upon our discourses to you, as well as on the strain of those addresses which we present to the throne of grace in your name and on your account. We shall not be over-anxious about the order of words, the elegance of expression, or the little graces of composition or delivery; but shall study to speak on the most important subjects, and to handle them with such gravity and seriousness, with such solemnity and spirit, as may, through the divine blessing, be most likely to penetrate the hearts of our hearers, to awaken those that are entirely unconcerned about religion, and to animate and assist those, who, being already acquainted with it, desire to make continual advances, which will be the case of every truly good man.

It is my earnest prayer for myself, and for my brethren in the ministry of all denominations, that

* For the full proof of this, that it is the most Scriptural sense, I must desire the reader diligently to examine [illegible] several texts which are quoted in the following Discourses; for it would [illegible] them a critical examination. Let it still be remembered, that [illegible] remark let any one find can do it put together all the passages [illegible] and baptized persons for persons born of God, and [illegible] words themselves; and I cannot but think he will be struck [illegible] And I must add, that if he look into the context of many of these passages, as with the same [illegible] as some have done, "that regeneration easily [illegible] a motion so fully confuted by our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, [illegible] compared with 1 Pet. i. 14. iv. 2. which proves that the apostle there [illegible] Gentiles) that I think it quite superfluous to discuss it more largely here.

we may, in this respect, approve our wisdom and integrity to God, and commend ourselves to the consciences of all men. It is our charge, as we shall answer it another day to the God of the spirits of all flesh, to use our prudent and zealous endeavours, to make men truly wise and good, virtuous and happy: but to this purpose, it is by no means sufficient to content ourselves, merely with attempting to reform the immoralities and irregularities of their lives, and to bring them to an external behaviour, decent, honourable, and useful. An undertaking like this, while the inward temper is neglected, even when it may seem most effectual, will be but like painting the face of one who is ready to die, or labouring to repair a ruinous house, by plastering and adorning its walls, while its foundations are decayed. There is an awful passage in Ezekiel to this purpose, which I hope we shall often recollect: "Woe to the foolish prophets,—because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, when there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them that daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall:—Thus saith the Lord God, I will even rent it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it; so will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and shall be consumed in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

If there be any, in one body of Christians or another, that abet men's natural disposition to flatter themselves in a way that is not good, by encouraging them to hope for salvation, because they were regularly baptized in their infancy; because they have diligently attended on public worship, in its established or its separate forms; or merely because they do nobody any harm, but are rather kind and helpful to others; or because their faith is orthodox, their transports of affection warm, or their assurance confident; I pray God to awaken them by the power of his grace, before they are consumed, with their hearers, in the ruins of their deceitful building. Those of you who are my stated hearers can witness for me, that in this respect I have delivered my own soul. It has been the steady tenor of my doctrine among you, that our hope and confidence must be in Christ, and not in ourselves; and that, if we desire to be interested in the righteousness he has wrought out, and in the blessings he has purchased by his sacred blood, we must be experimentally acquainted with the work of God's renewing grace upon our souls, curing the inward distempers of our degenerate hearts, and transforming us into the image of his holiness: that is what we are taught in Scripture to call by the name of regeneration; and considering how much the subject is neglected by some, and, I fear I may add, misrepresented and disguised by others, I apprehend I shall profitably employ an evening hour for several succeeding sabbaths, in giving a larger account than I have yet done, of the Scripture doctrine on this important subject, in its various parts. It shall be my care in the series of these discourses, as God shall enable me, to speak the words of truth and soberness; and I entreat you to have recourse to the law and to the testimony, that you may judge of the truth and weight of what I say. I desire not to be regarded any further than I produce evidence from reason and Scripture; but so far as we are disregarded, while we have the concurrent testimony of both, our hearers must see to it; and their danger will then be proportionable to the importance of those truths, which their negligence, or their prejudice, engage them either to reject, or to overlook.

The plan, on which I intend to proceed in the course of these Lectures, is this:

I. I will endeavour to describe the character of those, whom we may properly call persons in an unregenerate state.

II. I will describe the nature of that change, which may properly be called regeneration, or conversion.

III. I will show at large the absolute necessity of this change, and the consequent misery of those that are strangers to it.

IV. I shall endeavour to prove the reality and necessity of the divine influences on the mind, in the production of such a change.

V. I shall describe some of those various methods, by which God is pleased to operate in the production of this holy and important work.

VI. I shall propose some advices to those who are already awakened, as to the method in which they are to seek renewing grace. After which,

VII. I shall conclude these Discourses with an address to those who have experienced this happy change, as to the manner in which they ought to be affected with such a series of sermons as this, and the improvement they should make of what they hear, and what they have felt agreeable to it.

I should be peculiarly inexcusable, if I entered upon such a subject, without earnest and importunate prayers to the Fountain of light, grace, and holiness, that while you hear of this important doctrine, you may have that experimental knowledge of it, without which such discourses will indeed seem obscure and enthusiastical, according to the degree in which they are rational and spiritual. I shall only add, that these Lectures will take their rise from a variety of texts, which I shall not, according to my usual method, largely open and

dilate upon, but only touch on them as so many mottos to the respective sermons to which they are prefixed.

As I intend not philosophical essays, but plain, practical, and popular addresses, I shall begin,

First, With describing the character of those, whom we may properly call unconverted and unregenerate persons.

It is absolutely necessary that I should do this, that you may respectively know your own personal concern in what is further to be laid before you in the process of these Lectures.

Now you have the general character of such, in the words of my text; and a very sad one it is. They are represented, as dead in trespasses and sins, utterly indisposed both for the actions and enjoyments of the spiritual and divine life; as walking according to the course of this world, a sad intimation that it was the state of the generality of mankind; nay, according to the prince of the power of the air, that impure and wicked spirit, who works, or exerts his energy, in the children of disobedience, that is, in those who reject and despise the gospel; in which it is implied, (and a dreadful implication it is,) that the course and conduct of those who reject the gospel is according to the desire and instigation of the prince of darkness: they are going on as the devil himself would have them, and choose that path for themselves which he chooses for them, as leading them to most certain and most aggravated ruin.

And who are these unhappy persons? Surely there must be some of them among us: for who can flatter himself, that in so numerous an assembly, the course of all is different from that of the world; and that all have happily triumphed over the artifices of that accursed spirit, who is, by God's righteous permission, become its prince, while it continues in its apostate state? I shall however think it a very happy point gained, if I could convince any of you, who are justly liable to that conviction, that you are the men; if I could, as it were, render visible to your eyes those subtle, yet strongly complicated, chains, in which Satan is binding you, and by which he is drawing you on to eternal ruin; that you might recover yourselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure.

I am this evening to describe the character of unregenerate men: but I cannot pretend to do it in all the variety of circumstances which may attend it. I shall therefore mention only some particulars which are most important, and which most certainly demonstrate a person to be of that wretched number. There are a great variety of countenances in the human species; yet the principal features in all are the same, though their proportion and lineaments may differ: and I apprehend, the characters which I am now to lay down, will most of them suit every unregenerate person, though they may appear in various persons in different degrees and different instances. I shall chiefly lay down these characters in negatives, as I apprehend it is the safest way; and only would observe, what you may easily perceive, that I speak only of the adult; for I would cautiously avoid entangling this discourse, with what relates purely to the case of infants, lest Satan should get an advantage over us, and turn that into an occasion to amuse curiosity, which I humbly hope, under the influence of the Spirit of God, will be the means of awakening conviction, and of breaking that delusive peace, in which, like the strong man armed, he keeps his vassals, till the fatal hour come which is to complete their ruin.

To wave the formality of laboured demonstrations in a case which admits of such easy evidence, I shall go upon this obvious principle in the whole of my reasoning: "That to be regenerate, and to be born of God, are in Scripture terms of the same import; and consequently, that whatever temper and disposition is in Scripture declared to be inconsistent with the character of a child of God, must necessarily denominate a man an unregenerate person." And one would think this principle could hardly be disputed, since all that allow of regeneration at all, in a Christian sense, seem to understand by it that change, whatever it is, by which a person is made a child of God, and by consequence an heir of heaven.

Now on this principle, you may take the marks of an unregenerate person in such particulars as these; and let those, whose consciences own them, hear and tremble.

1. The soul "that never seriously inquired into its spiritual state," is, beyond all doubt, an unregenerate soul.

The apostle earnestly presses it upon the Christians to whom he wrote, that they should diligently examine themselves whether they were in the faith: and he who has entirely neglected to do it, seems to express, not merely a forgetfulness of religion, but even a contempt of it too. Nevertheless, be it known unto you, Sirs, that a humble return to God, and a cordial dedication of soul to his service, is not so slight an act of a man's life, that it should pass without any observation in doing it, or any serious reflection on having done it. Religion is a deliberate thing; it brings a man seriously to consider his ways, that he may turn his feet to God's commandments; to search and try them, that he may turn again unto the Lord. A good man is so impressed with the thoughts of God, and of eternity, that perhaps he is rather ready to be over anxiously afraid and suspicious, in a matter of so great importance; and therefore will review, on the one hand, the plan of salvation that God has laid down in his word, and on the other, the correspondency

to it that he may discover in his own soul. And if there are any of you that have never been thus employed, any that have never separated yourselves awhile from other employments, that you might seek and intermeddle with this divine wisdom, you are assuredly strangers to it. If there are any of you that have never studied God's word, to learn his will from thence; that have never attended to sermons, that you might try yourselves by them, and if possible carry home something of the chief of what you hear, to assist your retired and more diligent inquiries; you may now come to a very quick conclusion, and before you leave this place, yea, before I proceed to any further particulars, you may set it down as the memorable beginning of these Lectures, and of this Discourse, "I am already proved to be an unregenerate creature: I am in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity!" Nay, you may add, that there are perhaps thousands of those that are yet unregenerate sinners, who have not been so careless and so insensible as you. For indeed, Sirs, a man may begin an examination, and start back from the prosecution of it, before it is brought to any important issue; or trying himself by false characters, he may come to a conclusion, which will be so much the more dangerous, as it has been the more deliberate. For the sake of such, therefore, I add,

2. The soul "that is not deeply convinced of its guilt before God, and desirous to seek deliverance from it by the Lord Jesus Christ," is still in an unregenerate state.

All the promises of God's paternal favour do certainly imply the promise of forgiveness; and you well know, that these are appropriated to such as humble themselves before God; and that humbling which is merely external, and implies no deep sense of inward guilt, can pass for very little with that God, who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men.

The Scripture assures us, that whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and nothing can be more certain from the whole tenor of it, than that he that believes not shall be damned: and surely a state of damnation is not, and cannot be, a state of regeneration. But what is this faith in Christ? Is it no more than a bare notional persuasion, that he is the Son of God? If this were all, the devils themselves believe; and many were the instances in which you know that they confessed it, and trembled before him. You cannot then be ignorant, that the faith, to which the promises of salvation are made, is a faith which receives the Lord Jesus Christ in all his offices, which trusts his atonement, as well as admits his revelation: and flies to him for righteousness and life. And how can that man seek righteousness from Christ, who is insensible of his own guilt? or how can he depend upon him for life, who is not aware that he is under a sentence of death and condemnation.

But imagine not you are secure, because you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners. If that acknowledgment be slight and formal, it shows you are strangers to the operation of that Spirit, whose office it is to convince men of sin. If you have not been made sensible of the pollution of your hearts, as well as the rebellion of your lives; if you have not received as it were a sentence of death in yourselves, and submitted to that sentence as righteous, though ever so dreadful; if you have not been made to loathe and abhor yourselves, and to repent in dust and ashes; if you have not laid your hand on your mouth, and your mouth in the dust, crying out, Unclean, unclean; and in this sense, at least, adopted that pathetic complaint, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? it is a certain sign, that sin still reigns in your mortal bodies, and is unto this day bringing forth fruit unto death.

3. The soul "that is unconcerned about the favour of God, and communion with him," is still in an unregenerate state.

Common reason may tell you, that a soul destitute of the love of God can never be the object of his complacential regards; and that it is impossibl you should love him, while you are unconcerned about his favour, and habitually indifferent to converse with him. You believe there is a God;—you acknowledge that he is the great Benefactor of the whole world;—you know your happiness depends upon his favour;—you wish, therefore, that you may enjoy it;—that is, you wish that, some way or other, you may be happy rather than miserable. But let conscience say, whether you have ever felt, that in his favour is life? whether you have ever known, what it is to cry out with intenseness and ardour of soul, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me? Alas, Sirs, had you been sons, God would have sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts: and if this be not the sincere, if it be not the habitual, language of your soul; if you do not thus earnestly desire to live under the manifestations of the divine love, and to be able to say, Truly our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; you are spiritually dead, and under the fatal influences of that carnal mind, which being enmity against God, engages men to live contented without God in the world, so long as their corn and their wine increase. A heart thus alienated from God, was never savingly turned to him, and can have no just reason to imagine itself the object of his paternal favour.

4. The soul "that is destitute of a sincere love to mankind," has reason to consider itself as in an unregenerate state.

You may, perhaps, think it unnecessary to mention this: but the apostle was undoubtedly a much

better judge, and his own words suggest this particular to me: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not, knoweth not God, and consequently cannot be born of him; for God is love." And our Lord strongly intimates the same thought, when he exhorts his disciples to the most universal and unlimited benevolence by this argument, That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; plainly implying, that otherwise they could not really be born of God, or claim him for their Father. Regeneration is to form a man for intimate communion with the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to prepare him for the region of complete and everlasting love; and the first-fruits of it are to appear, and to be manifested here. It is a faithful saying, that they who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works; and unfeigned love is to be the root of them: so that if you cannot stand this trial, your religious hopes are all delusive and vain.

Let me entreat you, therefore, that you would now look into your lives and hearts. Do any of the malignant passions harbour there? Ask yourselves, "Is there any of my fellow-creatures whom I would wish to see miserable; or would make so, if it were in my power to do it by the secret act of my will, so that no mortal on earth should ever know me to be the cause of their calamity?" If it be so, and this be your settled temper, you hate your brethren, and are murderers; and therefore are the children of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; and we may thus say of you, in the very words of our Lord, who never uttered a rash censure, You are of your father the devil, for his passions you cherish, and his lusts you would do.

But reflect further, If you wish others no harm, do you really wish them well? and that so really, and so sincerely, as to be ready to do them good? for merely to say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, when you have it in your power to help them, is at once to mock the poor, and to despise him that made him. You that are conscious of a mean selfish temper, and wrap yourselves up, as it were, in your own separate interests, or in those of your own families, and can feel a concern for no others; you that devise what you may imagine shrewd and prudent things, but none that are liberal and compassionate; you, whose eye does not affect your heart, when you see the distresses of your brethren, while you have this world's good; how dwelleth the love of God in you? How can you imagine you are the children of him whom you so little resemble?

Nay, permit me to add once more upon this head, that, if all your compassion is only moved by men's temporal calamities, and works not in any degree with respect to their spiritual and eternal interests, you have reason to fear that it is no better than an unsanctified humanity; and, indeed, that you never have learned the worth of your own souls, while you set so little value on the souls of others, even of those to whom you profess and intend friendship. And this concluding hint is of importance, to prevent a dangerous mistake, in which too many good-natured sinners are ready to flatter themselves, and in which, perhaps, others are too ready to join in flattering them.

5. He "that does not know what it is to struggle with indwelling sin, and heartily to resolve against indulging it in any kind or degree," is undoubtedly still in an unregenerate state.

You will observe, I do not say, "that every one who knows what it is, to feel a struggle in his own mind, when assaulted by temptations to sin, is a truly good man;" the contrary is dreadfully apparent. A principle of natural conscience often makes very strong remonstrances against sin, and sends out bitter cries when subjected to its violence; and this is so far from denominating a man a real Christian, that it rather illustrates the power of sin, and aggravates its guilt. But when a man's inclinations run entirely one way, and when he gives a swing to his natural passions without any regard or restraint; when he is a stranger to any inward conflict with himself, and any victory over his own lusts and his corrupted will; it is a certain sign he is yet under the dominion of Satan, and is even to be numbered among the tamest of his slaves. For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts; have learnt to deny themselves, and to mortify their members upon earth.

It is also of great importance to add, that there must be "a resolution to oppose sin in every kind, and in every degree:" for he that is born of God sinneth not; nay, it is elsewhere said, He cannot commit sin: and though it is too visibly true in fact, and apparent from several other passages in the very epistle whence these words are taken, that this expression is to be interpreted with some limitation; yet the least that it can be imagined to signify is this, that he does not wilfully allow himself in the practice of any sin. He has learnt to hate every false way, and to esteem all God's precepts, concerning all things, to be right: so that, upon the whole, if he might have his request, and God would grant him the thing that he longs for, it would be this, to sin no more, and to get rid of every sentiment, desire, and affection, in any degree contrary to the purity of God's nature and law. If therefore there be any of you that spare one accursed thing, though you should seem eager on destroying all the rest; if it be the secret language of your soul, "There is but one lust that I will indulge; there is but one temptation that I

will comply with." I perceive your hearts are not right in the sight of God: for though you could, according to your pretended purpose, keep all the rest of the law, and yet offend in this one point alone, you would in effect be a transgressor of all. In short, he that committeth sin, is of the devil: but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

6. He "that does not know what it is to overcome this world, and to place his happiness in another," is yet in an unregenerate state.

This is another of those certain marks which God has given us of his own children. Whatsoever is born of God, (as it is very emphatically expressed in the original,) overcometh the world. It is not, you see, the extraordinary attainment of a few more eminent Christians; but it is an essential branch of every good man's character: for he is begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, even to the hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. You have reason therefore to judge very uncomfortably concerning your state, if you are strangers to this lively hope; which is a very different thing from that hope to be saved, of which some people talk in so indolent, not to say, in so profane, a manner, as to show, that it is the hope of the hypocrite, which will perish, when God takes away his soul. If you are conscious to yourselves, that you mind earthly things, your end will be destruction; for having your heart on earth, it is plain your only treasure is here; and if you govern yourselves by worldly maxims alone, and your great care be to obtain those riches and honours which the children of the world pursue: if the importance of eternity has never appeared in such a light, as to make you judge every thing trifling, that can come in competition with it; nay, whatever your views of eternity have been, if you are not practically carrying on a scheme for it; and if you cannot, and do not, deny your worldly interest, when it cannot be secured without hazarding your eternal hopes; it is plain you are friends of the world, in such a sense as none can be, but he must be an enemy of God. If indeed you were dead to the world, and your life hid with Christ in God, you would set your affections on things above, on those things which are there, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: but the want of this temper shows, that you are carnally minded, which it is death to be; and that the redeeming love of Christ has never exerted its influence upon your souls, nor his cross had any due efficacy upon you; for if it had, the world would have been crucified to you, and you also to the world.

7. The soul "that does not long for greater improvements in the divine life," is still a stranger to the first principles of it.

You know, that we are called, as Christians, with a high and holy calling; and as he that is the Author of this calling is holy, so are we to be holy in all manner of conversation, and to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. Here will therefore be room for improvement, not only during our continuance in the present life, but through all the ages of a glorious eternity: and it is the ardent desire of every good man, that in this sense, above all others, his path may be like the shining light, that shineth more and more until the perfect day. And this is the one thing that he does, or that in which all his labours centre; being conscious to himself how far he is from having already attained, or being already perfect, forgetting the things that are behind, he reacheth forth unto those things that are before, and presses toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In this view he seriously considers the circumstances of life in which Providence has placed him, that he may observe the advantages which these circumstances give him for religious improvements; and it is delightful to him to discover such advantages.

Now if there be any of you, who know nothing of this temper, you are certainly in an unregenerate state, for none can be born of God, that do not love him; and none can truly love him, that do not earnestly desire more and more to resemble him. So that if your hearts can indulge such a thought as this, "I wish I knew how much religion would be just sufficient to save me, and I would go so far, and stop there;" your conscience must tell you, that you secretly hate religion, and are unwillingly dragged toward the form of it, by an unnatural and external violence, the fear of misery and ruin in neglecting it; and that you are not actuated by the free and liberal principles of a nature savingly renewed.

8. The soul "that does not know what it is to live by faith in Christ, and in dependence on his Spirit," is still in an unregenerate state.

We are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, if indeed we are so at all: and he that is joined to the Lord, in this sense, is one spirit with him. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; for as God has predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself; so of his fulness it is, that all believers do receive, even grace for grace, or an abundance and variety of grace, by virtue of their union with him, who is the head; from whom the whole body, being fitly joined together, and strengthened by what every joint supplies, by an energy proportionable to every part, increases to the edifying of itself in love. These things, as you see, are not only hinted in Scripture, but are copiously insisted upon, as very material points: and though I readily acknowledge,

good men may apprehend and consider them very differently, and may express those apprehensions in different phrases; yet as experience makes it plain, that those souls generally flourish most who have the most distinct conceptions of them, so I think it is plain from these scriptures, that there can be no religion at all where there is a total insensibility of them. If, therefore, there are any of you that apprehend it is enthusiasm to talk of the assistances of the Spirit; nay, I will add, if there are any of you that do not earnestly desire these assistances, and do not seek them daily from the hand of Christ, as the great covenant-head of his people; you are, I fear, strangers to some of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are sensual, not having the Spirit. And though you may now and then form a hasty, and perhaps a warm, resolution in religion, you will quickly, with the proud youth that are conceited with their own sufficiency, faint and be weary, and, with the young men, you will utterly fail; while they only that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, shall mount up as on eagle's wings, and, pressing on with an unwearied pace, according to the different degrees of vigour which the different parts of their course may require, shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. In short, if you do not thirst after the water of life, that is, (as the evangelist himself explains it,) the Spirit, which they that believe on Christ shall receive, however bountiful he is, he makes no promise to impart it to you; and if you never receive it, all your other sources of comfort will soon be dried up, and the miserable condition of the creature, that asked in vain for one drop of water to cool his tormented tongue, will certainly be yours.

Here I apprehend multitudes will miscarry, who have made a fair show in the eyes of men; and if you are condemned by this mark, I am sure you will not be acquitted by any of the preceding. For all the branches of a holy temper have such a connexion with this, and such a dependence upon it, that a man who is destitute of this can have only the semblance of the rest.

And thus, Sirs, I have, with all plainness and faithfulness, as in the sight of God, and sensible of my account to him, laid before you a variety of hints, by which I think you may safely and truly judge, whether you be or be not in an unregenerate state; and I shall now beg leave to conclude this discourse with one plain inference from the whole, viz.

That baptism is not regeneration, in the Scriptural and most important sense of the word.

To prove this as a corollary from the preceding discourse, I shall only assume this most reasonable concession, with which you may remember I at first set out; "that regeneration and being born of God signify the same thing." Now I have shown you, from a variety of Scriptures, under the former heads, that every one whom the sacred oracles represent as born of God, receiveth Christ, overcometh the world, and sinneth not. But it is too plain, that these characters do not agree to every one that is baptized; and consequently it evidently follows, that every one who is baptized is not of course born of God, or regenerate; and therefore, that baptism is not Scripture regeneration.

I think no mathematical demonstration plainer and more certain than this conclusion; and therefore, whatever great and ancient names may be urged on the other side of the question, I shall rest the matter here, without leading you into the niceties of a controversy so easily decided. I would only further observe, that they who most vigorously contend for the other manner of speaking (for after all it is but a dispute about a word) acknowledge expressly, that a man may be saved without what they call regeneration, and that he may perish with it. And though persons are taught to speak of their state, in consequence of baptism, in very high, and I fear dangerous, terms; yet when wise and good men come to explain those terms, it evidently appears, that many of whom they are used are *so* in a state of salvation, as to be daily obnoxious to damnation; *so* the children of God, as also to be the children of the devil; and *so* inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, as to be children of wrath, and on the brink of hell.

Where persons of real piety apprehend themselves under a necessity of using such phrases with respect to all that are baptized, we cannot blame them for endeavouring to bring down their signification as low as possible: but they will, I hope, excuse those who choose to speak in what they apprehend to be a more Scriptural, rational, and edifying language.

It was matter of conscience with me to state the matter as you have heard. I do therefore earnestly entreat you, my dearly beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the sake of your own immortal souls, that you deceive not yourselves with vain words; but that where your eternal salvation is so plainly concerned, you bring the cause, the important cause, to an immediate trial; and if you are convinced, as I suppose many of you quickly may be, that you are at present dead in trespasses and sins, then let me beseech you to reflect on what the most transient survey of the Scripture may teach you, as to the danger of such a case. For though it will be my business, in the process of these Discourses, more largely to represent it, when I come to speak of the necessity of the new birth, God only knows whether your lives may be continued till we advance so far in the subject, and where a case of this kind is in question, the delay of a week, or even of a day, may be inevitable and eternal ruin.

SERMON XXIII.

OF THE NATURE OF REGENERATION, AND PARTICULARLY OF THE CHANGE IT PRODUCES IN MEN'S APPREHENSIONS.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The knowledge of our true state in religion, is at once a matter of so great importance, and so difficult, that in order to obtain it, it is necessary we should have line upon line, and precept upon precept. The plain discourse which you heard last Lord's day, was intended to lead you into it; and I question not but I then said enough to convince many that they were in an unregenerate condition. Nevertheless, as there are various approaches towards regeneration and conversion, which on the whole fall short of it, I think it very expedient now to give you, what I may properly call the counterpart of this view; which I shall, by divine assistance, attempt from the words I have now been reading.

The apostle who wrote them was transported to such a zeal for Christ, and for the souls of men, that some thought him beside himself; and no doubt many would represent him as the greatest enthusiast upon the face of the earth. But as it was a very small thing to him to be judged of man's judgment, he calmly vindicates himself, by declaring that there was a cause for all this warmth, as the honour of God, and the Redeemer, and the eternal salvation of men, were so intimately concerned in the affair: "The love of Christ, says he, constrains us, or, as the word* properly signifies, it bears us away with it, like a mighty torrent, which we are not able to resist; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, under the sentence of God's righteous law, or they would not have needed such an atonement as the blood of his Son; and we further judge, that he died for all, that they who now live, only in consequence of his dying love, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them." We therefore live to this Jesus; we consecrate our lives and labours to this purpose; and in consequence of it, we henceforth know no man after the flesh, that is, we do not regard our temporal interests, nor consider how we may most effectually obtain the favour and friendship of those who may be useful to us in life; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, or have expected a temporal Messiah, who should make our nation triumphant over the Gentiles, and enrich it with the spoils of other nations, yet now henceforth we know him no more under such a character. And in this respect the same temper will prevail in the heart of every real Christian; and therefore, i. e. in consequence of what was said before of the Redeemer's love, if any man be in Christ, if he be really one of his faithful servants, united to him by a lively faith, and in consequence of that union interested in his salvation, he is a new creature; his views and sentiments, his affections and pursuits, are so entirely changed, that he seems as it were to be come into a new world, and to be transformed quite into another person from what he formerly was: old things are passed away, and (behold the astonishing transformation!) all things are become new. This is the thought that I am now to illustrate; and you cannot but see how proper a foundation it will be for our discourse on the second general I proposed, which is,

Secondly, Particularly to describe the nature of that great change, which passes on every soul, that is truly regenerate, in the Scriptural and most important sense of the word.

And here it may hardly seem necessary to tell you, that I do not mean to assert, that the substance of the soul, and its natural faculties, are in a strict and proper sense changed: a man might as reasonably assert from such a scripture, that the former body was annihilated, and a new one produced; and common sense and decency will not allow us to imagine, that the apostle meant any thing of this nature, by the general terms he uses here. But the plain meaning is, that when a man becomes a real Christian, the whole temper and character of his mind is so changed, as to become different from that of the generality of mankind, and different from what it formerly was, while in an unenlightened and unrenewed state. It is not merely a little circumstantial alteration; it is not assuming a new name, professing new speculative opinions, or practising some new rites and forms: but it is becoming (as we frequently say, in our usual forms of speech) a different creature, or a new man.—And thus the sacred writers express themselves in many other passages, which very happily serve to illustrate this. They, in particular, represent God as promising, with relation to this work, "A new heart will I give them; and a new spirit will I put within them; and I will take away the heart of stone," the stubborn, obstinate, impenetrable disposition they once had, "and will give them a heart of flesh," a tender, compliant temper, which shall incline them to submit to my will with humility, and to obey it with delight. And thus, when the apostle had exhorted the Ephesians to put off, with respect to their former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, he adds, And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God, or in conformity to his

* Συνεχει.

image, is created in righteousness and true holiness; which is further illustrated by his important exhortation to the Romans, Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. And on the same principles, what in one place he calls the new creature, in another parallel place he expresses, by faith that works by love, and by keeping the commandments of God; for all these, as equivalent characters, he opposes to circumcision and uncircumcision, or to the mere externals of a religious profession; declaring the utter insufficiency of the latter, and the absolute necessity of the former.

The general nature of this change may then be understood, by an attentive consideration of such scriptures as those mentioned above; which indeed contain what is most essential on this subject. But for the more complete illustration of the matter, I shall particularly show you, that where there is reason to speak of a man, as one of those who are in Christ Jesus, or who are truly regenerate, there will be "New apprehensions, new affections, new resolutions, new labours, new enjoyments, and new hopes:" and perhaps there are few important branches of the Christian character, which may not be introduced, as illustrating one or other of these remarks.

The former of them is indeed the foundation of the rest; because, as religion is a reasonable service, all the change which is made in the affections and resolutions, in the pursuits, enjoyments, and hopes of a good man, arises from that different view, in which he is now taught to look on those objects, the nature of which is to direct his choice, to determine his conduct, and regulate his passions: it will therefore be the business of this evening's discourse to show you,

I. That wherever there is a real principle of regeneration, there will be new apprehensions of things.

When God created the natural world, he said, in the very beginning of his work, Let there be light, and there was light: and thus he deals in this new creation, which raises the soul from a chaos, to such a beautiful, well-ordered, and well-furnished frame. God, says the apostle, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; whereas before, the understanding was darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness or perverseness of their hearts.

Now this illumination, of which I am speaking, does not so much refer to a speculative, as to a practical and heart-impressing knowledge. It is true, that when a man once comes to be in good earnest in religion, he generally arrives at a clearer and fuller knowledge, even of the doctrines of Christianity, than he had before: for he then sets himself to inquire with greater diligence, and to seek light of the great Father of lights with greater earnestness; he gets clear of many evil affections, that put a corrupt bias upon his judgment; and he comes within the reach of those promises, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, and if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Yet, I think, I may very properly say, that at various times, when our judgment of any object is the same, our apprehensions of it are very different. It is one thing, for instance, to believe that God is the omnipotent, all-wise, and all-gracious governor of the world; and another and very different thing, to have the heart powerfully impressed with an apprehension of his ability and readiness to help us. I will, therefore, a little more particularly illustrate those respects, in which the apprehensions of such as are really regenerate, differ from those which they formerly had: and I hope you will do yourselves the justice to reflect, as we go along, how far you have felt these apprehensions which you hear me describe; and I have a pleasing persuasion, that many of you have felt them in a much livelier manner than they can be described. I would observe then to you, that a regenerate soul has new apprehensions "of God,—of itself,—of Christ,—of eternity,—and of the way and method that God has marked out for its being happy there."

1. A regenerate soul has new apprehensions "of the blessed God."

There are very few who pretend so much as to doubt of the being of a God; and fewer yet, that will venture to deny it: and even among those who have denied it, and disputed against it, some by their own confession, have felt their hearts give them the lie, and upbraid them for using the powers of reason and speech against the Giver and Preserver of both. I persuade myself, at least, there are none that hear me this day, who would not look upon a professed atheist as a monster, unworthy to be a member of human society, and little to be trusted in any of its relations. Yet after all, while the being of the blessed God is warmly asserted, his nature is so little understood and considered, that there are thousands who may still properly be said to be without God in the world, or in practice and temper, though not in notion, to be atheists in it. Wicked men therefore, in general, are described as those that know not God: but where God has determined to glorify his mercy in the salvation of a sinner, he shines into the heart for this blessed purpose, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. And thus the glories of the divine Being are known to the regenerate soul in such a manner, as they are not to the most acute metaphy-

sician, or the sublimest philosopher, who is himself a stranger to the spiritual life.

The person of whom we now speak, has new apprehensions "of the spirituality and omnipresence of God,—of his majesty and purity,—of his power and patience,—of his goodness,—and his intimate access to men's spirits, with the reality and importance of his operations upon them." Permit me a little to represent the views of each, both to direct your inquiries, and also to impress your minds, and my own, with truths in which we have all so intimate a concern.

The divine spirituality and omnipresence is apprehended by the good man in a peculiar manner. That there is some immaterial substance, and that matter is moved by his active power continually impressed upon it, according to stated laws, is indeed so plain a dictate of reason, that I question not but the thought influences the minds of some, who have not so much acquaintance with language as to be able properly to express it: but, alas! it easily passes through, as if no way important. It is quite a different thing to feel, as it were, the presence of an infinitely intelligent and all-observing Deity, actually surrounding us in all times and places;—to say from the heart, O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me, so that thou understandest my thoughts afar off: whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me;—to feel, as it were, the hand of God, which indeed we may feel, if we duly attend to it, in all the impressions made on our bodily senses, and on the powers of our mind;—to feel ourselves even now supported by it, and to argue from the constant support of his hand, the never-failing notice of his eye. "He reads my present thoughts; he knows even now, all the secrets of my soul, and has always observed my conduct in every the minutest particular: and recorded, in permanent characters, the whole history of my life, and of my heart; of this depraved, sinful life, of this vain, this treacherous, this rebellious heart."

With this conception of the divine observance, are closely and intimately connected new apprehensions of the purity of God, and of his infinite Majesty; views, which mutually assist and illustrate each other. The irreverence with which the generality of men behave in the presence of God, and the easiness with which they admit the slightest temptation to sin against him, plainly show what low notions they have of him: but God does, as it were, appear to the eye of a renewed mind, arrayed in his robes of light and majesty; so that he is ready to cry out, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: I see the eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient God, who sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; who spreadeth out the heavens as a tent to dwell in, and looks down on the nations as the drop of a bucket, and counts them as the small dust of the balance. Who would not fear before him? who would not tremble at his presence? who would not revere that God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity: who cannot be tempted with evil, but must see it, and hate it, even in all its forms!"

And such too are the views it has of his almighty power, that the enlightened mind will further add, "A God of almighty power, who could speak a whole world into ruin; (undoubtedly he could, for he spoke it into existence;) who by one single thought, by one silent volition, could easily abase the proudest creature in the universe; must have it in his power to bring me in a moment to the dust of death, and to the flames of hell; to lay me as low in misery, and to hold me as long in it, as he should please: this, O my soul, this is the God, against whom such feeble worms as we are daily offending, and whom we madly presume to make our enemy."

This gives the regenerate man a further sense of the patience of God than ever he had before. Others may look round upon the world, and wonder there is so much penal evil in it; but the renewed soul wonders there is not a thousand times more. When he sees, how the world lieth in wickedness; when he observes, how poor impotent mortals are, many of them perhaps, in words blaspheming the God of heaven; many more of them, most presumptuously violating all the plainest and most important precepts of his law; and most of the rest, living in a perpetual forgetfulness of him, as if he were not at all, or were not so considerable as to be any way worth their notice; such an one cannot but wonder, that the Almighty Majesty of heaven does not in a moment make himself known by the thunder of his power, and confound all their madness and folly by crushing the world with its inhabitants into ruin. He often sees the rising sun, and the descending rain, with astonishment that it should be sent down on such a world as ours.

He has also more affecting views than ever of the divine goodness. Most men speculatively believe it; and they take occasion, even from that belief, to affront it: but a good man views it at once as a delightful and a venerable thing; he fears the Lord and his goodness; and while it encourages him, guilty as he is, to repose himself upon it as his hope, it awakens a generous kind of confusion at the thought of ever having offended him, and fills his very soul with indignation at the thought of repeating such offences.

And once more, the regenerate man has quite different notions than before, of the intimate access

which God has to the spirits of men, and his important power of operating upon them. The greatest part of men indeed consider not, as they ought, how the whole material world perpetually depends upon a divine agency, and is no other than one grand machine, on which the great Artificer continually acts, to make it an instrument of mercy to his sensitive and intelligent creatures. But there are yet fewer, who seriously consider how entirely the hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, and how much depends on his influences upon them. Nevertheless, experience teaches the renewed soul, that he is the God of the spirits of all flesh; and that he not only views, but manages, them as he pleases. "Lord," does he say, "this spirit of mine is shaded with thick darkness, but thou canst illuminate it; it is diseased, but thou canst cure it; it is unstable as water, and lighter than a feather, yet thou canst fix and establish it; and whatever thou wouldst have me to be, and to do, for thy glory, and mine own happiness, thou canst work in me both to will and to perform it: so that all I need, to the rectitude and felicity of my nature, is only this, that I may have more of thine inward, vital, operative presence." It is not easy to conceive, what efficacy this thought has, for the transformation of the soul. But again,

2. New apprehensions are connected with these sentiments in the regenerate soul, "concerning itself, and its own state."

It is surprising to think, how many run through successive years in life, without ever turning the eye of the mind inward, that the soul may survey itself. I speak not of a philosophical survey of the faculties of the mind; which, though indeed in its place it be useful and entertaining, is no more necessary in its refinements to a well-ordered state, than skill in anatomy is to a healthful constitution: but I speak of those views of the mind, which are in the reach of all, how low soever their genius or their education may have been.

As all true happiness is an internal thing, wherever God intends to produce it in the heart of a revolted and corrupted creature, (and such, alas! we all naturally are,) he leads it into a view of itself; and shows it (if I may be allowed the expression) a mixture of grandeur and misery, that lies within; which yet the greatest part of mankind live and die without ever observing. "I am here," does the awakened creature say, "an intelligent being; far superior to this well-wrought frame of flesh and blood, which God has given me for a little while to command, and which I must quickly drop in the dust: I am made capable of determining my own choice, of directing my own actions, of judging concerning the importance of ends, and the propriety of means in subserviency to them; and while I see a vast variety of creatures in different forms beneath me, I see no rank of creatures above me, nothing nobler than man, here on earth, where I dwell. Yet I see man, in the midst of his glory, a feeble, dependent, mortal creature, who cannot possibly be his own end, nor can of himself alone, by any means, command or insure his own happiness.—Every thing tells me that he is the creature of God; and that it is his greatest honour and felicity to know, and practically to acknowledge, himself to be so: every thing tells me that it is most reasonable that God, who is the great original of man, should also be the end of his being; but have I made him the end of mine? My soul, thou art conscious to thyself thou hast lived in many instances without him in the world.—He has given thee, even in the system of thine own nature, and of the visible beings that are round about thee, compared with his providential interposition in the management of them, the intimations of his holy and righteous will: he has expressed these dictates far more plainly in his written word: and when thou comest to examine them, how art thou condemned by them! When thou comest to think of the spirituality and purity of his being and his law, how shameful does thy temper and thy life appear to have been! what an infinite disproportion is there between that and its perfect rule!—And whom, O my soul, hast thou offended? whose law hast thou broken? whose grace hast thou despised?—The law, the grace of that eternal God, of whom I have now been hearing; who is here present with me, who is even within me, and who sees, O my heart, (more distinctly than thou canst see,) all thy guilt, and all its aggravations. O Lord! I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. I have talked of sin, and of the sentence of God against it, as a thing of course: but oh, my soul, it is thine own concern! The guilt, the stain of sin is still upon thee; the sentence of God is pronounced against thee; and it must be reversed, or thou art undone for ever. These irregular habits and dispositions that prevail in thee must be corrected, or they will prove thy mortal disease and everlasting torment.—Thou art a poor, weak, irresolute creature; the experience of every past day of life, since I began to think of religion at all, proves it: yet thou must, by some means or other, attain to inward strength and inward purity, or thou art lost; and all these great capacities, and glorious faculties, will but make thy ruin so much the more distinguished. Oh how weighty the care! Oh how great the charge! What shall I do, that thought, that reason, that immortality, may not be my destruction? Where shall I find a rock that will be firm enough for my support and safety? Where shall I find the means to build the fabric of such a happiness, as thine, O my soul, must be, if ever I am happy at all?"

Thus does God teach the mind, by its inward reviews and reflections, this important lesson of its own impotence and guilt, of its depravity and ruin; and so prepares it for those new apprehensions of Christ which I mentioned as the third particular.

3. The regenerate soul has new apprehensions "concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, considered as a Mediator in general, and as such a particular Mediator as he is exhibited in the word of God."

That affecting view which the regenerate soul has of the majesty, glory, power, and purity of the blessed God, will undoubtedly convince him how unfit he is in himself to appear before his awful presence. He is ready to sink down in the dust at the very thought, and to say, "Who is able to stand before such a great and holy God as thou art? If I were in all the original rectitude and glory of my nature, I could not do it: how much less, surrounded as I am, with so much guilt, with so much pollution! I need, as it were, a days-man betwixt us, who might lay his hand upon us both, who should transact affairs in my name with God, and bring the peaceful messages of God to me: let such a one speak with me, and I will hear; but let not God speak with me, lest I die."

And when he comes to take a more near and intimate view of this Mediator which God has exhibited in the gospel, the renewed soul is even charmed and transported with the view: and that Jesus, whose name he before pronounced with so much coldness, that the very mention of it was a kind of profanation, now is regarded by him as the chiefest among ten thousand. He beholds his glory, as that of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, though it appears indeed a mystery, which he cannot fully explain, is nevertheless a glorious certainty, which in the general he most cordially believes. He sees Emanuel, God dwelling with us in human flesh, and acquiesces in the sight; while the rays of divine glory are attempered by passing through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. He considers Christ as made of God unto him wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: and each of these views rejoices him to the very heart. "Ignorant as I am, I shall be taught and instructed by him, that great Prophet, whom God sent into the world: by him, who is incarnate wisdom, as well as incarnate love; whose words resound in the gospel, and whose Spirit seals the instructions of his word. Guilty as I am, my crimes shall be expiated; for there is redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: there is an everlasting righteousness that he has introduced: and O how richly will it adorn my soul!—This pollution of mine shall not for ever exclude me from a comfortable intercourse with the pure Majesty of heaven: for Christ is come to be my sanctification, and he can cleanse me by his Spirit, and transform me into that divine, delightful image which I have lost.—Victorious Lord, how easily canst thou redeem me from that state of servitude, in which I have been kept so long complaining! how easily, and how powerfully, canst thou vindicate me into the glorious liberty of the children of God!—Blessed Jesus, thou art my light and my strength, my hope and my joy! Thou art just such a Saviour as my necessity requires; thou fillest up all my wants, and all my wishes; thou art all in all to me! I would not be ignorant of thee for ten thousand worlds; I would not live a day, nor an hour, without recollecting who and what thou art, and maintaining that intercourse with thee, which is the life of my soul."

4. The regenerate soul has also new apprehensions "of the importance of eternity, when compared with time and all its concerns."

It is indeed a most pitiable thing, and awakens our astonishment, grief, and indignation, to observe how the things of this world press down immortal spirits, and reduce them almost indeed to a state of brutality. Most deplorable it is, to see the power and energy of those motives, which are taken merely from this earth, and its little concernments; so that if a man did but know what was the favourite vanity, he might almost predict, from the knowledge of circumstances, how a man's actions would be ordered; and might almost be sure that he would follow, whithersoever this interest, or that pleasure, this ambitious, or that mercenary, view, called him; though all the prospects of an eternal world pleaded the contrary way. Such is the folly and madness that is in men's hearts while they live; and after that, they go down to the dead, and spend that immortal duration, which they have despised, in fruitless lamentations. Fatal delusion! which it is the great design of the gospel to cure.

But when a soul becomes wise to salvation, it is taught to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; because it has now a full sense of what before it only notionally confessed, that the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.—Eternity! it is impossible I should tell you how much an eye, that is enlightened by God, sees and reads, as it were, in that one word; while one scene beyond another is still opening on the mind, till its sight and its thoughts are swallowed up: and as the creatures are as nothing with respect to God, so all the interests of time, with respect to eternity, appear as less than nothing and vanity. To be made for an everlasting existence appears in so awful a view, that while it has some pleasing

hope, it rejoices with trembling; and every remaining fear, with relation to this great interest, seems a greater evil than the certainty of any temporal calamity.

I might add upon this head, that the regenerate soul has not only new views of the importance, but likewise of the nature, of the invisible and eternal state; and particularly of the nature of the celestial happiness. It does not consider it merely, or chiefly, as a state of corporeal enjoyment, formed to gratify and delight the senses; but as a state of perfect conformity to God, and most endearing intercourse with him; of which, as it begins already by divine grace to taste the pleasures, so it most ardently thirsts after them; and would be heartily willing to lose this body for ever, and to bid an eternal adieu to every object capable of giving it delight; rather than it would consent to lose, in a perpetual succession of such objects, the sight of the Father of spirits, and that sensibility of his love which adds the most substantial solidity, and exalted relish, to every inferior good that can be desired from it.

5. A regenerate man has also new apprehensions "of the way which God has marked out to this happiness."

Nothing is more common than for carnal and ignorant men to imagine, that it is a very easy thing to get to heaven; and upon this presumption, they hew out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; and often live and die with a lie in their right hand. But the renewed soul, having such awful notions of the blessed God, and such apprehensions of the excellency and glory of the heavenly state, as you have heard, deeply feels how absolutely necessary it is, that something of a very great and important change should pass in the mind of that sinful creature, that ever hopes to be a partaker of it. He sees, that it is impossible any external rite should secure so great an end; impossible, that baptism should be regeneration, in that sense in which the Scripture uses the word, or that by this alone, though ever so regularly administered, a man's eternal happiness should be secured. He sees, that to be associated to this or that party of Christians, to join with established or separate churches, and to be ever so zealous for their respective order, worship, and discipline, is a thing quite of foreign consideration here; and that the best or the worst of men may be, and probably are, on one side, and on another; nay that ignorance, pride, and bigotry may take occasion from hence, to render men further from the kingdom of God, than any mistake in judgment or practice on these disputed points could have set them.

No, my brethren, when a man's eyes are enlightened by God's renewing Spirit, he sees and feels that, in the language of Scripture, he must be created anew in Christ Jesus: he sees, that holiness is a character without which no man shall see the Lord; and he is perhaps little anxious, whether this, or the faith that produces it, shall be called a condition, or a qualification, or an instrument, while he sees he must perish without it: he sees, that as it is absolutely necessary, so it is very extensive, as the commandment, which is its rule, is exceeding broad: he sees, that it must not only effectually regulate the actions of his life, but control all the sentiments of his heart: nay, he sees, it must not only be submitted to as a necessary, but be chosen as a most amiable, thing; and accordingly, he does choose it as such.—The unregenerate soul, when he hears of repentance and reformation, though he understands not half that it means, nor is aware of what will, in fact, be the greatest difficulty of it, looks upon it at best as a nauseous medicine, which he must take, or die; but the regenerate man finds his heart so wonderfully and so happily changed, that he regards it for itself, as the food, the health, and the life of his soul; as that which necessarily brings its own pleasures, and, in a considerable degree, its own reward, along with it; so that now, as David beautifully expresses it, He openeth his mouth, and panteth, because he longs for God's commandments.

And I will add once more, the good man is also made sensible of the place which faith and holiness hold, in the scheme which God has laid, for our justification before him, and our acceptance with him. I do not say, that all Christians conceive of this with equal perspicuity, or express their conceptions with equal exactness: the most candid allowance should here be made for the different ideas they fix to the same phrases, as they have been used to look upon them with veneration, or with suspicion. But this I will venture to say, because I am persuaded the Scripture will bear me out in it, "that the confidence of a regenerate soul is not fixed on his own holiness, or faith, as the meritorious cause of his acceptance with God." He is deeply and cordially sensible, that he is made accepted in the Beloved; and seeing nothing but guilt, and weakness, and ruin in himself, he ascribes to the blessed Jesus, and to the riches of God's free grace in him, his righteousness, his strength, and his salvation. And where a man is thus persuaded, I think he must, in effect, believe, even though he might scruple in words expressly to own it, "that Christ, as our great Surety, having perfectly obeyed the law of God himself, and by his blood having fully satisfied the divine justice for the breach of it, we, on our believing in him by a vital faith, are justified before God by the imputation of his perfect righteousness." This latter way of stating it, when rightly explained, appears just equivalent to the former: and it is a manner of

conceiving and expressing it, which, when rightly understood, seems extremely suitable to that deep humility, and poverty of spirit, to which the renewed soul is brought, when like a new-born babe, it desires the sincere milk of the word, that it may grow thereby. But as the mind, at such a time, finds little inclination to contend about words and phrases, it would be much less proper for me to enter into any controversy about them here.

Let it suffice for the present, that I have given you this plain representation of that change which is wrought in a man's apprehensions, when he is made a new creature. When old things are passed away, he has new apprehensions of God, of himself, of Christ, of eternity, and of the way to obtain the happiness of it; and as at this happy time all things are become new, there are "new affections, new resolutions, new labours, new enjoyments, and new hopes," which are the result of the change already described. But it will be much more difficult to reduce what I have to offer on these heads within the bounds of the next discourse, than proper to attempt any of them in this. Go home, my friends, and try yourselves by what you have already heard; and be assured, that if you are condemned by this part of the description, it is impossible you should be approved by any that will follow; since they have all their foundation in this.

SERMON XXIV.

ON THE NATURE OF REGENERATION, WITH RESPECT TO THE CHANGE IT PRODUCES IN MEN'S AFFECTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, LABOURS, ENJOYMENTS, AND HOPES.

2 Cor. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Among the various subjects which exercise the thoughts and tongues of men, few are more talked of than religion. But it is melancholy to think how little it is understood, and how much it is mistaken and misrepresented, in the world. The text before us gives a very instructive view of it; such a view, that I am sure an experimental knowledge of its sense would be infinitely preferable to the most critical and exact knowledge of all the most curious passages, both of the Old Testament and the New. From it, you know, I have begun to describe that great change, which the word of God teaches us to represent under the notion of regeneration, or, according to the language of St. Paul, in this passage of his writings, by a new creation. I know I am explaining it before many, who have been much longer acquainted with it than myself, and, it becomes me to believe, before many that have attained much higher advancements in it: but I fear also, at the same time, I speak of it before many who are yet strangers to it; and I am labouring, by the plainest addresses that I can, to give them at least some just ideas of it. O that, to all the descriptions that either have or shall be given, God may, by his grace, add that understanding which arises from feeling correspondent impressions on the mind!

I have already endeavoured to illustrate those new apprehensions, which arise in the regenerate mind; apprehensions of the blessed God, of itself, of Christ, of the eternal world, and of the way to obtain the happiness of it. It now remains, that I consider those "new affections, resolutions, labours, enjoyments, and hopes," which result from them. I observe, therefore,

II. That these new apprehensions will be attended with *new affections*.

I readily acknowledge, that the degree in which the affections operate may, and will be, different in different persons, according to their natural constitution: but as, in some degree or another, they make an essential part of our frame, it is impossible but they must be impressed with a matter of such infinite importance, as religion will appear. And the apprehensions described above, must awaken the exercise of correspondent affections, and direct them to objects very different from those by which they were before excited, and on which they were fixed. And here now,

1. This may be especially illustrated in *love*.

Love is indeed the ruling passion of the mind, and has all the rest in an avowed and real subjection to it. And here lies the very root of human misery in our fallen state: we are naturally lovers of ourselves in a very irregular degree; lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. But, on the contrary, the first and great commandment of the law is written in the breast of every regenerate man: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. It is true indeed, that if his soul were perfectly delivered into this mould, and his attainments in divine love were complete, there would be an end of all sin, and almost of all calamity too; for what evil could assail or impress a mind entirely and unchangeably fixed upon God? yet that the love of God should be the prevailing affection, is not merely a circumstance, but an essential part, of true religion. While the good man sees him who is invisible, as infinitely perfect in himself, and as the Author of being and happiness to the whole creation, he cannot but acknowledge, that he is, beyond comparison, the most amiable of all objects.

And though it is certain, that nothing can so much induce and inflame our love to God, as a well-grounded assurance, that he is become our God, and our Father in Christ; yet before the regenerate soul has attained to this, a sense of those favours which he receives from God in common with the whole human race, and more especially of those which are inseparable from a Christian profession, together with the apprehension of his being accessible through a Mediator, and reconcilable to sinful men, will diffuse some delightful sense of God over the mind, which will grow sweeter in proportion to the degree in which his own hopes brighten and settle, while they are growing toward the full assurance of faith.

And as the real Christian loves him that begat, he loves him also that is begotten of him. He loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, viewing him, not in a cold and insensible manner, as he once did, but with inflamed affections, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. If he knows in any degree the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in becoming incarnate for the salvation of his people, in making himself a sacrifice for their sins, and paying his life for the ransom of their lives; he feels himself drawn toward Jesus, thus lifted up on the cross; and the love of Christ constrains him to such a degree, that he longs to find out some acceptable method to express his inward and overbearing sense of it. How divided soever true Christians may be in other respects, they all agree in this, in loving that Jesus whom they have not seen.

We may further recollect on this head, that the apostle in a solemn manner adjures Christians by the love of the Spirit, thereby plainly implying, that such a love to him is an important branch of their character; and it must be so in all those who regard him, as every regenerate soul does, as the author of divine light and life, and as the source of love and happiness, by whom this love of God is shed abroad in the heart, while it is enlarged with sacred delight to run the way of his commandments; as that Spirit, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption, and who brings down the foretastes of heaven to the heart in which he dwells, and which, by his presence, he consecrates as the temple of God.

And most natural is it, that a soul filled with these impressions and views should overflow with unutterable joy, and feeling itself thus happy in an intercourse with its God, should be enlarged in love to man; for, says the apostle, ye are taught of God to love one another. Those whom he apprehends as his brethren by regenerating grace, he knows are with him beloved of the Lord; and as he hopes to dwell with them for ever in glory, he must love them so far as he knows them now. And though a narrow education, and that bigotry which sometimes conceals itself under very honourable and pious names, may perhaps influence even a sanctified heart, so far as to entertain unkind suspicions as to those whose religious sentiments may differ from his own, and it may be, to pass some rash censures upon them; yet, as his acquaintance with them increases, and he discerns, under their different forms, the traces of their common Father, his prejudices wear off, and that sometimes by very sensible degrees; and Christians receive one another, as Christ has received them all. And where the good man cannot love others with a love of complacency and esteem, he at least beholds them with a love of compassion and pity; and remembers the relation of fellow-creatures, where he sees no reason to hope that they are fellow-heirs with him. In a word, the heart is melted down into tenderness; it is warmed with generous sentiments; it longs for opportunities of diffusing good of all kinds, both temporal and spiritual, wide as its influence can reach; it beats with an ardour which sometimes painfully recoils upon a man's self, for want of ability to help others in proportion to his desire to do it: and that God who knows all the inmost workings of his mind, hears many an importunate intercession for others in the hours of solemn devotion, and many a compassionate ejaculation, which he is occasionally sending up to heaven from time to time, as he passes through so sinful and so calamitous a world.

These are the ruling affections in the heart of a good man; and though it is neither reasonable nor possible, that he should entirely divest himself of self-love, yet he endeavours to regulate it so, that it may not interfere with the more important consideration of general good. Self has the lowest place in his regards, nor does he limit his affection to a party; but aiming at extensive usefulness, he guards against those immoderate attachments to particular friendships, and those extravagant sallies of personal fondness, which are often no more than self-love under a specious disguise; which at once alienate the heart from God, and contract the social affections within very narrow, and those very irregular, bounds; and so prove almost as fatal to the health of the mind, as an excessive flow of blood into one part would be to that of the body.

I have enlarged so copiously on this change in the leading affection of the mind, that I must touch in a more transient manner on the rest. I add, therefore,

2. That a regenerate soul has *new aversions*.

He once hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. He hated the light, which disclosed to the aching eye of his conscience the beloved and indulged irregularities of his heart. He hated every thing that laid an embargo upon his lust; and was ready to count those for his enemies that plainly admonished him, and secretly

to dislike those whose conduct even silently reproved him. But now all these things are amiable to him; and those are esteemed his most valuable friends, whose examples may be most edifying, whose instructions may be most useful, and whose admonitions may be most faithful. For he now hates every false way; yea, and every vain thought too. He looks upon every irregular desire as an enemy, which he longs utterly to subdue; and especially strives against that sin which does most easily beset him, and abhors it more than he ever delighted in it. And though he rather pities than hates the persons of the most wretched and mischievous transgressors, yet he can no longer continue an endearing friendship with those who were once his seducers to sin, and his companions in it. In this sense, like David, he hates the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked; and if they will not be wrought upon by his compassionate endeavours to reclaim them, he will soon break off the intercourse, and say, Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I determine that I will keep the commandments of my God.

3. The regenerate man has also *new desires*.

There was a time, when sinful passions, as the apostle expresses it, did work in his members to bring forth fruit unto death. He was fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and making provision to fulfil the lusts of both. But now he earnestly desires a conformity to God, as his highest happiness; and can look up to him, and say, "O Lord, the desire of my soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; to maintain such a sense of thy presence at all times, as may influence my heart to think, my lips to speak, and my hands to act, in a manner suitable to that remembrance, and agreeable to thy wise and holy will." He now hungers and thirsts after righteousness; feels as real an appetite after more advanced degrees of piety and holiness, as he ever felt towards the gratification of his senses; and esteems the proper methods of attaining these advanced degrees, even more than his necessary food. Instead of desiring to run through a long course of animal enjoyments, he desires to get above them; longs to be a pure and triumphant spirit in the refined regions of immortality; and is willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

But I wave the further illustration of this, till I come to consider the new hopes which inspire him. I therefore add, as a necessary consequence of these new desires,

4. That the regenerate man has *new fears*.

Pain and sorrow, disappointment and affliction, he naturally feared; and the forebodings of his own mind would sometimes awaken the fears of future punishment, according to the righteous judgment of an offended God: but now he fears not merely punishment, but guilt: fears the remonstrance of an injured conscience; for he reverences conscience as God's vicegerent in his bosom. He therefore fears the most secret sins, as well as those which might occasion public disgrace; yea, he fears, lest by a precipitate and inconsiderate conduct he should contract guilt before he is aware. He fears, lest he should inadvertently injure and grieve others, even the weakest and the meanest. He fears using his liberty, in a manner that might insnare his brethren, or might occasion any scandal to a Christian profession: for such is the sensibility of his heart in this respect, that he would be more deeply concerned for the dishonour brought to God, and the reproach which might be thrown on religion by any unsuitable conduct of his; than merely for that part of the shame that might immediately and directly fall upon himself. But again,

5. The regenerate man has *new joys*.

These arise chiefly from an intercourse with God through Jesus Christ; and from a review of himself, as under the sanctifying influences of his grace, and as brought into a state of favour with him, in proportion to the degree in which he can discern himself in this character and state.

You know David, speaking of God, calls him his exceeding joy; and declares the gladness he had put into his heart, by lifting up the light of his countenance upon him, to be far beyond what they could have, whose corn and wine increased. And the apostle Paul speaks of Christians, as joying in God through Jesus Christ, and as rejoicing in Christ Jesus: and Peter also describes them as those, who believing in him, though unseen, rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Perhaps there was a time, when the good man censured all pretences of this kind, now at least in these latter days of Christianity, as an empty enthusiastic pretence: but since he has tasted that the Lord is gracious, he has that experimental knowledge of their reality and excellence, which he can confidently oppose to all the most artful and sophistical cavils; and could as soon doubt, whether the sun enlightens his eyes, and warms his body, as he could question, whether God has ways of manifesting himself to souls when it is felt with unutterable delight: and when thus entertained, he can adopt David's words, and say, that his soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, so that with joyful lips he praises God, when his meditation of him is thus sweet, and God says unto his soul, I am thy salvation.

The survey of the Lord Jesus Christ gives him also unutterable joy: while he reflects on that ample provision, which God has made by him, for the supply of all his necessities, and that firm security which is given to his soul by a believing union with Christ, whereby his life is connected

with that of his Saviour. In his constant presence, in his faithful care, he can boast all the day long; and that friendship, which establishes a community of interests between him and his Lord, engages him to rejoice in that salvation and happiness, to which he is advanced at the right hand of God, and gives him, by joyful sympathy, his part with Christ in glory, before he personally arrives at the full possession of it.

I add, that he also rejoices in the consciousness of God's gracious work upon his own soul, so far as he can discern the traces of it there. He delights to feel himself, as it were, cured of the mortal disease with which he once saw himself infected; to find himself in health and vigour of mind, renewed to a conformity with the divine image. He delights to look inward, and see that transformation of soul which has made the wilderness like the garden of the Lord, so that instead of the thorn there shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier the myrtle. Thus the good man is satisfied from himself; and though he humbly refers the ultimate glory of all to that God, by whose grace he is what he is, he enters with pleasure into his own mind, and reckons it a part of gratitude to his great Benefactor, to enjoy with as high a relish as he can the present workings of divine grace within him, as well as the pleasing prospect of what it will further do.

But this head has so near a resemblance to some that are to follow, that were I to enlarge upon it, as I easily might, I should leave room for nothing different to be said upon them. I will only add,

6. That as the counterpart of this, *new sorrows* will arise in the mind of a regenerate man.

These are particularly such as spring—from the withdrawings of God's presence,—from the remainder of sin in the soul,—and from the prevalence of it in the world about him.

The regenerate man will mourn, "when the reviving manifestations of God's presence are withdrawn from his soul." It seems very absurd to interpret the numberless passages in the sacred writers, in which they complain of the hidings of God's face from them, as if they merely referred to the want of temporal enjoyments, or to the pressure of temporal calamities. If the light of God's countenance, which they so expressly oppose to temporal blessings, signify a spiritual enjoyment, the want of it must relate to spiritual desertion. And I believe there are few Christians in the world who are entirely unacquainted with this. They have most of them their seasons when they walk in darkness, and see little or no light: and this, not only when anxious fears arise with relation to their own spiritual state; but at some other times, when though they can in the main call God their Father, yet he seems as it were to stand afar off, and to continue them at a distance, which wears the face of unkindness, especially under temptations and other afflictions, in which they lose their lively sense of God's presence, and that endearing freedom of converse with him, which, through the influence of the Spirit of adoption on their souls, they have sometimes known. If this be mysterious and unintelligible to some of you, I am heartily sorry for it; but I do not remember that I was ever intimately acquainted with any one, who seemed to me a real Christian, that has not, upon mentioning the case, acknowledged, that he has felt something of it: at least I will boldly venture to say this, that if you are truly regenerate, and do not know what I mean by it, it is because you have hitherto been kept in a continual flow of holy joy, or at least in a calm and cheerful persuasion of your interest in the divine favour: and even such may see the day, when, strong as their mountain seems to stand, God may hide his face to their trouble: or, however, they will infer from what they now feel, that it must be a mournful case whenever it occurs; and that sorrow, in such a circumstance, will soon strike on a truly sanctified heart, and wound it very deep.

The sorrow of a good man also arises "from the remainder of sin in his soul." Though he is upright before God, and proves it by keeping himself from his iniquity; yet he cries out, Who can understand his errors? who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? A sense of the sinfulness of his nature humbles him in the dust; and the first risings of irregular inclinations and passions give him a tender pain, with which a carnal heart is unacquainted, even when sin is domineering within him.

And once more, "the prevalence of sin in the world around him," is a grief to one that is born of God. It pierces him to the heart to see men dishonouring God, and ruining themselves; he beholds transgressors, as David well expresses it, with a mixture of indignation and sorrow; and when he seriously considers how common, and yet how sad, a case it is, he can perhaps borrow the words of the same prophet, so far as to say, that rivers of waters run down his eyes, because men keep not the law of God. Now, as these are sorrows that seldom do at all affect the heart of an unregenerate man, I thought it the more proper to mention them, to assist you in your inquiries into your own state.

Such are the affections of love and aversion, of desire and fear, of joy and sorrow, which fill the breast of the regenerate man, and naturally arise from those new apprehensions which are described under the former head. I add,

III. That he has also *new resolutions*.

You will easily apprehend I speak of those that are formed for the service of God, and against sin.

I readily acknowledge, that there are often, in unregenerate men, some resolutions of this kind, and perhaps those very warm, and for the present very sincere; yet there is considerable difference between them and those we are now to represent; as the resolutions of the truly good man are more universal, more immediate, and more humble.

1. The resolutions which he now forms are more universal than they ever were before.

He does not now resolve against this or that sin, but against all; against sin, as sin, as opposite to the holiness of God, and destructive of the honour and happiness of the rational creation. He does not say, with Naaman, concerning this or that more convenient iniquity, The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing; nor does he resolve to excuse himself in an indulgence, even to that sin which does most easily beset him: but rather, in his general determination against sin, and in those solemn engagements with which such determinations may be attended, he fixes especially upon those sins which he might before have been most ready to except.

2. The resolutions of the regenerate man are more immediate.

It very frequently happens, that while others are under awakening impressions, as they see a necessity for parting with their sins, and engaging in what they may call a religious life, they resolve upon it: but then they think it may be delayed a little longer; perhaps a few years, or at least a few weeks or days; or they, perhaps, refer it to some remarkable period which is approaching, which they flatter themselves they shall make yet more remarkable, as the era of their reformation; but, in the mean time, they will take their farewell of their lusts by a few more indulgences: and thus they delude themselves, and rivet on their chains faster than before. But the good man, with David, makes haste, and delays not to keep the commandments of God. He is like the prodigal, who, as soon as ever he said, I will arise and go to my father, immediately arose and came to him. He reckons the time he has already spent in the service of sin may suffice, and that indeed it is far more than enough: he wishes he could call back that which is past; but he determines that he will not take one step further in this unhappy path. He fully purposes, that he will never once more deliberately and presumptuously offend God, in any matter, great or small; if any thing can be called small, which is a deliberate and apprehended offence: and he determines, that from this moment he will yield himself to God, as alive from the dead, and employ his members as instruments of righteousness. But then,

3. His resolutions are more modest and humble than they have ever been before.

And this indeed is the great circumstance that renders them more effectual.—When an awakened sinner feels himself most enslaved to his vices, he pleases himself with this thought, that there is a secret kind of spring in his mind, which when he pleases to exert, he can break through all at once, and commence, whenever that unhappy necessity comes upon him, a very religious man in a moment. And when conscience presses him with the memory of past guilt, and the representation of future danger, he cuts off these remonstrances with a hasty resolve, "I will do so no more:" but then, perhaps, the effect of this may not last a day; though possibly it may, at other times, continue a few weeks or months, where the grosser acts of sin are concerned: and indeed his resolutions seldom reach further than these; for the necessity of a sanctified heart is a mystery which he has never yet learned. But a truly regenerate man has learned wisdom from this experience of his own, and the observation of other men's, frailty. He feels his own weakness, and is so thoroughly aware of the treachery of his own heart, that he is almost afraid to express in words the purpose which his very soul is forming; he is almost afraid to turn that purpose into a vow before God, lest the breach of that vow should increase his guilt; but this he can say, with repenting Ephraim, Lord, turn thou me, and I shall be turned; and with David, hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps may not slip. "I am exceeding frail; but, Lord, be thou surety for thy servant for good, and then I shall be safe! Do thou rescue me from temptations, and I shall be delivered! Do thou fill my heart with holy sentiments, and I will breathe them out before thee! Do thou excite and maintain a zeal for thy service, and then I will exert myself in it!" And when once a man is come to such a distrust of himself; when, like a little child, he stretches out his hand to be led by his heavenly Father, and trusts in his guardian care alone for his security and comfort; then out of weakness he is made strong, and goes on safe, though perhaps trembling; and sees those that made the loudest boasts, and placed the greatest confidence in themselves, falling on the right hand and on the left, and all their bravery melting away like snow before the sun.

IV. The regenerate man has *new labours* and *employments*.

Not that his former employment in secular life is laid aside: it would ordinarily be a very dangerous snare for a man to imagine that God requires this. On the contrary, the apostle gives it in charge to Christian converts, that in what calling soever a man is found, when he is called into the profession of the gospel, he should therein abide with God. But when he becomes a real Christian, he prosecutes this calling, whatever it be, with a new spirit and temper, from new principles, and to new purposes.

While his hands are labouring in the world, his heart is often rising to God; he consecrates his work to the divine honour, and to the credit of religion; and desires, that his merchandise and his gain may in this sense be holiness to the Lord, by employing it to support the family which Providence has committed to his charge, and to relieve the poor which Christ recommends to his pity: and as he depends upon God to give him wisdom and success in the conduct of his affairs, he ascribes the glory of that success to him; "not sacrificing to his own net, nor burning incense to his own drag."

And I will further add, that regeneration introduces a set of new labours, added to the former, with which the man was before utterly unacquainted.—We may consider as the principal and chief of these, the great labour of purifying the heart, of conquering sinful inclinations and affections, and of approaching God by a more intimate access and more endeared converse. Now they that imagine this to be an easy matter, know little of the human heart, little of the spirituality of God's nature and his law. Give me leave to say, that the labours of the body, in cultivating the earth, are much more easily performed than this spiritual husbandry. To weed a soil so luxuriant in evil productions, and to raise a plentiful harvest of holy affections and actions in a soil so barren of good; to regulate appetites and passions so exorbitant as those of the human heart naturally are, and to awaken in it suitable affections; to be abundant in the fruits of righteousness, and to converse with God in the exercise of devotion: these are no little things; nor will a little resolution, watchfulness, and activity, suffice, in order to the discharge of such a business. It is comparatively easy to go through the forms of prayer and praise, whatever they are; to read, or from present conception to utter, a few words before God; but to unite the heart in God's service, to wrestle with him for a blessing, to pour out the heart before him, to speak to him as searching the very heart; so that he should say, "This is prayer:" this, my brethren, is a work indeed; and he that is conscientious in the discharge of it will find, that it is not to be despatched in a few hasty moments, nor without serious reflection, and a resolute watch maintained over the spirit.

New labours also arise to the regenerate soul, in consequence of the concern it has to promote religion in the world.—Being possessed, as I formerly showed you the heart of the good man is, with unfeigned love to his fellow-creatures, and knowing of how great importance religion is to the happiness of men, he pleads earnestly with God for the propagation and success of the gospel; and he endeavours, according to his ability and opportunity, to promote it; to promote pure and undefiled religion in his family and his neighbourhood, even in all around him. And this requires observation and application, that this attempt may be prudently conducted, and great resolution, in order to its being rendered effectual: it requires great diligence in watching over ourselves, lest our examples prove inconsistent with our precepts; and no small degree of courage, considering how averse the generality of mankind are to admonitions and reproofs; in consequence of which, a person can hardly act the part of a faithful friend without exposing himself to the hazard of being accounted an enemy.

Such are the new labours of the real Christian: let any man try to perform them, and he will not find them light: but to encourage the attempt, let me further add,

V. That the regenerate soul has its *new entertainments* too.

He has pleasures, which a stranger intermeddles not with, and which the world can neither give, nor take away: pleasures, which a thousand times overbalance the most painful labours, and the most painful sufferings too; and which sweetly mingling themselves with the various circumstances of life, through which the Christian passes, do, as it were, gild all the scene, and make all the fatigues and self-denial of his life far more agreeable, than any of those delights the worldling, or the sensualist, can find in the midst of his unbounded and studied indulgences.—But here I shall be in great danger of repeating what I said under a former head, when I was speaking of the new joys which the Christian feels, in consequence of the great change that regeneration makes in his soul: and therefore, omitting what I then observed, concerning the pleasure of communion with God through Christ, and of perceiving a work of divine grace upon the soul, I shall now touch upon some other sources of exalted entertainment, which did not so directly fall under that head.

1. The Christian finds *new pleasures* in the word of God.

You know with what relish the saints of old spake of it. "Thy words were found," says the prophet, "and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." "Thy statutes," says the Psalmist, "are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; they are sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb."—The apostle Peter beautifully represents this, when he exhorts the saints to whom he wrote, as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby. And the infant that smiles on the breast, and with such eagerness and delight draws its nourishment from it, seems an amiable image of the humble Christian, who receives the kingdom of God, and the word of that

kingdom, as a little child: who lays up Scripture in his heart, and draws forth the sweetness of it, with a firm persuasion, that it is indeed the word of God, and was appointed by him for the food of his soul.

2. He also finds *new pleasures* in the ordinances of divine worship.

He is glad when it is said unto him, Let us go into the house of the Lord. He indeed esteems the tabernacles of the Lord as amiable, and regards a day in his courts as better than a thousand elsewhere.—And this pleasure arises, not merely from any thing peculiar in the administrations of this or that man who officiates in holy things; but from the nature of the exercise in general, and from a regard to the divine authority of those institutions which are there observed. He feels a sacred delight in an intercourse with God in those solemnities; in comparison of which, all the graces of composition and delivery appear as little as the harmony of instruments, or the perfume of incense, to one of the Old-Testament saints, when compared with the light of God's countenance, which was lifted up on the pious worshipper under the Mosaic forms, when in his temple every one spake of his glory. One thing has he desired of the Lord, and that he seeks after, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life; not to amuse his vain imagination, not to gratify his ear, not to indulge his curiosity with useless inquiries, nor merely to exercise his understanding with sublime speculations; but to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

3. He likewise finds a *new entertainment* in the conversation of Christian friends.

He now knows what it is to have fellowship with those whose communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. His delight is now in them that are truly the excellent of the earth. He delights to dismiss the usual topics of modern conversation, that some religious subject may be assumed, not as matter of dispute, but as matter of devout recollection; and loves to hear the plainest Christian express his experimental sense of divine things. Those sentiments of piety and love, which come warm from a gracious heart, are always pleasing to him; and those appear the dearest bands of friendship, which may draw him nearer to his heavenly Father, and unite his soul in ties of more ardent love to his Redeemer. A society of such friends is indeed a kind of anticipation of heaven; and to choose and delight in such, is no contemptible token, that the soul has attained to some considerable degree of preparation for it. I only add,

VI. That in consequence of all this, the regenerate soul has *new hopes* and *prospects*.

Men might be very much assisted in judging of their true state, if they would seriously reflect what it is they hope and wish for? what are those expectations and desires that most strongly impress their minds? A vain mortal, untaught and unchanged by divine grace, is always dressing up to himself some empty phantom of earthly happiness, which he looks after and pursues; and foolishly imagines, "could I grasp it, and keep it, I should be happy." But divine grace teaches the real Christian to give up these empty schemes: "God," does he say, "never intended this world for my happiness: he will make it tolerable to me; he will give me so much of it as he sees consistent with my highest interest; he will enable me to derive instruction, and it may be consolation, out of its disappointments and distresses: but he reserves my inheritance for the eternal world. I am begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, even to the hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: and though it be, for the present, reserved in heaven, it is so safe, and so great, that it is well worth my waiting for, though ever so long; for the things that are not seen are eternal." And this indeed is the true character of a good man. Eternity fills his thoughts; and growing sensible, in another manner than he ever was before, of the importance of it, he pants for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. Assign any limited duration to his enjoyment of God in the regions of glory, and you would overwhelm him with disappointment: talk of hundreds, of thousands, of millions of years, the disappointment is almost equal: periods like these seem scarce distinguishable from each other, when compared with an eternal hope. To eternity his desires and expectations are raised; and he can be contented with nothing less than eternity: perfect holiness and perfect happiness for ever and ever, without any mixture of sin, or any allay of sorrow; this he firmly expects, this he ardently breathes after; a felicity which an immortal soul shall never outlive, and which an eternal God shall never cease to communicate. This heavenly country he seeks; he considers himself as a citizen of it, and endeavours to maintain his conversation there; to carry on, as it were, a daily trade for heaven, and to lay up a treasure there; in which he may be rich and great, when all the pomp of this earth is passed away as a dream, and all its most precious metals and gems are melted down and consumed among its vilest materials in the last universal burning.

This is the change, the glorious change, which regeneration makes in a man's character and views: and who shall dare to speak, or to think, contemptibly of it? Were we indeed to represent it as a kind of charm, depending on an external ceremony, which it was the peculiar prerogative of a certain order of men to perform, and yet on which eternal

life was suspended; one might easily apprehend that it would be brought into much suspicion. Or should we place it in any mechanical transports of animal nature, in any blind impulse, in any strong feelings, not to be described, or accounted for, or argued upon, but known by some inward inexplicable sensation to be divine; we could not wonder, if calm and prudent men were slow to admit the pretension to it, and were fearful it might end in the most dangerous enthusiasm, made impious by excessive appearances of piety.—But when it is delineated by such fair and bright characters as those that have now been drawn; when these divine lineaments on the soul, by which it bears the image of its Maker's rectitude and sanctity, are considered as its necessary consequence, or rather as its very essence; one would imagine, that every rational creature, instead of cavilling at it, should pay an immediate homage to it, and earnestly desire, and labour, and pray, to experience the change: especially as it is a change so desirable for itself; as we acknowledge health to be, though a man were not to be rewarded for being well, nor punished, any further than with the malady he contracts, for any negligence in this respect.

Where is there any thing can be more ornamental to our natures, than to have all the powers of the mind thus changed by grace, and our pursuits directed to such objects as are worthy of the best attention and regard?—To have our apprehensions of divine and spiritual things enlarged, and to have right conceptions of the most important matters;—to have the stream of our affections turned from empty vanities, to objects that are proper to excite and fix them;—to have our resolutions set against all sin, and a full purpose formed within us of an immediate reformation and return to God, with a dependence on his grace to help us both to will and to do;—to have our labours stedfastly applied, to conquer sin, and to promote religion in ourselves and others;—to have our entertainments founded in a religious life, and flowing in upon us from the sweet intercourse we have with God in his word and ordinances, and the delightful conversation that we sometimes have with Christian friends;—and finally, to have our hopes drawn off from earthly things, and fixed upon eternity?—Where is there any thing can be more honourable to us, than thus to be renewed after the image of him that created us, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?—and where is any thing that can be more desirable, than thus to have the darkness of our understandings cured, and the disorders rectified that sin had brought upon our nature? Who is there that is so insensible of his depravity, as that he would not long for such a happy change? Or who is there that knows how excellent a work it is, to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that would not, with the greatest thankfulness, adore the riches of divine grace, if it appear that he is thus become a new creature; that "old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new?"

But I shall quickly show you, that regeneration is not only ornamental, honourable, and desirable, but absolutely necessary, as ever we would hope to share the blessings of God's heavenly kingdom, and to escape the horror of those that are finally and irrevocably excluded from it. This argument will employ several succeeding discourses; but I would dismiss you at present with an earnest request, that you would, in the mean time, renew your inquiries, as to the truth of regeneration in your own souls; which, after all that I have been saying, it will be very inexcusable for you to neglect, as probably you will hear few discourses, in the whole course of your lives, which centre more directly in this point, or are more industriously calculated to give you the safest and clearest assistance in it. May God abase the arrogance and presumption of every self-deceiving sinner; and awaken the confidence and joy of the feeblest soul, in whom this new creation is begun!

SERMON XXV

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION ARGUED FROM THE IMMUTABLE CONSTITUTION OF GOD.

JOHN iii. 3.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

WHILE the ministers of Christ are discoursing of such a subject as I have before me in the course of these Lectures, and particularly in this branch of them which I am now entering upon, we may surely, with the utmost reason, address our hearers in those words of Moses to Israel, in the conclusion of his dying discourse: Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe and do, even all the words of this law; for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life. That must undoubtedly be your life, concerning which the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the incarnate wisdom of God, the faithful and true witness, has said, and said it with a solemn repeated asseveration, that without it a man cannot see the kingdom of God.

The occasion of his saying it deserves our notice; though the niceties of the context must be waved in

such a series of sermons as this. He said it to a Jew of considerable rank, and, as it appears, one of the grand Sanhedrim, or chief council of the nation: who came not only for his own private satisfaction, but in the name of several of his brethren, to discourse with Christ concerning his doctrine, at the first passover he attended at Jerusalem, after he had entered on his public ministry. Our Lord would, to be sure, be peculiarly careful what answer he returned to such an inquiry: and this is his answer, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God: as if he should have said, "If the princes of Israel inquire after my character, let them know that I came to be a preacher of regeneration; and that the blessings of that kingdom which I am come to reveal and erect, are to be peculiar to renewed and sanctified souls; who may, by an easy and natural figure, be said to be born again." And the figure appears very intelligible, and very instructive to those that will seriously consider it; and might lead us into a variety of pertinent and useful remarks.

You easily perceive, that to be born again must intimate a very great change; coming, as it were, into a new world, as an infant does; when, after having lived awhile a kind of vegetative life in the darkness and confinement of the womb, it is born into open day; feels the vital air rushing in on its lungs, and light forcing itself upon the awakened eyes; hears sounds before unknown; opens its mouth to receive a yet untasted food, and every day becomes acquainted with new objects, and exerts new powers, till it grows up to the maturity of a perfect man. Such, and in some respects greater and nobler than this, is the change which regeneration makes in a heart before unacquainted with religion; as you may have seen at large from the preceding discourses.

But I might further observe, that the phrase in the text may also express the humbling nature of this change, as well as the greatness of it. Erasmus gives this turn to the words; and it is so edifying, that I should have mentioned it at least, though I had not thought it so just as it appears. To be born again must signify, to become as a little child; and our Lord expressly and frequently assures us, that without this we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. He has pronounced the very first of his blessings on poverty of spirit; and where this is wanting the soul will never be entitled to the rest. A mild and humble, a docile and tractable, temper, a freedom from avarice and ambition, and an indifference to those great toys of which men are generally so fond, are all essential parts of the Christian character; and they have all, in one view or another, been touched upon in the preceding discourses. Let it be forgiven, however, if, considering the importance of the case, you are told again, that in malice ye must be children; and that, if any man think himself wise, he must become a child, and even a fool, that he may be wise indeed.

I might observe once more, that these words intimate the divine power, by which this great and humbling change is effected. Our first formation and birth is the work of God, and no less really so in the succeeding generations of men, than the first production of Adam was, when God formed him of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. We may each of us say, with respect to the natural birth, and in an accommodated sense with respect to the spiritual too, "thine eyes did see my substance, being as yet imperfect, and in thy book all my members, which in continuance of time were fashioned, were written, when as yet there was none of them." All the first gracious impressions that were made upon the mind, and all the gradual advances of them, till Christ was formed in the heart, and the new creature animated, must (as I shall hereafter show at large) be ultimately and principally referred into a divine operation; and in this sense, it is God that brings every good purpose in the mind to the birth, and God that gives strength to bring forth.

But I omit the further prosecution of these remarks at present, because they coincide with what I have said in former discourses, or what will occur in those which are yet to come: and shall only further consider the words, as they are a confirmation of, and therefore a proper introduction to, what I am to lay before you under the third general head of these discourses; in which (as I have already shown, who may be said to be in an unregenerate state, and how great that change is which regeneration makes in the soul) I shall now proceed,

Thirdly, To show the high importance, yea, the absolute necessity, of this change.

Our Lord expresses it in a very lively and awakening manner, in these few determinate words, which are here before us: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. You see how emphatical the words are: he who is himself invariable truth, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, repeats it again and again, with as much solemnity as he ever uses upon any occasion; repeats it to us, as he did to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that is, I seriously deliver it as a truth of infinite moment; Except a man, i. e. any man, whatever his profession, whatever his knowledge, or whatever his privileges may be, though he be a Jew, though he be a Pharisee, though he be as thou Nicodemus art, a ruler or a senator; except he be born again, and have that great change, so often described in the word of God, wrought by the operation of the

Spirit in his mind, he cannot see the kingdom of God: he cannot by any means approach it, so as to enter into it, or have any share in the important blessings which it contains."

That we may more fully understand, and enter into, this weighty argument, I shall from these words,

I. Briefly consider, what it is to see the kingdom of God.

II. Show how absolutely impossible it is, that any unregenerate man should see it. And,

III. How wretched a thing it is to be deprived of the sight and enjoyment of it.

And I am well persuaded, that if you diligently attend to these things, you will be inwardly and powerfully convinced, that no argument could be more proper to demonstrate the importance and necessity of regeneration, than this, which our Lord has suggested in these awful, emphatical, and comprehensive words.

I. I am to show you what it is to *see the kingdom of God*.

And for the explication of it, it will be necessary to consider,—what we are to understand by this kingdom,—and what is meant by seeing it.

[1.] I would show you what we are to understand by *the kingdom of God*.

And you will pardon me if I state the matter pretty largely; because the phrase is used in Scripture in different senses; and the true interpretation of many passages in it depends on a proper distinction between them. You may observe then for the explication of this phrase,—that the kingdom of God in general signifies "the society of those who profess themselves the servants and subjects of Christ;" and in consequence of this,—that there are some passages, in which it peculiarly relates to "the imperfect dispensation of this kingdom, and the beginning of it in the world;"—and others, in which it relates to "the more perfect form, which this society is to bear in the world of glory."

1. The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, (for they are synonymous phrases,) does in the general signify "the society of those who profess themselves the servants and subjects of Christ."

You well know this was a phrase used among the Jews; and therefore the original of it is to be traced from the Old Testament: and I apprehend it to be this:—Almost every Christian is aware, that in the early days of the Jewish commonwealth, as Samuel with great propriety expresses it, God was their king. Jehovah was not only the great object of their religious regard, as the creator and supporter of the whole world; but he was also their supreme civil magistrate, settling the forms of their political government, and reserving to himself some of the chief acts of royal authority. They did indeed afterwards desire another king, like the other nations round about them. But still those kings being appointed by God, were indeed to be looked upon as no other than his vicegerents, though another kind of governors than he had originally instituted. By degrees their peculiar regard to the civil authority of God among them, as well as to his religious authority, which was nearly connected with it, in a great measure wore out; and their government went through a great many different forms, which it would be unnecessary here particularly to describe. Nevertheless God was pleased to declare by king David, and by many others of his holy prophets, that he would in due time interpose to erect another, and a far more extensive, kingdom in the world: not indeed upon the same political principles, with that which he exercised over the Jews; which principles would by no means have suited this extensive design: but it should be a kingdom in which the authority of the God of heaven should be acknowledged, and his laws of universal righteousness observed with greater care, and to nobler purposes, as well as by a vastly greater number of subjects, than ever before. This kingdom he determined to commit to the government of the Messiah, who with regard to this was called the Lord's Anointed, his King whom he set upon his holy hill of Zion; and to whom indeed he would give all power, not only on earth but in heaven too; so that having trained up his subjects here, in the discipline of holiness and obedience, he should at length translate them to another and a better country, that is, a heavenly, where they should see his glory, and should reign with him in eternal life.

This plainly appears from the whole tenor of the Old and New Testament, to have been the grand plan of God, with respect to the Messiah's kingdom: and you will easily see, that coming from God as its great Author, and referring to him as its end, it may, with great propriety, be called the kingdom of God; and ultimately terminating in the heavenly state, it may also properly be called the kingdom of heaven. These were phrases which prevailed in the Jewish nation, before Christ or his immediate forerunner appeared: and indeed they were used by Daniel in a very remarkable manner, which probably made them so familiar to the Jews, who had some peculiar reasons for studying his writings, even more than those of some other prophets. After that prophet had foretold the rise and fall of several great empires of the world, he adds, and in the days of these last kings (i. e. of the Romans) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall not be destroyed,—but shall stand for ever. And the person whom the Ancient of days, i. e. the eternal and ever-blessed God, should fix on the throne of this kingdom, from his appearing in the human nature, is called the Son of man.—I saw in

the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

In allusion to this, when our Lord Jesus Christ appeared, he called himself the Son of man: and he particularly used this phrase, and it was exceedingly proper that he should, in this conference with Nicodemus, again and again. And all those who being convinced of the divine commission he bore, submitted themselves to him, might in this respect be said, to enter into the kingdom of God, or of heaven; that is, into the society which had so long been foretold and expected under that title. This kingdom, as the above-mentioned prophecy declared, was to be raised from very low beginnings, under the personal ministry of Christ and his apostles, till at last it should extend through very distant regions of the world, and kings and princes should submit themselves to it, and reckon it their glory to enrol themselves among his subjects.

Agreeable to this meaning of the phrase, and to this view with respect to the establishment of his kingdom, our Lord opened his ministry with preaching, as John the Baptist had done, the kingdom of heaven. And you will see, that in most places of the gospel, where the phrase occurs, it is to be taken in this sense. Thus our Lord says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; *i. e.* they are fit to be members of this society, and to receive the blessings of it. Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; *i. e.* labour to serve the interest of this society that I am erecting, and to obtain and promote that righteousness which it recommends, and is intended to establish in the world. And again, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God: persons with such a disposition are most fit to become my subjects, and to enter into this holy and spiritual society. And when our Lord says to the Pharisees, publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you; he means, no doubt, they are more ready than you to join themselves to the society of those who profess themselves my subjects. And once more, when he speaks of some who chose the severities of a single life, that with less entanglements they might serve the interests of his church, he expresses it, by their making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

I shall only add, that the phrase, by a near connexion with this sense, sometimes signifies the charter of this society, or the privileges which it affords to its members; as when our Lord says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein."

This then is the general sense of this phrase: it signifies "the society of those who should submit themselves to the government of Christ, as appointed by God to rule over them; who are thereby to be considered as God's people and subjects." In consequence of this you will easily apprehend,

2. That it comprehends "the more imperfect dispensation, under which the members of this society are, during their abode in the present world."

All that passes here is indeed but the opening of Christ's kingdom: nevertheless, the phrase does sometimes more particularly refer to this opening; and there are several passages, in which it would be apparently absurd to suppose it comprehended the glories of the invisible state, to which Christ intended finally to conduct his faithful servants. Thus our Lord tells the Pharisees, The kingdom of God is come unto you, *i. e.* that gracious dispensation under the Messiah, by which God is gathering subjects to his Son. And elsewhere he says to them, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, *i. e.* not with such outward show and grandeur as you expect; but behold, it is within, or, (as it might be rendered,) among you: God has begun to open and establish it, though you know it not; and has actually brought many poor sinners into it, whom you proudly deride as ignorant and accursed. Thus also, when our Lord says to Peter, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, it would be most absurd to suppose, he meant to grant to him the power of admitting into, or excluding from, the world of glory: but the plain meaning is, that he should bear a distinguished office in the church upon earth, and be the means of admitting Jews and Gentiles into it. Here, as in many other instances, the kingdom of God, or of heaven, means much the same with the professing church of Christ, during its settlement in this imperfect state: as it undoubtedly does, when Christ threatens his hearers, that the kingdom of God should be taken away from them: and when he represents it, as consisting of good and bad, of tares and wheat; but declares, that at the last day he will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; whereas nothing of that kind shall ever enter into the kingdom of glory. But yet,

3. It ultimately relates to "the more perfect form and state of this society in the kingdom of glory."

You very well know, that the design of God in his gospel was not to establish a temporal kingdom, as the Jews expected; nor merely to form a body of men, who should live upon earth with some peculiar forms of worship, under very excellent rules, and with distinguished privileges of a spiritual nature, but that all these ultimately referred to the

invisible world. Thither the Son of man was removed, when he had finished his labour and sufferings upon earth; and thither all the true and faithful members of the kingdom were sooner or later to be brought, and there were to have their final settlement and everlasting abode, in a far more splendid and happy state, than the greatest monarch on earth has ever known: they shall there, as the apostle most properly expresses it, reign in life by Jesus Christ. Now as the kingdom of God upon earth is to be considered with a leading view to this, so we sometimes find, that this glorious state of its members, or (which will come much to the same thing) the society of the faithful in this glorious state, is, by way of eminence, called the kingdom of God: and with regard to this, they whose characters are such that they shall be excluded from thence, are represented as having no part in the kingdom of heaven, though they have been by profession members of the church of Christ on earth. Of this you have a remarkable instance, where our Lord says, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven: now it was calling Christ, Lord, or professing a regard to him as a divine teacher and governor, which was the very circumstance that distinguished the members of his kingdom on earth from the rest of mankind; yet as they who do this insincerely shall be excluded from final glory, it is said, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. So also the apostle tells us, that flesh and blood, *i. e.* such gross machines of animal nature as those in which we now dwell, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, they cannot dwell in so pure a region; and therefore it is necessary, that before they enter upon it, those who are found alive at the illustrious day of Christ's appearance, should undergo a miraculous change to fit them for such an abode. In reference to this we are likewise told, that then, *i. e.* at the great resurrection-day, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And this is what our Lord most certainly had in view, when he tells the impenitent Jews, that there should be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they should see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out; which could not be meant of the privileges of the Christian church upon earth, in which the patriarchs had no share; nor did the Jews at all envy those professing Christians, who most evidently had: it must undoubtedly therefore be numbered among those passages, in which the kingdom of heaven chiefly refers to the state of glory. And I apprehend, the text here before us may be added to that catalogue; which leads us to show,

[2.] What we are to understand by seeing the kingdom of God.

Now, in general, you will easily apprehend, that to see the kingdom is to enjoy the blessings of it.—There is no need of enumerating many passages of Scripture, where to see properly signifies to enjoy. This is apparently the sense of it, when Christ declares, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God: for the Deity cannot be an object of sight; but the promise is, that such souls, (O that we may be in their number!) shall for ever enjoy the most delightful communications from him. And thus again we are to understand it, where it is said, What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see, *i. e.* that he may enjoy, good! for otherwise, to see it without enjoying it, would be a great aggravation of misery and distress. And in this sense it is most evident, that seeing the kingdom of God must here be put, for enjoying the chief and most important blessings appropriated to this happy state; because, as I have just been observing, condemned sinners are represented in another sense, as seeing that kingdom, and the glorified saints in it; but viewing it only at an unapproachable distance, as a spectacle that fills them with horror and despair.

This therefore is, upon the whole, the meaning of this passage: "that no unregenerate soul shall finally have any part in the glory and happiness which Christ has prepared for his faithful subjects; nor can any that appear to be such, according to the tenor and constitution of the gospel, be admitted into the number even of professing Christians." It is true indeed, a man may appear under such a disguise, that those who are in this sense the stewards of the mysteries of God, may in the judgment of charity, be obliged to think well of him, and to admit him; but Christ, who intimately knows him, does even now discern him. The present external privileges he enjoys, are such as he has no just right to; and in a little time, Christ will root him out of this kingdom with a vengeance, and he shall be openly declared a rebel, and one whom the Lord of it never knew, or never approved. So that, upon the whole, it is so little a part that he had in the kingdom, and that for so short a time, that it may, in the free language of Scripture, be said, that he has never seen the kingdom of God at all; that he has neither part nor lot in this matter, has no part with God's chosen, nor any lot with his inheritance.

Having thus largely explained the meaning of this phrase, I now proceed,

II. To show you how certain this declaration of our Lord in the text is, or how absolutely impossible it is, that *any unregenerate* man should thus see the kingdom of God.

Now this I shall argue,—partly "from the immutable constitution of God, whose kingdom it is;"—and partly "from the nature of its blessings.

which are such, that no unregenerate man, while he continues in that state, can have any fitness or capacity to enjoy them."

The first of these considerations is copious and important enough, to furnish out abundant matter for the remainder of this discourse; and it will be difficult to despatch it within these limits.

[1.] The impossibility there is, that any unregenerate man should enter into the kingdom of God, appears, "from the immutable constitution of that God, whose kingdom it is."

This might be sufficiently argued, from the express and emphatical words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the text. For he bore his Father's commission to preach the gospel of the kingdom, to publish the good news of its erection and success, and likewise to declare its nature, and the method of admittance into it. And he is himself the great Sovereign of that kingdom; and consequently cannot but perfectly, and beyond all comparison with any other, know the whole of its constitution.—But God has repeated the declaration by him, and by his other messengers to the children of men, in different ages, and under different dispensations, in such a manner as suited its infinite importance.—And, therefore, for the further illustration of the argument, I shall enumerate a great variety of scriptures that speak the same language; not so much aiming therein at the speculative proof of the point, as attempting to impress the consciences of my hearers with a sense of its certainty; and humbly hoping that some of those sharp-pointed arrows, which I am now drawing out of the quiver of God, may, by the direction of his Spirit, enter the reins of some against whom they are levelled, and convince them of the absolute necessity of an entire change in their hearts, as well as their lives, or of the vanity of all those hopes which they entertain, while that change is wanting. And let me bespeak your attention, not to the conjectures or reasonings of a frail mortal man, but to the solemn admonitions and declarations of the eternal God; and be assured, that in one sense or another, his word shall take hold on you, as it has done on sinners of former generations, either for conviction or condemnation.

That I may not be confounded in the multiplicity of my proofs, I shall range them under these three distinct heads: "The prophets of the Old Testament were commissioned to make this declaration;—it was renewed by the preaching of Christ;—and was supported by the testimony of the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

1. The prophets of the Old Testament were commissioned in effect to make this declaration, that no unregenerate sinners should enter into the kingdom of God.

Well might our Lord say to Nicodemus, Art thou a teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things! for to this in effect all the prophets bear witness, and it might be learned from almost every page of their writings. It is true, the particular phrase of being born again, or regenerated, does not occur there; nor is it expressly said, that an unregenerate man shall not be admitted into God's kingdom; but then the prophets every where assert, what is in effect the same, that no wicked man, who does not heartily repent of his sins, and turn from them to God, must expect the divine favour. Now if you consider what we mean by an unregenerate man, according to the description I have given before, you will find it is just the same as an impenitent sinner: and if it be declared that such are not to expect the divine favour, nay, that they must certainly prove the objects of his displeasure, this must certainly imply an exclusion from his kingdom, and must intend a great deal more than being deprived of everlasting happiness. And thus you see that all those scriptures, which speak of the irreconcilable hatred of God against sin, and against all impenitent sinners, come in to do service here, and are equivalent to the declaration in the text. And I may hereafter show you, that there are many scriptures in the Old Testament which lead men to consider that change, said to be so necessary, as what must be effected by a divine operation on their souls. But as that will more properly come in under a following head, I shall at present content myself with selecting a few scriptures, as a specimen of many hundreds more, in proof of the main point before us; and I beseech you that you would endeavour to enter, not only into the sense, but into the spirit, of them.

You well know that unregenerate sinners are wicked men; and of such it is said, God is angry with the wicked every day; or all the day long, as the original imports. The sinner lies down and rises up, goes out and comes in, under the divine displeasure; and though with great patience God bears with him for a while, he is described as preparing his dreadful artillery against him, to smite him even with a mortal wound: so far will he be from admitting him into his kingdom, that, as it is there added, if he turn not he will whet his sword; he has bent his bow and made it ready; he has also prepared for him the instruments of death. And in another place, he describes the dreadful consequence of that preparation in most lively terms: If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me: I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh from the beginning of revenges on the enemy, i. e. as soon as I begin this awful work. And elsewhere he compares the destruction which he will bring upon sinners at last, to that

which he executed on Sodom and Gomorrah, when he scattered fire and brimstone on their habitations, and reduced their pleasant country to a burning lake: Upon the wicked he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this will be the portion of their cup; and oh, how unlike the state and abode of those who are the happy subjects of his kingdom.

None of the prophets speak in milder and more gentle language to returning penitents than Isaiah; yet he declares, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Yea, he does, as it were, call in the concurrence of all who feared God, and who loved their country, to echo back and enforce the admonition: say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; but, on the other hand, woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

The enumeration would be endless; and it would require more than the time of a whole discourse, only to read over, without any comment or remark, one half of the passages which might properly be introduced on this occasion. I will, therefore, only mention two more, which, though some of you may hear with indifference, I confess I cannot read without a very sensible inward commotion.

The one is that passage in the Mosaic law, where God directs his servant to say, If there be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, or any unregenerate soul, who, when he hears the words of this curse, shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, and run into one debauchery and sin after another: the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke and be inflamed against that man;—and the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in the book of the law. There is a terrible emphasis of which we cannot but take notice here: God declares, that if, among all the thousands of Israel, there was but *one* such presumptuous sinner, that thus flattered himself in the way of his own heart, he would make a terrible example of him, and separate that one man to evil, out of thousands and ten thousands of his faithful and obedient servants.

This, therefore, is a passage full of apparent terror: the other is indeed a language of mercy; but it contains a most awful insinuation, which appears, as good Archbishop Tillotson expresses it, "like a razor set in oil, which wounds with so much the keener edge." As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? thereby plainly intimating, that, notwithstanding all that gentleness of the divine nature, which he expresses in a most tender invitation, which he confirms even with the solemnity of an oath; yet, if sinners did not turn from their evil ways, there was no remedy, but they must die for it.

And how, Sirs, will any of you that continue in an unregenerate state, arm yourselves against these terrors? Is it by saying, "that these are the thunders of Mount Sinai; that these are the denunciations of the Old Testament; whereas the New speaks in milder language?" You may easily know the contrary; and to this purpose I am further to show you,

2. That this declaration was renewed by the preaching of Christ.

It is true, indeed, that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ: yet all the grace and gentleness of that administration he brought did not contradict those awful threatenings; nay, it obliged him to set them in a stronger light.—He presently repeats to Nicodemus what he had just before asserted in the text, and declares, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God; *i. e.* "As he must be baptized with water, in order to a regular entrance into the society of my people, so he must also be sanctified and transformed by the cleansing and renewing influences of the Spirit, signified by the water there used, or he can have no part in the blessings which my gospel brings."—And that this must produce a universal change in the life as well as in the heart, and a faithful subjection to the will of God, without which no profession will stand a man in any stead, our Lord solemnly declares in the conclusion of his incomparable discourse on the mount: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." And shall you, Sirs, merely for having a name and place in his house, escape; when those that have preached his gospel, and wrought miracles in confirmation of it, when those that personally conversed with Christ, and those that ministered unto him, shall perish, if destitute of a holy temper of heart, and of its solid fruit in their lives?—Has not our Lord expressly said, that he will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; and will cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?—Nay, in his infinite compassion, he has given to sinners, as it were, a copy of the sentence that will another day be pronounced upon them; that they may meditate upon it, and review it, and judge whether they can bear

the terror of its execution: hear it attentively, and then say whether unregenerate sinners shall enter into his kingdom. The dreadful doom is this: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And what now will you say to this? Can any soul of you imagine, that the Lord Jesus Christ did not know what would pass in this day in which he is appointed to preside? or that *knowing it*, and knowing it would be something different from this, he would, on any consideration whatsoever, make a false representation, and lay so much stress upon it? Yet one or other of these things you must secretly imagine; or must own, that every unregenerate sinner, and you among the rest, must not only be excluded from his presence, but be condemned to suffer all the fury of his wrath, in company with devils and damned spirits, in final darkness and everlasting burnings. It only remains that I show you,

3. That the same testimony was renewed by the apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

You know that they were authorized by their great Master to declare, in an authentic manner, the constitution of this kingdom; and that he who despises them despises Christ. Now I would fain persuade you all to consider this argument as it lies in Scripture; to read over the epistolary parts of the New Testament in this view, to observe what encouragement they any of them give to an unregenerate sinner, to expect any part of the kingdom of heaven. In the mean time, permit me to present you with a few texts, as a specimen of the rest.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, does indeed speak of God's justifying the ungodly; but lest any should vainly imagine that he encourages the hope of those that continue so, he expressly tells us, in the very same epistle, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; and that ere long this wrath shall be executed, even in the day of the more ample revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (which is the character of every unregenerate sinner,) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, as having had the most signal advantages, though advantages inferior to yours, and also of the Gentile. And further he assures us, that to be carnally minded is death; and that the carnal mind, which universally prevails in men, till by regenerating grace they are made spiritual, is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.—In another epistle he mentions it as a first principle, in which, it might reasonably be supposed, no Christian was uninstructed, Know ye not, says he, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And elsewhere he declares, that all external modes of religion, separate from that entire change of soul which I have described, are worthless and vain: In Christ Jesus, says he, or to those that desire any part in him and his kingdom, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.—He likewise tells us to this purpose in another place, that his grace, which has appeared unto all men, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; and yet after all to acknowledge, that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.—And without holiness, which is the effect of these sacred operations upon the soul, he expressly tells us in another place, that no man shall see the Lord.—And to allege but one more passage from him; as it is evident that all unregenerate sinners, and only they, are ignorant of God, and disobedient to the gospel; he solemnly assures us, that instead of receiving such at last into this kingdom, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.—This is the testimony of the apostle Paul in his own emphatical words, zealous as he was for the doctrine of free grace, which such declarations as these do not in the least degree contradict.

Let us now hear his brethren, the other apostles of the Lord.—James urges sinners, if they ever desire to draw nigh to God, and to have him draw nigh to them, to cleanse their hands, and purify their hearts. And yet more expressly he says, when he speaks of those who should receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.—The apostle Peter describes Christians, as those whose souls were purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; and as those, who were made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.—Again, John, the beloved disciple, tells us, that every one that doth righteousness is born of God; but he that committeth sin is of the devil: and that every one that has a well-grounded hope of being like Christ, and seeing him as he is, when he appears, purifies himself even as he is pure.—And once more, the apostle Jude, as he describes those who are sensual, and have not

the Spirit, as men that, if they were saved at all, must be plucked out of the fire; so he echoes back that awful prophecy which Enoch had so long since delivered, that the Lord will come with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly of all those ungodly deeds and words by which they have violated his law.

This then appears, from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, to be the positive and immutable constitution of the great God, "that none who are unregenerate shall be admitted to enjoy the happiness of heaven." And from the view that we have taken of the sacred writings it is manifest, that this, in every age, has been the language of the word of God; and under every dispensation we have sufficient evidence of this important truth. This is the doctrine of the Old Testament; and many are the passages that I have offered from the law of Moses, and from the Prophets, and the Psalms, that show it is impossible an unrenewed soul should enter into heaven. And the same also is asserted in the strongest terms in the New Testament; and when Christ came to set the gospel of the kingdom in a clearer light, the purport of the declaration that he makes to Nicodemus in the text, was frequently repeated by him in the course of his preaching, and represented as the rule he would regard at the last day. And the inspired apostles speak the same thing with a united voice, and testify at large in their epistles, that it is absolutely necessary we should be born again, if ever we would hope to see the kingdom of God.

So that now, Sirs, I may say, Call, if there be any that will answer; and to which of the saints will you turn, to encourage your vain and presumptuous hope, of finding your lot among God's people in the kingdom of glory, if you are strangers to that important and universal change, which we before described as regeneration in the Scripture sense of the word? The prophets under the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles under the New, concur, in all the variety of the most awful language, to expose so presumptuous a hope. And is it not audacious madness in any, to venture their souls upon it? Thus you would undoubtedly judge of any man, who should strike a dagger into his breast, or discharge a pistol at his head, on this presumption, that the almighty power of God could prevent his death, though the heart or the brain were pierced. But it is much greater folly for a man, while he continues in an unregenerate state, to promise himself a part in the kingdom of heaven. For though there would be no reason in the world to expect a miraculous interposition, to save a life which a man was so resolutely bent to destroy; yet none can say, that such an interposition would contradict any of the express engagements of God's word; whereas to admit an unregenerate sinner into the regions of glory, would be violating, not this or that single declaration, but the whole series and tenor of it: and we shall further show, in the next Discourse, that it would also be, in effect, altering the very nature of the heavenly kingdom itself, as well as its constitution. Now what hope can be more desperate, than that which can have no support but in the subversion of the Redeemer's kingdom, and even of the eternal throne of God, the foundations of which are righteousness and truth?

SERMON XXVI.

OF THE INCAPACITY OF AN UNREGENERATE PERSON FOR RELISHING THE ENJOYMENTS OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

JOHN iii. 3.

——*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

IN order to demonstrate the necessity of regeneration, of which I would fain convince not only your understandings, but your consciences, I am now proving to you, that without it it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of God: and how weighty a consideration that is I am afterwards to represent.

That it is thus impossible, the words in the text do indeed sufficiently prove; but for the further illustration of the subject, I have proposed to consider it under two distinct views.

I have already shown it is impossible, because "the constitution of the kingdom of heaven is such, that God has solemnly declared, and this under different dispensations, and more or less plainly in all ages of his church, that no unregenerate person, *i. e.* no impenitent sinner, shall have any part in it." And I am now further to show,

[2.] That "the nature of the future happiness (which is here chiefly signified by the kingdom of God) is such, that an unregenerate person would be incapable of relishing it, even upon a supposition of his being admitted into it."

This is a thought of so great importance, and so seldom represented in its full strength, that I shall at present confine my discourse entirely to it.

I know, sinners, it will be one of the most difficult things in the world, to bring you to a serious persuasion of this truth. You think heaven is so lovely and so glorious a place, that if you could possibly get an admittance thither, you should certainly be happy. But I would now set myself, if possible, to convince you that this is a rash and ill-grounded

persuasion; that on the contrary, if you were now in the regions of glory, and in the society of those blessed inhabitants, that unrenewed nature and unsanctified heart of yours would give you a disrelish for all the sublimest entertainments of that blissful place, and turn heaven itself into a kind of hell to you.

Now for the demonstration of this, it is only necessary for you seriously to consider "what a kind of happiness that of heaven is, as it is represented to us in the word of God;" for from thence undoubtedly we are to take our notions of it.

You might to be sure sit down and imagine a happiness to yourselves, which would perfectly suit your degenerate taste; a happiness which the more entirely you were enslaved to flesh and sense, the more exquisitely you would be able to enter into it. If God would assign you a region in that beautiful world, where you should dwell in fine houses, magnificently furnished and gaily adorned; where the most harmonious music should soothe your ear, and delicious food and generous wines in a rich variety should regale your taste: if he should give you a splendid retinue of people, to caress and attend you, offering you their humblest services, and acknowledging the most servile dependence upon your favour: especially if with all this he should furnish you with a set of companions just of your own temper and disposition, with whom you might spend what proportion of your time you pleased, in gaming and jollity, in riot and debauchery, without any interruption from the reproof, or even the example, of the children of God, or from indispositions of body, or remorse of conscience: this you would be ready to call life and happiness indeed: and if the great Disposer of all things were but to add perpetuity to such a situation, you would not envy persons of a more refined taste the heaven you lost, for such a paradise as this.

Such indeed was the happiness which Mahomet promised to his followers: flowery shades and gay dresses, luxurious fare and beautiful women, are described with all the pomp of language in almost every page of his Alcoran, as the glorious and charming rewards which were to be bestowed on the faithful after the resurrection. And if this were the felicity which the gospel promised, extortioners and idolaters, whoremongers and drunkards, would be much fitter to inherit the kingdom of God, than the most pious and mortified saint that ever appeared on earth. But here, as almost every where else, the Bible and the Alcoran speak a very different language; and far from leading us into such gross and sensual expectations, our Lord Jesus Christ has told us, that the children of the resurrection neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are like the angels of God in heaven, and enjoy such pure and spiritual delights, as are suited to such holy and excellent creatures.

It is true, that in the book of Revelation, stately palaces and shining habits, delicious fruit and harmonious music, are all mentioned, as contributing to the happiness of those who have the honour to inhabit the New Jerusalem. But then the style of that obscure and prophetical book, naturally leads us to consider these merely as figurative phrases, which are made use of to express the happiness that divine wisdom and love has prepared for the righteous, in a manner accommodated to the weakness of our conceptions: or at least, if in any of these respects provision be made for the entertainment of a glorified body, whatever its methods of sensation and perception may be, all will be temperate and regular: and after all, this is even there represented but as the least considerable part of our happiness, the height of which is made to consist in the most elevated strains of devotion, and in an entire and everlasting devotedness to the service of God and of the Lamb.

Let us therefore immediately proceed to settle the point in question, by a more particular survey of the several branches of the celestial felicity, as represented to us in the word of God: and from thence it will undeniably appear, that were an unregenerate soul in the same place with the blessed, and surrounded with the same external circumstances, the temper of his mind would not by any means allow him to participate of their happiness. For it is plain the Scripture represents the happiness of heaven as consisting,—in the perfection of our minds in knowledge and holiness;—in the sight and service of the ever-blessed God;—in beholding the glory of our exalted Redeemer;—and enjoying the society of glorious angels and perfected saints,—throughout an endless eternity.—Now, sinners, it is impossible you should enter into any such delights as these, while you continue in an unregenerate state.

1. One very considerable part of the happiness of heaven consists, "in that perfection of knowledge and holiness to which the blessed shall be there exalted;" in which the unregenerate soul can have no pleasure.

Thus we are told, that the spirits of just men shall there be made perfect; for nothing that defiles, as every degree of moral imperfection does, shall enter into the New Jerusalem. An Old-Testament saint conceived of future happiness, as consisting in *being satisfied with the likeness of God:* a character that is manifestly most agreeable to the view of it which the beloved disciple gives us, where he says, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: which must certainly refer to the glories of the mind, which are of infinitely greater importance than the highest imagin-

able beauty and ornament that can be put upon the corporeal part of our nature in its most illustrious state.

Now from this perfection of holiness, which shall then be wrought in the soul, there will naturally arise an unspeakable complacency and joy, something resembling that which the blessed God himself possesses, in the survey of the infinite and unspotted rectitude of his most holy nature. And in proportion to the degree, in which the "eyes of our understandings are enlightened" to discern wherein true excellency consists, will the soul be delighted in the consciousness of such considerable degrees of it in itself.

But surely it will be superfluous for me to undertake to demonstrate, that an unregenerate soul can have no part in this divine pleasure, which implies the complete *renewal of the mind* as its very foundation. For to imagine that he might, would be supposing him *regenerate* and *unregenerate* at the same time. As Mr. Baxter very well expresses it, "The happiness of heaven is holiness; and to talk of being happy without it, is as apparent nonsense, as to talk of being well without health, or being saved without salvation."

I would only add on this head, That the highest improvement of our intellectual faculties could not make us happy, without such a change in the affections and the will, as I have before described under the former general head. For the more clear and distinct the knowledge of true excellence and perfection is, the greater would be your anguish and horror, to see and feel yourselves entirely destitute of it; and it is exceeding probable that spirits of the most elevated genius have the keenest sensation of that infamy and misery, which is inseparable from the prevalence of sinful dispositions in such minds as these.

2. Another very considerable branch of the celestial happiness, is that which arises "from the contemplation and enjoyment of the ever-blessed God;" but of this likewise an unregenerate sinner is incapable.

As our own reason assures us, that God is the greatest and best of beings, and the most deserving object of our inquiries and regards, one would think it would naturally lead us to imagine, that the perfection and happiness of the human soul consists in the knowledge and enjoyment of him; and that when it arrives at the seat of complete felicity, it must intimately know him, and converse with him. And in this view, I have sometimes been surprised, that men of such abilities, as some of the heathen poets and philosophers appear to have been, should have had no greater regard to the Supreme Being in the descriptions which they give us of the future happiness. That sort of friendship for them, which an acquaintance with their writings must give to a person of any relish for the beauties of composition, makes one almost unwilling to expose the low and despicable ideas, which they often give of the state of their greatest heroes in the regions of immortality.—But the word of God speaks a very different language. Our Lord represents the rewards to be bestowed on the pure in heart, by telling us that they shall see, i. e. contemplate and enjoy, God: and virtuous souls, who overcome the temptations with which they are here surrounded, shall be "made as pillars in the house of their God, and shall go no more out:" and it is elsewhere said, that his servants shall serve him, and shall see his face. And David's views under a darker dispensation rose to such a degree of refinement, as to say, As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: Which he mentions as a felicity infinitely superior to all the delights of the most prosperous sinner.

But now, sinners, it is utterly impossible that while you continue in an unregenerate state, you should behold the face of God with pleasure. The unutterable delight which the blessed inhabitants of heaven find in it, arises not merely from the abstract ideas of his essential perfections, but from a sense of his favour and love to them. It is this that gives a relish to the whole survey, and rejoices the heart of all the saints, both in heaven and on earth. He is a God of awful majesty and irresistible power, of infinite wisdom and unspotted holiness, of unerring justice, invariable fidelity, and inexhaustible goodness: and "this God is our God, he will be our guide and our portion for ever." And were it not for this view, let a creature think of God with ever so much spirit and propriety, he must think of him, and be troubled; yea, he must be filled with unutterable horror and confusion, as the devil is at the thought of an infinitely perfect being, in whom he has no interest, from whom he has nothing friendly to expect; and if nothing friendly, then every thing dreadful.

Now it is certain, sinners, that while you continue in an unregenerate state, under the influence of that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and full of unconquerable rebellion against his law, there can be no foundation for a friendship between him and your souls; nor for any persuasion, or any apprehension, of your interest in his favour and love. Friendship, you know, supposes something of a similitude of nature and sentiment; for, as God himself argues, "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" Now I have before observed to you at large, that God being of purer eyes than to behold evil, must necessarily "hate all the workers of iniquity: the foolish therefore shall not stand in his sight," or shall not be admitted to such a situation; nor would they indeed be able to endure it.—Let conscience judge what satisfaction you could find in the presence of a God, that you knew scorn-

ed and hated you, even while he suffered you to continue among the crowd of his children and servants. The more lively ideas you had of the beauty and perfection of the divine nature, the more you must loathe yourselves for being so unlike him, and so abominable to him: and what pleasure do your think consistent with such self-contempt and abhorrence? Or rather, would not the wretched degeneracy of your nature lead you another way; and a kind of unconquerable self-love, joined even with this consciousness of deformity and vileness, lead you to hate God himself? It is described as the fatal effect of prevailing wickedness in the heart, "my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me." And thus would it probably work in you, and produce in your wretched breasts a mortal hatred against him, and an envious rage at the thought of his perfect happiness: a state of mind, of all others that can be imagined, the most odious, and the most tormenting. How, Sirs, could your hearts, possessed with these diabolical passions, bear to see the beams of his glory surrounding you on every side? How could you bear to hear the songs and adorations, that were continually addressed to his throne; and to observe the humble attendance of all the hosts of heaven about it, who perpetually reckon it their honour and happiness to be employed in obedience to his commands? Such a sight of the glory and felicity of your divine enemy would make you, so far as your limited nature was capable of it, miserable even in proportion to the degree in which he is happy. This was, no doubt, the torment of the devils as soon as they had harboured a thought of hostility against God; and the remembrance of that glory in which they once saw him, and which they know he still invariably possesses, is surely an everlasting vexation to them; and it would be so to you, if you were within the sight of it.

But further, the blessed in heaven find their everlasting entertainment "in the service of God." They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty; *i. e.* they are continually employed, either in the immediate acts of devotion, or in other services, in which they still maintain a devotional temper, and are breathing out their souls in holy affections, while their active powers are employed in the execution of his commands. But as I have already shown you, that while in an unregenerate state you could have no sense of his favour to you; it is very apparent, that you could have no sentiments of gratitude and love towards him. So that while angels and glorified saints were breathing out their souls in the most delightful and rapturous praises, you must keep a sullen kind of silence: or, if it were possible that your harps and voices should sound as melodiously as theirs, it would be all ceremony and show; the music of the heart would be wanting; and you would look on all the external forms of service but as a tedious task, and count it your misfortune, that the customs of the place obliged you to attend them. You may the more easily apprehend and believe this, when you consider what little relish you now have for those solemnities of divine worship, in which sincere Christians have the most lively foretastes of heaven. You know, in your own consciences, that short and interrupted as our public services are, they are the burthen of your lives. You know that you say, in your hearts at least, "When will the sabbath be past, and the new moon be gone?" Judge then how insupportable it would be to you, to spend an everlasting sabbath thus. I question not, but to your wretched spirits annihilation would appear vastly preferable to an eternal existence so employed.

3. Another very considerable branch of the happiness of heaven, is that which arises "from the sight of the glory of an exalted Redeemer;" but for this likewise no unconverted sinner can have any relish.

This is a view of the future happiness, which our Lord gives us, when he prays for his people in those memorable words, engraven, as I hope, upon many of our hearts; "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." And he elsewhere promises it, as the great reward he would bestow upon his people: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be." And agreeable to this, the apostle Paul represents it as the transporting view in which he considered the happiness of the future world; I desire, says he, to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better; incomparably beyond any of the enjoyments of the present world which can come into competition with it.—But for this part of the happiness of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, it is also evident, that you, sinners, can have no relish.

The sight of Christ will afford holy souls a transporting delight, because they will regard it as the glory of their Redeemer and their friend, and as a pledge and security of their own glory. But what foundation can you, sinners, find for such a joyful sympathy with Christ, and such a comfortable conclusion with regard to yourselves? Such is the wretched degeneracy of your nature, that though Christ be indeed "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," possessed of every divine perfection and excellence, yet you now slight and neglect him, and discern in him no form nor comeliness, for which he is to be desired: and were you unregenerate in heaven, the same principle would prevail. Now where there is

no love to a person, there can be no delight in his converse, nor any pleasure in his happiness. Nay, the contrariety of your nature to his would rather occasion aversion and terror. You could not but know, that the blessed Jesus is holy and undefiled, and separate from sinners; that he abhors all moral evil to such a degree, that he laid aside all the glory and entertainments of heaven, that he might destroy the interest of sin in this world of ours, and might purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works: and when you should recollect at the same time that sinfulness, that continued to reign in your hearts, and made you to every good work reprobate, you could not but know that you must be hateful to him; and therefore could not but fear, lest his almighty power should be exercised for your punishment and destruction: and thus your terror must rise, in proportion to the sensible evidence you had of his dignity and authority. In a word, you would stand like guilty rebels in the presence-chamber of their injured and displeased Sovereign: his throne and his sceptre, his robe and his crown, his courtiers and his guards, though in themselves splendid and magnificent objects, only serve to terrify and amaze them, while they display the grandeur and power of their enemy.

4. Another very considerable branch of the celestial happiness will be "the society of angels and glorified saints;" but for this likewise an unregenerate sinner must be unfit.

You know, that when the apostle speaks of our alliance to the heavenly world, he represents it as a social state; where excellent spirits dwell together, and converse with each other with mutual esteem and endearment: "Ye are come (says he) to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." It is sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the patriarchs and prophets, all the apostles and martyrs, in the kingdom of heaven: and perhaps you think you shall want nothing more to complete your happiness, than to be admitted to a place among them. But reflect a little more attentively upon the circumstances of things, and I am persuaded you will form a different judgment.

There is no reason to doubt, but that at your first entrance into the regions of glory you would be agreeably struck with the view of those inhabitants. As for those beauties of their character, which consist in love to God, and in zeal for his honour and interest, it is certain, that you would be insensible of them, and pay but little regard to them: but the humanity and benevolence of their temper would no doubt render them agreeable to you: and so much the more, as self-love might lead you to expect some personal advantage by it. And it is more than possible, that you would be much prejudiced in their favour by those resplendent and attractive forms in which they appear; forms, no doubt, far more beautiful and engaging than any which the children of men ever saw upon earth. On both these accounts it might be natural enough for you at first to address them with an air of respect, as persons that you could be glad to be upon good terms with, and in whose friendship you could desire to share.

But how do you think that any such proposal of friendship would be received by an angel or a glorified saint? No doubt, if there were any prospect of converting you, or any hope you might be brought to a devout and holy temper, they would immediately become preachers of righteousness to you; and endeavour, by the most rational, the most pathetic, and the most insinuating address, to awaken and charm you to a sense of religion, and so to form you to a capacity for happiness. But they would know, that according to the eternal constitution of God, there could be no room to entertain such a hope; but that being filthy, you must be filthy still: and therefore, as they would know you to be incorrigible, their love to God, and their concern to be approved and accepted by him, would prevent their forming any intimate friendship with persons whose natures were so contrary to him, and on whom he looked with such irreconcilable abhorrence. And besides this, their own personal sanctity of character would give them an aversion to such corrupt and degenerate creatures; so that how much soever they might pity your condition, they would turn away from you as objects whose presence and converse were not to be endured.

And do you not easily apprehend, that such a refusal on their part would be both shameful and very provoking to you? For which way could you bear it, to be thus rejected and dishonoured by the most excellent part of the creation; by those whom perhaps you once intimately knew, and with whom you conversed upon equal terms; nay, by many who were once much your inferiors, and whom perhaps, in the pride of your hearts, you would not condescend to regard? The natural effect of this must surely be, that you would soon be proportionably displeased and enraged with the refusal, as you were at first charmed at their appearance; and when you saw that transporting pleasure which they took in the affection and friendship of each other, and the joy which the divine favour poured into their souls, while you, in the very same place, were excluded from these rich entertainments, your heart would soon burn with envy and indignation; and as much as you before admired them, you, upon this, would come to hate them. And perhaps that hatred would put you upon some attempt to interrupt, or even, if it were possible, to destroy, that

happiness which you were not allowed to share. But then, when you saw them continually under the divine protection, and compassed with his favour, as with a shield, so that your malice could not reach them, all the keenness and rancour of your spirit would recoil upon itself; you would fly from their presence as insupportable: and would be glad to retire to some meaner apartment, or to hide yourselves in the shades of darkness; so that you might but get rid of the sight of so many dazzling objects, whose lustre, instead of cheering your vitiated eye, would pain and overpower it.

But if you should not be transported to this diabolical excess; if it were possible for you to behold the glorified saints, and to live among them, without these envious and tormenting passions; yet surely you would want a relish for the most entertaining part of their conversation. Had you indeed a good natural genius, which to be sure many unconverted sinners have, it might be very agreeable to hear them discoursing of the wonders of nature; and that curiosity, which is, in some measure, incident even to persons of the meanest capacities, would make it pleasant to hear them recount the important history relating to the revolutions of the angelic world, which we on this earth are entirely strangers to, or at least have been very little acquainted with them. But surely the most delightful topics of conversation, which heaven itself can furnish out, must be those which are religious and divine; the infinite perfections of the ever-blessed God; the personal glories and incomparable love of his condescending, but exalted Son; and the sanctifying operations of the blessed Spirit on the soul, transforming it into the divine image, and making it meet for eternal glory. Yea, even when the blessed spirits above are handling philosophical or historical subjects, they still consider them with a regard to God, as his perfections are displayed and illustrated in the works of his hands, and in the conduct of his providence. And here their pleasure flows, not merely from a set of rational ideas, which arise in their own minds, or are suggested to them by others; but from the exercise of those devout affections upon the blessed God, which are correspondent to these several subjects of discourse.

And can you, Sirs, who are alienated from the divine life, and accustomed to live in a continual neglect and forgetfulness of the Great Parent of universal nature, can you relish such subjects as these? You would, no doubt, be discontented and uneasy in such a scene; the heavenly oratory of this holy society would have no charms for you; but you would be longing for some of those vain and worthless companions, which you were so fond of here upon earth, to hear a merry story, or a song, or to join with them in the pleasures of a debauch.

5. Another considerable branch of the happiness of heaven, arises "from the assured prospect of the everlasting continuance of this felicity;" but, if an unregenerate soul could find any entertainment at all in heaven, he certainly could have no ground for such an expectation of its continuance.

When the children of God on earth think of the happiness of heaven, the eternity of it makes a very deep impression on their hearts, and even swallows up their souls with ardent desire and unutterable joy: it raises their esteem, and animates their hope, while they reflect on that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away.—And no doubt but the blessed in heaven regard it in the same view, and all the pleasures they enjoy are vastly increased by the prospect of their endless duration; so that by the anticipation of an eternity still to come, they do, as it were, every moment enjoy an infinite satisfaction.—But as for you, sinners, while you are so ill attempered to the happiness of heaven, the prospect of an eternal abode there would not, on the principles I have laid down above, be a prospect of eternal happiness, but rather, on the whole, of eternal uneasiness to you.

But suffer me a little to discourse upon another supposition; and let me now, for argument sake, wave what I have been so long insisting upon, and suppose, that you could so far command the turbulent passions of your own heart, and so unite (as it were) the whole powers of your soul, to attend to the beauty of place, the harmony of music, and whatever else may be supposed capable of regaling the senses or the imagination; as upon the whole, to find heaven a pleasing and delightful abode, and to wish, that though some of its entertainments were above your taste and capacity, yet you might be allowed an eternal enjoyment of the rest; could there be any room for you to expect a perpetual abode in these blissful seats? No, sinners, you would not be able so much as to hope it. The good itself is so great, and *perpetual enjoyment*, even in any degree, has such a kind of infinite value, that I know not how the purest and noblest spirits in heaven could absolutely have been secure of it, separate from the engagement of a divine promise. And what divine promise would you be able to have recourse to in such a circumstance as we now suppose? Where could you find it in all the book of God, that persons of your character should ever enter into heaven at all, much less that you should for ever continue there? You could have therefore no security of the continuance of your abode in heaven, if it were possible that you should enter on the possession of it: but when you should consider the unsullied holiness of the ever-blessed God, the Sovereign of this sacred province, and the spot-

less purity of that gracious Redeemer, to whom the government of it is committed, you could not but fear, that you should quickly be seized by the hand of vengeance, be hurled from the battlements of heaven, and plunged low into the pit of destruction. You know this was the condemnation of the rebel angels, and your guilt, compared with that dreadful event, which makes so considerable a scene of the history of heaven, would, I doubt not, be sufficient to create everlasting jealousy and uneasiness, and to turn every pleasurable circumstance into a source of horror, in the apprehensions of being deprived eternally of it.

Thus you see, Sirs, from a particular survey of the various lights in which heaven is represented, and of the various branches of which its happiness consists, an unregenerate sinner is incapable of it, even though we should suppose that he was actually admitted to it. Let me entreat you to reflect on all these things, and you will see the reasonableness of that one remark with which I shall conclude this discourse.

How vain are all those hopes of heaven, which in your present condition you are ready to entertain!

I have been proving at large, that if God were to admit you to the possession of heaven, which it is certain he never will, you would be incapable of relishing the enjoyments of it; nay, that there would be a solid foundation in your own hearts, for many of the most tumultuous and disquieting passions. Envy and grief, fear and rage, those roots of bitterness, would spring up even in the paradise of God, and turn the fertility of that blessed soil into their own nourishment. And do you imagine that any external accommodations or ornaments could make you easy and comfortable under the transports of such hellish passions? What if you were to take a man that was tormented with a violent fit of the stone or gout, and to place him in a most delicious garden, or in a palace of marble and cedar, to set him on a throne of gold under a canopy of purple, to clothe him with robes of velvet and embroidery, regaling him with the most delicious fruits and generous wines, and at the same time soothing his ear with all the harmony of sound, which the most melodious symphony of instruments and voices could afford? Would all this magnificence and luxury make him insensible of that anguish which was racking his very vitals? or would not that inward torture rather render him insensible of this association of pleasurable impressions from without? Yea, would it not incline him to suspect, that you intended all these pompous preparations only to deride and insult him? As little would your distempered and unholy souls be capable of relishing the entertainments of heaven, while these entertainments, and these souls of yours, continue what they are at present.

There must be therefore a change: and will you consider where that change must be made? If you continue still in your present character and circumstances, there must be a vast change in heaven itself, before you can be happy in it. The whole temper, character, and disposition of every saint and angel there, must be changed from what it now is, before they can be capable of any friendly and complacential conversation with you. Yea, our "Lord Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," must divest himself of those beauties of holiness, which are infinitely dearer to him than any external grandeur or authority, before he can receive you into his kingdom. Nay, the very "Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," must be entirely changed. He must lay aside that holiness which is essential to his nature, and which is the brightness and glory of it; he must love that which he now hates, and be indifferent to that which he most affectionately loves, before he can open his arms to you, and smile upon your souls. And can you dare to hope for such an unaccountable, such an inconceivable, revolution as this? No, Sirs, infinitely sooner would God change earth into hell, and bury you, and all of your character, under the ruins of this world which you inhabit and pollute, than he would thus tarnish the beauties of heaven, and divest himself of the brightest glory of his own divinity. "God," says Archbishop Tillotson, "has condescended to take our nature upon him, that he might make us capable of happiness; but if this will not do, he will not put off his own nature to make us happy."

What then do you imagine? Do you think that God will prepare some separate apartments in heaven, furnished with a variety of sensual pleasure, for the entertainments of persons of your character? some apartments from whence the tokens of his presence shall be withdrawn, from whence the exercise of his worship shall be banished, from whence saints and angels shall retire to make way for those inhabitants, who, like you, have sinned themselves beyond a capacity of enjoying God, or of being fit companions for any of his most excellent creatures? This were to suppose the Christian religion false, and to contradict the light of natural reason too, which not only shows such a disposition of things to be unworthy the divine sanctity and majesty, but also shows that if there be a future state, it must be a state of misery to wicked men, in whose minds those vicious habits prevail, which are even now the beginning of hell; which therefore they must carry along with them wherever they are, in proportion to the degree in which they are predominant.

Upon the whole then, you must evidently see that it is absolutely necessary that you, sinners,

should be changed, if ever you expect to have any part or lot in the future happiness. And when do you expect that change should be wrought? Do you expect it when death has done its dreadful office upon you, and your soul arrives at the invisible world? Is the air of it (if I may be allowed the expression) so refined, that it will immediately purify and transform every polluted sinner that comes into it? You cannot but know, that the whole tenor of Scripture forbids that presumptuous, destructive hope. It assures us, that there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave; but that we must be judged according to what we have done in the body, and not according to what has passed in any separate state, whether the actions we have done be good, or whether they be evil.

If ever therefore you are regenerate at all, it must be while you are here below, in this state of education and trial: and if you continue in your sins till death surprise you, your souls will be for ever sealed up under an irreversible sentence, and by the decree of God, and the constitution of things, will be excluded from happiness, as by no means either entitled to it, or prepared for it. So evident is the truth of this assertion in the text, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And will you then sit down contentedly under such a conclusion as this, "I shall be excluded from this kingdom as accursed and profane?" Alas, Sirs, the conclusion is big with unutterable terror and death; as I should now proceed to show you at large if my time would allow: for I am next to represent the infinite importance of entering into that kingdom, and consequently of that entire change which has been proved to be necessary to that entrance. But I must reserve that to the next opportunity of this kind. In the mean time let me add, that I doubt not but there are many present, who have heard this description of the heavenly world with delight, and who are saying in their hearts, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it: this is the felicity to which my heart aspires with the most ardent breathing." Such may with the utmost reason regard it as a token for good, and may go on in a cheerful assurance, that the grace that has made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, will at length conduct them to it, in perfect safety and everlasting triumph. Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTERING INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

JOHN iii. 3.

—— *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

How impossible it is that an unregenerate sinner should see, *i. e.* enjoy, the kingdom of God, or that future blessedness to which the gospel is intended to lead its professors, I have shown you at large. I have appealed to the testimony of God's holy prophets, and apostles, in concurrence with that of his incarnate Son, to prove that persons of such a character are, by the inviolable constitution of that kingdom, excluded from it. And I have further, in my last discourse, proved, that if they were actually admitted to it, they would be incapable of relishing its pleasures; that their vitiated palate would have a distaste to the choicest fruits of the paradise of God; yea, that in these blissful regions, thorns and briers would spring up in their paths, and make them wretched in the very seat of happiness.

I doubt not, but you are in your consciences generally convinced, that the truth of these things cannot be contested. You are inwardly persuaded that it is indeed so; and I fear many of you have also reason to apprehend, that you are of this unhappy number, who are hitherto strangers to regenerating grace. But how are your minds impressed with this apprehension? Do I wrong you, Sirs, when I suspect that some of them are hardly impressed at all? Do I wrong you, when I suspect there are those of you, who have spent the last week with very little reflection upon what you have heard? The cares and amusements of life have been pursued as before, and you have not taken one hour to enter into the thought with self-application, and seriously to consider, "I am one of those concerning whom eternal wisdom and truth has pronounced, that, if they continue such as at present they are, they shall not see the kingdom of God." You have not paused at all upon the awful thought; you have not offered one lively petition to God, to beg that you may be recovered from this unhappy state, and brought to a meetness for his kingdom, and a title to it. For your sakes therefore, and for the sakes of others in your state, having already explained, illustrated, and confirmed the proposition in my text, I proceed,

III. To represent to you the importance of the argument suggested here; or to show you, how much every unregenerate sinner ought to be alarmed to hear that, while he continues in his present state, "he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And O that, while I endeavour to illustrate this, my words might enter into your minds as goads,

and might fix there as nails fastened in a sure place! The substance of my argument is given forth by the one great Shepherd; may the prosecution of it be blessed, as the means of reducing some wandering sheep into his fold!

Now, in order to illustrate the force of this argument, I beseech you seriously to consider,—what this kingdom is, from which you are in danger of being for ever excluded;—and what will be the condition of all those who shall be finally cut off from any interest in it.

[1.] Consider "what that kingdom is from which the unregenerate, or those who are not born again, shall be excluded."

And here you are not to expect a complete representation of it; for that is an attempt in which the tongues of angels, as well as men, might fail; or how proper soever their language might be in itself, to us would be unintelligible; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And surely these final and most illustrious preparations of his love must, beyond all others, exceed our description and conception. A minister that, with the apostle Paul, had been caught up into the third heaven, if he would attempt to speak of the glorious scenes which were there opened to him, must say, they were unutterable things: and one that, with John, had lain in the bosom of Christ himself, must say, as that apostle did, "It does not yet appear what we shall be." And, indeed, when we go about to discourse of it, I doubt not but the blessed angels pity the weakness of our apprehensions and expressions, and know that we do but debase the subject, when we attempt the most to exalt and adorn it.

Yet there are just and striking representations of this kingdom made in the word of God; and we are there often told in general, wherein it shall consist. You no doubt remember that I was, in the last of these Lectures, going over several important views of it. I then told you, it will consist in the perfection of our souls in knowledge and holiness; in the sight of God, and our blessed Redeemer; in exercising the most delightful affections towards them, and in being for ever employed in rendering them the most honourable services; in conversing with saints and glorious angels; and in the assured expectation of the eternal continuance of this blessedness in all its branches. That this is the Scriptural representation of the matter, I proved to you from many express testimonies in the word of God: and I doubt not, but you have often heard the excellency of each of these views represented at large, in distinct discourses on each.

I will not, therefore, now repeat what has been said upon such occasions; but will rather direct you to some general considerations, which may convince you of the excellency of that state and world, from which, if you continue unregenerate, you must for ever be excluded: for I would fain fix it upon your minds, that it is in this connexion, and for this purpose, that the representation is made. And O that you might so review it, as no longer to neglect so great a salvation, nor act as if you judged such everlasting life to be beneath your attention, and unworthy your care and regard! You cannot think it so when you consider,—that it is represented in Scripture under the most magnificent images;—that it is the state which God has prepared for the display of his glory, and the entertainment of his most favourite creatures;—that it is the great purchase of the blood of his eternal Son;—that it is the main work of his sacred Spirit to prepare men's hearts for it;—and the great business of our inveterate enemy the devil, by all possible means, to prevent our obtaining it.—Each of these considerations may much illustrate the excellency of it, and all taken together yield a most convincing demonstration.

1. Consider, "by what a variety of beautiful and magnificent images this happiness is represented in the word of God;" and that may convince you of its excellency.

When the blessed God himself would raise our conceptions of a state of being, so much superior to any thing we have ever seen or known, unless he intended a personal and miraculous revelation of it, he must borrow our language, and in painting the glory of heaven must take his colours from earth. And here the magnificence of a city, the sweetness of a garden, the solemn pomp of a temple, the lustre of a crown, and the dignity of a kingdom, strike powerfully on the human mind, and fill it with veneration and delight. But when such figures as these are borrowed from this low world of ours, faintly to shadow out that which is above, there is always the addition of some important circumstance, to intimate how far the celestial original exceeds the brightest earthly glory, by which the divine condescension has vouchsafed to describe it.

The enumeration of a variety of Scriptural descriptions will set these remarks in the strongest light.—If therefore heaven be described as a city, it is the New Jerusalem, the city of our God, that cometh down from God out of heaven: the pavement of its streets is all of pure gold, its gates are pearl, and its foundation jewels.—If it be a garden, it is the paradise of God, and so far superior to that which he at first prepared and furnished out for the entertainment of Adam in his state of innocence, that it is planted on every side with the tree of life, of which there was but one alone in the garden of Eden; and is watered, not with such common rivers as the Tigris and Euphrates, but

with that living, copious, unexhausted stream, the river of the water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and gently glides along through all its borders. When it is represented as a temple, we are told, that instead of a golden ark placed in the remotest recess, to which only the high priest might once a year approach, and on which he might not be allowed to gaze, the throne of God is erected there, perpetually surrounded with myriads of worshippers who see his face, and like the high priest when clothed in his richest robes, have his name written in their foreheads: instead of the feeble rays of that golden candlestick, whole lamps shone in the holy place, the heavenly temple is illuminated in a more glorious manner, and needs no candle, neither light of the sun; for the glory of God continually enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof: nay, we are assured that its sacred ministers are made kings as well as priests unto God; and accordingly being clothed in white raiment, they have crowns of gold on their heads; as well as harps and golden vials, or censers full of incense, in their hands: and lest we should think these pompous services are only the entertainment of some peculiarly sacred seasons, we are told that they rest not day nor night, adoring him that sits upon the throne, and are fixed as pillars in his temple, to go out no more.—Again, if it be spoken of as a crown, it is represented as incorruptible; a crown of glory that fadeth not away.—And when it is called a kingdom, the Scripture does not only add, as here in the text, that it is the kingdom of God, which must certainly exalt the idea of it; but that it is a kingdom which cannot be moved, an everlasting kingdom: nay, to carry our thoughts to the highest degree of dignity and glory, it is spoken of as a sitting down with Christ on his throne.

But further, the value of these illustrious representations is much enhanced, if we consider the character of the persons by whom they are made. They were persons well acquainted with these things, having received their information from a divine revelation, and from the immediate visions of God. They were also persons of such sublime and elevated sentiments, that they had a sovereign contempt for all the enjoyments of time and sense, even those which the generality of mankind set the greatest value upon, and counted all things but loss for the knowledge of Christ, and the testimony of a good conscience, while they looked not at temporal but at eternal things. They could deliberately, constantly, and even cheerfully, resign all the riches, and honours, and carnal pleasures, which they might have purchased by their apostasy from religion; and were ready to embrace bonds, imprisonments, or death itself, when it met them in the way of their duty.—Now certainly a glory, with which such holy, wise, and heroic persons were so passionately enamoured, and which they describe with such pathos of language, and such ecstasy of delight, while they were trampling with so generous a disdain on every thing which earth calls good and great, must deserve our very attentive regard. And this it yet more evidently will appear to do, if we consider,

2. "It is the state and world, which God has prepared for the display of his glory, and the entertainment of the most favoured of his creatures."

This argument seems to be hinted at, when it is said, (as in the place I referred to before,) "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." God well knows the capacity of his creatures, and how much happiness they are able and fit to receive; and he can fill their capacities to the utmost; nay, he can further enlarge them to what degree he pleases, that they may admit superior degrees of glory and felicity. A happiness, therefore, which he has prepared on purpose, to display the riches of his magnificence and love, and to show what he can do to delight his creatures, must certainly be in some measure proportionable, if I may so express it, to the infinity of his own sacred perfections. Let us then seriously consider who God is; and attentively dwell, in our meditation, on the extent of his power, and the riches of his bounty; and our conception of the happiness of heaven must be raised to something more glorious, than the most emphatical words can perfectly describe.

And here, to assist our imagination in some degree, let us look round us, and take a survey of this visible world. This earth, how conveniently has he furnished it, how beautifully has he disposed it, how richly has he adorned it! What various and abundant provision has he made for the subsistence, the accommodation, and the entertainment of the creatures that inhabit it! and especially of man, in whom this scheme and system of things appears to centre, and to whom it is all most wisely and graciously referred! Yet earth is the habitation of a race of mean and degenerate creatures, who are but in a state of trial; nay, it is the habitation of thousands and ten thousands of God's incorrigible enemies, with whom he is angry every day. Already it is marked with some awful characters of the divine displeasure; and the Scripture assures us, that it is reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Yet even this earth is not a spectacle unworthy our regard; nor can we, if we allow ourselves to survey it with becoming attention, behold it without an affecting mixture of admiration, of love, and of joy: passions that will strike us yet more powerfully, if from this earth of ours we raise our eyes to the visible heavens, and there behold the glory of

the sun, the brightness of the moon, and all the numerous hosts of heaven that attend in her train. Who that considers, with any degree of attention, their magnitude, their lustre, their motion, and their influence, can forbear crying out, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens!" And when, with even these in our view, we further reflect, that there is another apartment, as yet invisible, of which this spangled firmament is but, as it were, the shining vail; an apartment, where the great Creator and Governor of all has fixed his stated residence, and erected the throne of his glory; even that throne which is for ever surrounded by all the most holy and excellent of his creatures; we must be convinced, it is something more beautiful and more magnificent than this harmonious system itself. And, methinks, when we have said more beautiful and more magnificent than this, imagination is ready to fail us, and to leave the mind dazzled and overwhelmed with an effulgence of lustre which it cannot delineate, and can scarce sustain. Yet will our venerable apprehensions of it be further assisted, if we consider,

3. That the kingdom of heaven is "the great purchase of the blood of God's only-begotten Son;" and therefore to be sure it must be inconceivably valuable.

If you are at all acquainted with your Bibles, you must know, that we are by sin in a state of alienation from God; that we had forfeited all our title to his love, and stood justly exposed to his severe displeasure; and that it is Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. Now if we owe it to his merit and atonement that we live, much more are we to ascribe it to him, if we are raised to any superior degree of happiness. If God could not, with honour to his justice, have suffered us, without such a propitiation, to have passed off with impunity; much less could he, without it, have received us to his embraces, and have advanced us to sit with him on his throne. Accordingly, it is said of the blessed martyrs in the heavenly world, even of those who had so gloriously distinguished their fidelity and zeal, and loved not their lives unto the death; that they had washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb: and they gratefully acknowledge it in their hymns of praise, that "Christ had redeemed them to God by his blood, and made them kings and priests unto God."

Now let us seriously reflect, and consider what this blood of the Lamb is. The apostle Peter tells us, that silver and gold, and all the peculiar treasures of kings and princes, are but corruptible things, or perishing and worthless trifles, when compared with it. And no wonder it is represented in such exalted language, when we consider it was the blood of the only-begotten Son of God, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and indeed one with him, being possessed of a nature truly and properly divine; so that it is called the blood of God. We may well argue, even from these transient surveys, that it was some important happiness which he came to procure at so expensive a rate. Had an angel been sent down from heaven, we should naturally have concluded, it must have been upon some momentous errand: surely, then, when the Lord of angels comes down, not only to live on earth, but to expire in bitter agonies on the cross, to purchase a benefit for us, we may be well assured that this benefit must be very considerable. Our Lord Jesus Christ must certainly set a very great value upon it, or he would not have purchased it at such a price: and we are sure, the value that he apprehended in it must be its true value. He could not be imposed upon by any false appearance of glory and splendour: he despised, with a just and generous contempt, all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he was also well acquainted with the celestial kingdom, having so long dwelt in it, and so long presided over it: yet so highly does he esteem it, that he speaks of it upon all occasions, as the highest possible gift of divine bounty, the richest preparation and noblest contrivance of divine love; yea, he regards it as a felicity so great, that when he conducts his people into it, with the last solemn pomp of the judgment-day, it is said, He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, allowing it to be a just equivalent for all he has done and all he has suffered in so glorious a cause.

4. The excellency of the heavenly kingdom will further appear, if we consider, that "it is the main work of the Spirit of God upon men's hearts, to prepare them for an admittance into it."

You well know, that the blessed Spirit of God is spoken of as that divine agent by whom all the hosts of heaven were created, and all God's various works produced; and it is he that knows the things of God, even as the human spirit knows the things of a man. Now it is his peculiar office in the economy of our redemption, to form the soul to a meetness for glory. Accordingly, when the apostle Paul had been reminding the Corinthians, that while they continued in their sinful state, they were unfit for the kingdom of God; he adds, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

That the Spirit should condescend to engage at all in such a work, must give us a very sublime idea of the end at which it aims. But much more will that idea be raised, when we consider with what a variety, and what a constancy, of operations he begins, continues, and perfects it. He attempts it (as we shall hereafter more particularly show

you) sometimes by convictions of terror, and sometimes by insinuations of love; and by one method or another, in the hearts of all the heirs of this glory, he works so great a change, that it is represented by turning a heart of stone into a heart of flesh, by raising the dead from their graves, yea, by producing a new creation. For this does he watch over the soul with the tenderest care, and continues his friendly offices, to recover it from relapses, and gradually to form it to advancing degrees of sanctity, till at length it be enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Nay, so intent is this sacred agent on the important work, that when sinners most insolently and ungratefully reject him, and by resisting him oppose their own happiness, he does not immediately leave them; he strikes them again and again; and waits upon them for succeeding days, and months, and years: and when, perhaps, the sincere convert makes the most ungrateful return for the experience of his goodness, even after he has acknowledged, and at length obeyed, it; when, under the fatal transport of some ungoverned passion, and the influence of some strong temptation, he acts as if he were intent upon tearing down the work of the Spirit of God upon his soul, and driving him for ever away; yet in how many instances does he return again after all these injuries, pleading the cause of God with a sweetly prevailing eloquence, and thus healing the wound, and repairing the breach, and making it perhaps stronger than before? And all this for what? That the happy subject of all these kind operations may be formed to the fitness of the kingdom of heaven. —And are we to regard this blessed Spirit as an unmeaning agent, or as incapable of judging of the importance of this end for which he acts? Is that almighty energy of his employed in an insignificant manner? Surely Nicodemus, slow of understanding as he was, must apprehend the importance of entering into the kingdom of heaven, when he heard, that in order to be admitted to it, a man must be born of the Spirit. And let me add once more,

5. That the excellency of the heavenly kingdom may further be argued, "from the eagerness with which the enemy of souls is endeavouring to prevent our entrance into it."

You know the devil is always represented as the inveterate enemy of our happiness. His rage is expressed by that of a roaring lion, that walks about seeking whom he may devour; and with unwearied diligence he is continually employed in forming and pursuing his temptations: and this is the grand design of all, that he may exclude us from the promised felicity. While sinners are in their unregenerate state, he endeavours to engage all their regards to the objects of time and sense, and for that purpose he continually presents them with a variety of entertainments and amusements suited to their respective tempers and circumstances. If they are awakened to any serious concern about their eternal salvation, he uses his utmost address to divert their minds from an attendance to it: and for this purpose he displays before them all the allurements of sin in its most engaging forms; and if they are not captivated with these, he often puts on a face of terror, and endeavours to affright them from religion by the most gloomy representations of it, or by horrible and distracting suggestions, "that it is now for ever too late to attain it." Or if divine grace surmount all this opposition, and the sinner resolutely chooses his portion in heaven, and puts his soul into the hands of Christ, to be conducted to it; the malice of Satan pursues him even to that sacred retreat, which he has sought in the arms of his Saviour: and if he cannot prevent the soul from entering into heaven, he will at least labour to bring it into such a state of negligence, and to seduce it into those delays and relapses which may divert its regards to that blessed world, which may cloud its evidences of it, and may at least, as much as possible, diminish the degree of its glory there.

Now permit me in this instance to turn the artillery of this cunning enemy against himself, and to argue the excellency of this kingdom, from the zeal and attachment with which he endeavours to obstruct your attaining it. Though Satan be now a very degenerate creature, he was once an angel of light, and still retains much of the knowledge, though he has lost the rectitude and integrity, of the angelic nature. And he particularly knows what heaven is, because he was once an inhabitant there; and while he is endeavouring to persuade the sinner to prefer earth before it, he does, by that very endeavour, incontestably prove, that he himself knows the contrary, and is fully apprised that there is nothing here to be compared with the felicity of the future state. And therefore, while he seeks the destruction of the soul, he can leave it in the enjoyment of all its worldly prosperity; nay, he will attempt to lead him into methods, by which this prosperity may be promoted and increased.

And thus, Sirs, I have endeavoured a little to represent to you what this kingdom of heaven is, from which we are assured that unconverted sinners shall for ever be excluded. I have argued its excellency,—from the representations which are made of it in the word of God,—from its being the preparation of divine love,—from its being the purchase of a Redeemer's blood,—and the end to which, on the one hand, the glorious operations of the blessed Spirit lead,—and of which, on the other hand, all the stratagems and assaults of the prince of darkness are intended to deprive us. If therefore there be truth in Scripture, if there be wisdom in heaven,

or policy in hell, it must surely be infinitely important. And will any of you be such mean-spirited creatures, as, when this happiness is proposed to you, basely to relinquish the pursuit of it, and to sacrifice this blessed hope to any perishing trifle of mortal life? Surely it would be madness; though nothing more were to be apprehended than the loss of it; and though, when heaven were lost, all that earth can give should remain, if not to counterbalance the loss, yet at least to make you less sensible of it. But the weight of the argument will much more evidently appear, if you consider,

[2.] What will at last become of all those who are excluded from this heavenly kingdom.

And here I beseech you to ask your own consciences, whether they be not inwardly persuaded, —that those who are excluded from heaven will remain in a state of existence in which they will be ever sensible of their loss,—and will be delivered over by divine vengeance into that seat of torment which God has prepared for the punishment of his implacable and incorrigible enemies.—This many of you do undoubtedly believe of such persons in general: believe it therefore of yourselves, if you are, and continue, in an unregenerate state.

1. "You will still continue in a state of existence, in which you will be ever sensible of your loss."

It might afford some wretched kind of consolation to you, if, as soon as you died out of this world, your being or your apprehensive powers were immediately to cease. Then the loss of heaven would only be an affliction to you in your dying moments, when you saw the enjoyments of earth were come to an end, and that you must have no part in any future happiness. But alas, Sirs, you cannot but know that when your bodies are dead, and consumed in their graves, your thinking faculties will still be continued to you: and O that you would seriously reflect how they will then be employed! You will then be thinking what you have done in life, what you have chose for your happiness, and what has been the consequence of that choice. You will look round in vain for such accommodations and pleasures as you were once most fond of, but they will be no more; and when you perceive them vanished like the visionary amusements of a dream, you will lift up your astonished eyes towards the regions of glory. And you indeed will have a lively view of them; but to what purpose will that view serve? Only through the righteous vengeance of God, to aggravate your misery and despair. "Alas," will you think, "there are millions of creatures yonder in heaven, who are rejoicing in the sight and favour of God, and are as full of happiness as their natures can contain, and shall be so for ever; while I am cut off from all share in the divine bounty. Rivers of pleasure are flowing in upon them, while not one drop is sent down to me: nor could I obtain it, though I were to ask the favour from the least of Christ's servants there. I am cast out as an accursed wretch, with whom God and his holy and blessed creatures will have no further intercourse or communion: and why am I thus cast out? and why am I thus cut off from God's favour, and driven from his presence, while so many that dwelt with me on earth are admitted to it? My nature was originally as capable of happiness as theirs; and though it was sadly degenerate, it might like theirs have been renewed. God was once offering me that grace, by which my disordered soul might have been transformed, and I might have been fitted for the regions of glory: but I despised all these offers, and gave the preference to those fading vanities, which, alas! have for ever forsaken me. And now they that were ready are gone in to the delightful banquet, and the door is shut; the everlasting gates are shut for ever, and barred against me. And here I must lie at this miserable distance, envying and raging at their happiness, of which, whatever sight or knowledge I may have of it, I must never, never, never, partake."

Such reflections as these, Sirs, will cut deep into your souls; and accordingly our Lord declares to impenitent sinners in his own days, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see others sitting down in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And if you would reflect, you might easily apprehend this. How would you be enraged at yourselves, if by your folly you had neglected securing a plentiful estate, when it was offered to you on the most easy terms; and you actually saw others, once your equals, and perhaps your inferiors, in the possession of it, in consequence of having taken those methods which you stupidly neglected! The reflection, I doubt not, would very much impair the pleasure you might find in other comfortable and agreeable circumstances. How much more insupportable then will the loss of heaven appear to you, when you come to see, and know, what it is you have lost, and have nothing to relieve or support you, under the painful recollection?

It is to no purpose to object, that upon the principles of my last discourse, there will be no room to lament your exclusion from those entertainments, which you would be incapable of relishing if you were admitted to them; for you will then see and lament that incapacity as a very great misery. And if a man, who was naturally fond of feasting and mirth, should see a great many regaling themselves, and revelling about him, while he was languishing under some painful distemper, which made him incapable of joining in the entertainment; he would yet grieve that he had no part in it, and it

would be the increase, rather than the alleviation, of his uneasiness, that it was his sickness which unfitted him for it; especially if, as in your case, it was a sickness which he had brought upon himself by his own folly, and for which he had been offered an easy, pleasant, and infallible remedy, which he had refused to use till the malady was grown utterly incurable. One would imagine, this thought would be enough to impress you, but if it do not, let me entreat, and even charge, you to consider,

2. That if you are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, "you will be consigned over to those regions of darkness, despair, and misery, which God has prepared for those unhappy criminals, who are the objects of his final displeasure, and whom he will render everlasting monuments of his wrath."

There is something in human nature, that starts back at the thought of *annihilation* with strong reluctance; and yet how many thousands are there in this miserable world, who would with all their souls fly to it as a refuge? They shall seek death, as an inspired writer strongly expresses it, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. I will not attempt to enter into a detail of the horrors, attending the place and state, into which all who are excluded from the glories of the heavenly world shall be cast, and in which they shall be fixed. Let that one awful Scripture suffice for a specimen of many more; in which we are told, that every one whose name was not found written in the book of life, (or who was not registered in the number of those, who were to inhabit the New Jerusalem, or the kingdom of heaven,) was cast into the lake of fire, or, as it is afterwards expressed, into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Think of this, and ask your own hearts, you that are so impatient of the little evils of mortal life, whether you can endure to take up your abode for ever in devouring fire, or whether you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Yet these are the images by which the word of God represents it; to be plunged as in a sea of liquid fire, whose flames are exasperated and heightened, by being fed with brimstone; nay, as the prophet speaks, by a copious stream of brimstone, so expressly appointed by God himself, that this, as well as the river of the water of life, is represented as proceeding immediately from him: "he has made Tophet deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it."

It is painful to a tender mind to think of this, as what its fellow-creatures are obnoxious to: it is grievous to speak of it in these dreadful terms. But who are we, that we should be more merciful than God? Or rather, how can we imagine it is mercy to avoid speaking of the appointment of infinite wisdom, for the punishment of impenitent sinners? What mercy were that, Sirs, to avoid to mention these terrors to you, and to neglect to warn you of them, because they are great? which is indeed the very reason why the Scripture thus pathetically describes them.

Away therefore with this foolish, this treacherous, compassion, which chooses rather to leave men to be consumed, than to disturb their slumbers! Think, Sirs, of that wretched glutton, whom Christ describes as lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments, seeing the regions of the blessed at an unapproachable distance, and begging in vain that one drop of water might be sent to cool his tongue, amidst all the raging thirst with which he was tormented in this flame. Regard it attentively; for as God lives, and as your soul lives, if you continue in an unregenerate state, you see in that wretch the very image and representation of yourselves. Yes, sinners, I testify it to you this day, that intolerable as it seems, it will, on that supposition, be your own certain fate, or to speak much more properly, your righteous, but inevitable, doom. Heaven and earth will desert you in that dreadful hour; or, if the inhabitants of both were to join to intercede for you, it would be in vain. Sentence will be passed, and execution done; hell will open its mouth to receive you, and shut it again for ever to enclose you, with thousands, and ten thousands more, among whom you will not find one to comfort you, but every one ready to afflict you. Then shall you know the value which God sets upon his heavenly kingdom, by the judgments he inflicts upon you for neglecting and despising it; and then shall you know the importance of being born again, that *only means* by which hell can be avoided, and heaven secured.

And let me further add, that conviction will quickly come in this terrible way, if you are not now prevailed upon to consider these things; things, which if you have the least regard to the word of God, you cannot but notionally believe. Do not then go about to annihilate (as it were) these prospects to your mind, by placing them at a long distance. The distance is not so great as to deserve a mention. The patience of God will not wait upon you for thousands, or even hundreds, of years: you have a few mortal days, in which to consider of the matter; or rather, you have the present moment to consider of it. And if you improve the opportunity, it is well; but if not, the just and uniform methods of the divine administration shall proceed, though it should be to your ruin. God has vindicated the honours of his violated law, and despised gospel, upon millions, who with the rebel angels, by whom they have been seduced, are even now reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day; and he will as surely vindicate them upon you. If you

do not repent, if you are not regenerate, you "shall all likewise perish," and not one of you shall escape.

And thus I close this copious and important argument; this argument in which life and death, salvation and damnation, are concerned. View it, my friends, in all its connexion, and see in what part of it the chain can be broken. Will you say, that without regeneration you can secure an interest in the kingdom of heaven, though the constitution of heaven oppose it, and all the declarations of God's word stand directly against it; and though nature itself reclaim, and conscience testify your incapacity to enjoy it? Or will you say, that being excluded from it, you shall suffer no considerable damage, though you lose so glorious a state, the noblest preparation of divine love, the purchase of redeeming blood, and the end of the Spirit's operation on the soul; though you ever remain sensible of your loss, and be consigned over to dwell in that flaming prison, which God has prepared for the devil and his angels, and where all the terrors of his righteous judgments are made known?

But if you are indeed inwardly convinced of the truth and importance of these things, and will go away, and act as before, without any regard to them, I can say no more. The reason of man, and the word of God, can point out no stronger arguments, than an infinite good on the one hand, and an infinite evil on the other.

Hear, therefore, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! and let angels and devils join their astonishment; that creatures who would strenuously contend, and warmly exert themselves, I will not say merely for an earthly kingdom, but in an affair where only a few pounds, or perhaps a few shillings or pence, were concerned, are indifferent here, where, by their own confession, a happy or miserable eternity is in question. For indifferent, I fear, some of you are and will continue. I have represented these things in the integrity of my heart, as in the sight of God, not in artful forms of speech, but in the genuine language, which the strong emotions of my own soul, in the views of them, most naturally dictated. Yet I think it not at all improbable, that some of you, and some perhaps who do not now imagine it, will, as soon as you return home, divert your thoughts and discourses to other objects; and may perhaps, as heretofore, lie down upon your beds without spending one quarter of an hour, or even one serious minute, in lamenting your miserable state before God, and seeking that help and deliverance which his grace alone can give. But if you thus lie down, make, if you can, a covenant with death, that it may not break in upon your slumbers; and an agreement with hell, that before the return of the morning, it may not flash in upon your careless souls another kind of conviction, than they will now receive from the voice of reason and the word of God.

SERMON XXVIII

OF THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE INFLUENCES TO PRODUCE REGENERATION IN THE SOUL

TITUS iii. 5, 6.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

If my business were to explain and illustrate this scripture at large, it would yield an ample field for accurate criticism and useful discourse, and more especially would lead us into a variety of practical remarks, on which it would be pleasant to dilate in our meditation. It evidently implies, "that those who are the saved of the Lord, are brought to the practice of good works;" without which faith is dead, and all pretences to a saving change are not only vain, but insolent. Yet it plainly testifies to us, "that our salvation, and acceptance with God, is not to be ascribed to these, but to the divine mercy; which mercy operates by sanctifying our hearts, through the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit: and, that there is an abundant effusion of this Spirit under the gospel," which is therefore, with great propriety, called the ministration of the Spirit, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

But I must necessarily, in pursuance of my general scheme, wave several of these remarks, that I may leave myself room to insist on the grand topic I intend from the words.

I have already shown you, who may be said to be in an unregenerated state: I have also described the change which regeneration makes in the soul: and have largely shown you, in the three last discourses, the absolute necessity and importance of it. And now I proceed,

Fourthly, To show the necessity there is of the agency of the divine power, in order to produce this great and important change.

This is strongly implied in the words of the text: in which the apostle, speaking of the method God has been pleased to take for the display of his goodness in the salvation and happiness of fallen men, gives us this affecting view of it, that it is not by works of righteousness which we, or any of us Christians, have done, but according to his free

grace and mercy that he has saved us, by the washing, or (as it might be rendered) the laver, of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

I shall be ready to acknowledge, with the generality of ancient and modern interpreters, that baptism may probably here be called the laver of regeneration; God having appointed, that as newborn children are washed, so they, who by the influences of his grace on their hearts are born again, should, in token of their repentance for the sins of their past life, be washed with baptismal water, supposing (which was here apparently the case in this early age of Christianity) they had not received that ordinance in their infancy. Nevertheless, lest any should imagine, that an external ceremony was sufficient, or that it was the chief thing intended, the apostle takes the matter higher. And as the apostle Peter tells us, that the baptism which saves us is not merely the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God; so the apostle Paul here adds, that we are saved by the renewing of the Holy Ghost: by which I can by no means understand something entirely distinct from, and subsequent to, his regenerating influences; for, according to the view of regeneration, stated in our former discourses, none can be regenerated who are not renewed: but it seems to explain the former clause, and to refer to the more positive effect produced by divine grace on the soul, whereby Christians are not only purified from sin, but disposed to, and quickened in, a course of holy obedience. And then further tells us, that this Spirit is the gift of God, and is plentifully communicated to us in the name, and through the hands, of the blessed Redeemer, being shed on us abundantly by God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Agreeably therefore to the general design and purport of these words, I shall go on to demonstrate the absolute necessity of a divine agency and operation in this great work of our regeneration; which I shall do from a variety of topics. And here I shall studiously wave many controversies, with which the Christian world has been afflicted, and the soundest part of it disturbed, with relation to the kind and manner of this influence. I will not so much as mention them, and much less discuss them; lest Satan should take an advantage of us, to divert our minds from what is essential in this doctrine, to what is merely circumstantial. Only let it be observed in general, that I speak of "such an agency of God on our minds, as offers no violence to the rational and active nature which God has given us, nor does by any means supersede our obligations to those duties which his word requires; but on the contrary, cures and perfects our nature, and disposes the soul to a regard to such incumbent duties, and strengthens it in the discharge of them." With this only preliminary, which appears to me highly important, I proceed to show the reasonableness of ascribing this change to a divine agency, rather than to any thing else, which may be supposed to have any share in producing it. And we infer this,

[1.] "From the general and necessary dependence of the whole created world upon God."

There was a philosophical, as well as divine, truth, in that observation of the apostle Paul at Athens, which was well worthy of the most learned assembly; In him, *i. e.* in God, we live, and move, and have our being. Such is the innate weakness of created nature, that it continually depends on a divine support. The very idea of its being created supposes, that it had no cause of its existence, but the divine will, in the first moment of it: and if it could not then subsist without that will, in the first moment of its existence, it neither could subsist without it in the second, or in any future moment of it: since to have been dependent for a while, can never be supposed to render any thing for the future independent. The continued existence then of all the creatures, no less of angels, than of worms, or trees, or stones, does properly depend upon the divine energy which bears them up, and holds those of them in life which live, and those of them in being which are inanimate, or without life.

And if their being be dependent, then surely it will follow, that all their perceptive and active powers, whatsoever they are, must continually depend upon God: for to exist with such powers is evidently more than simply to exist; and if a divine agency be necessary for the latter, much more must we allow it to be necessary for the former.

The human mind therefore, with all its capacities and improvements, must acknowledge itself perpetually indebted to God, who is the fountain of truth and wisdom, as well as of being: accordingly we are told, it is he that teacheth man knowledge. All the skill of the husbandman, in one passage of Scripture, and all the wisdom of the artificer, in another, is ascribed to his influence: and if the improvement of the sciences, and any other discovery, which renders human life in any degree more commodious and agreeable, is to be ascribed to the divine illumination and influence, then surely it is from hence this art of living wisely and well must also be derived. All the views upon which good resolutions are formed, all the strong impressions upon the mind arising from these views, and all the steadiness and determination of spirit, which does not only form such purposes, but carries them into execution, are plainly the effect of the divine agency on the mind; without which no secular affairs could be clearly understood, strenuously pursued, or successfully accomplished. And how

peculiarly reasonable it is, to apply this remark to the point now in view, will appear by attending,

[2.] To "the greatness and excellency of this change," which speaks it aloud to be the divine work.

I must, upon this occasion, desire you to recollect what I laid before you in several of the former discourses. Think of the new light that breaks in upon the understanding,—of the new affections that are enkindled in the heart—of the new resolutions, by which the will is sweetly and powerfully, though most freely, influenced;—and think of the degree of vigour attending these resolutions, and introducing a series of new labours and pursuits;—and surely you must confess, that it is the finger of God; especially when you consider—how beautiful and excellent, as well as how great, the work is.

Do we acknowledge, that it was the voice of God that first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and that it was worthy of a divine agency to produce so beautiful a creature as the sun, to gild the whole face of our world, and to dress the different objects around us in such a various and vivid assemblage of colours? And shall we not allow it to be much more worthy of him, to lighten up a benighted soul, and to reduce its chaos into harmony and order?—Was it worthy of God to form the first principles even of the vegetative life, in the lowest plant or herb, and to visit, with the refreshing influences of the rain and sun, the earth wherein these seeds are sown? And is it not much more worthy of him to implant the seed of the divine life, and to nourish it from time to time by the influence of his Spirit?—Did it suit the divine wisdom and mercy to provide for sustaining our mortal lives, for healing our wounds, and recovering us from our diseases? And shall it not much more suit him, to act as the great physician of souls, in restoring them to ease, to health, and vigour?

They must be dead indeed to all sense of spiritual excellency, who do not see how much more illustriously God appears, when considered as the author of grace, than merely as the author of nature. For indeed all the works of nature, and all the instances of divine interposition to maintain its order and harmony, will chiefly appear valuable and important, when considered in subserviency to the gracious design of recovering apostate man from the ruin of that degenerate state, without which it had been far better for him never to have known being, and never to have inhabited a world so liberally furnished with a variety of good. And, therefore, I would appeal to every Christian, whether he does not find a much more ardent gratitude glowing in his heart, when he considers God as the author of the religious and divine, than merely of the animal or the rational, life.

And permit me here to remark, that, agreeably to these reasonings, some of the pagan philosophers have said very serious and remarkable things concerning the reality and the need of divine influences on the mind, for the production of virtue and piety there. Thus Seneca, when he is speaking of a resemblance to the Deity in character, ascribes it to the influence of God upon the mind. "Are you surprised," says he, "that man should approach to the gods? It is God that comes to men; nay, which is yet more, he enters into them; for no mind becomes virtuous but by his assistance."* Simplicius also was so sensible of the necessity of such an influence, that he "prays to God, as the father and guide of reason, so to cooperate with us, as to purge us from all carnal and brutish affections, that we may be enabled to act according to the dictates of reason, and to attain to the true knowledge of himself."† And Maximus Tyrius argues, agreeably to what was said above, that "if skill in the professions and sciences is insinuated into men's minds by a divine influence, we can much less imagine, that a thing so much more excellent, as virtue is, can be the work of any mortal art; for strange must be the notion that we have of God, to think that he is liberal and free in matters of less moment, and sparing in the greatest."‡ And in the same discourse he tells us, "that even the best disposed minds, as they are seated in the midst, between the highest virtue and extreme wickedness, need the assistance and the help of God, to incline and lead them to the better side."§—I am sensible that all these philosophers, with many more who speak to the same purpose, living after Christ's time, may be said to have learned such language from Christians; and if they did so, I wish all who have since worn the name had been equally teachable: but some who appeared much earlier, speak much in the same manner,‖ as I might easily show you, if it were not already more than time to observe,

* Miratis hominem ad Deos ire? Deus ad homines venit, imo, quod propius est, in homines venit. Nemo bonus sine Deo mens habuit. In hoc quod sol aut post beluas. Accedentibus mentem post quod. Senec. Epistles LXXIII.

† [illegible] Simplic. in Epictet. [illegible]

‡ [illegible] Max. Tyr. Dissert. XVI.

§ [illegible] Max. Tyr. ibid.

‖ It is here remarkable, that Xenophon represents Cyrus, with his dying breath, "as humbly ascribing it to a divine influence, (as his word, God he had been taught to acknowledge the cause of Prosperity, and to bear his prosperity with a becoming moderation." Xen. Cyropæd. lib. viii. cap. 7. § 1. And Socrates is introduced by Plato, as declaring, "that whosoever is the cause, of consequently he is not of a divine disposition." Plat. Men. tom. ii. p. 128. And to the same purpose Plutarchus observed "that virtue is not to be taught but by divine assistance." Upotom. pag. 1081. And Aristotle confesses "that if any man escape the temptations of life, and behave unjust, (as becomes a worthy member of society, as the laws of it are framed) without which, by the way, is something very far short of religion), he has reason to own, that it is God that saves him." De Repub. lib. vi. pag. 677. edit. Francof. 1602.

[3.] That we may further argue the divine agency in this blessed work, "from the violent opposition over which it prevails in its rise and progress."

The awakened soul, when labouring towards God, and aspiring after further communications of his grace to form it for his service, may justly say, with David, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! How many are they that rise up against me!" With how many threatening dangers are we continually surrounded! and what a numerous host of enemies are ready to oppose us! The law of sin that wars in our members, and concerning whose forces it may well be said, Their name is Legion, for they are many; the evil influence of a degenerate world, whose corrupt examples press like a torrent, and require the most vigorous efforts to bear up against them; and in confederacy with these, and at the head of all, the prince of darkness, whose counsels and efforts, with relation to this world of ours, do, as it were, centre in this one thing, to prevent men's regeneration; because it is by means of this, that those are recovered out of the snare of the devil, who were before led captive by him at his will.

I persuade myself, that when I am speaking on this head, though some may imagine it to be mere empty harangue, and a common-place of declamation, the experienced soul will attest the truth of what I say. It may be some of you, who, by what of these sermons you have already heard, have come under some serious convictions, and been awakened in good earnest to be thoughtful about being born again, have felt such a struggle in your own minds, that you may say, you never knew before what the flesh, the world, and the devil were, nor could have imagined that their opposition to this work was so forcible and violent as you now find it. To reform the irregularities of the life is comparatively easy; but to root sin out of the soul, to consecrate the whole heart to God, and demolish those idols that have been set up, as it were, in the secret chambers of imagery, is difficult indeed: all the corruptions of the heart, in such a case, are ready to exert themselves, and it is natural for the lusts of the flesh to unite against that which is set upon destroying them all; nor did you ever know before, that there was such a world of sin within you. With violence also does the strong man armed exert himself, when his goods are about to be taken from him by one stronger than himself; as our Lord, with an unerring propriety and wisdom, represents it: and indeed it seems as if, through the violence of his malignity, and the righteous judgment of God, who, whenever he pleases, can take the wise in his own craftiness, that Satan sometimes overshoots his mark, and raises so sensible an opposition against the cause of God in the soul, that an argument might be drawn, even from that very opposition, to prove the truth and excellency of what he sets himself so directly against. And you have now perhaps experienced too, more than you ever did before, the inveterate opposition of the seed of the serpent to that of the woman: you have found, that since you began to think of religion in good earnest, some have derided you, others, it may be, have reviled you, and enemies have sprung up out of your own house; though the impressions you have felt tend to make you more amiable, more kind, and more useful, and therefore one would think should conciliate their friendship: but this is a memorable instance in which self-love seems to make, as it were, a sacrifice of itself to the hatred of God.—Now, therefore, to accomplish such a mighty change in the midst of such opposition, must evidently speak a divine interposition. And surely the Christian, when thus recovered and restored, has reason to declare, as Israel did, If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when these confederate enemies rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul, and would have quenched and buried every spark that looked like divine life, and have borne away every purpose of reformation and holiness. The remark will be further illustrated, if we consider,

[4.] "By what feeble means this change is accomplished."

The apostle observes, that in his day they had the treasure of the gospel lodged in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power, which rendered it successful, might appear to be of God, and not of man. And it is still in a great measure apparent, that the same method is made use of, from the same principle. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; and if, at any time, they are mighty and effectual, it must be only through God. It is not by secular might or power, that this great work is accomplished: no, nor by the refinements of learning, or the charms of eloquence. These things indeed have their use; the understanding may sometimes be convinced by the one, and the affections moved by the other: yet where both these have been done, the work often drops short, and it may be the plainest addresses from a weak and almost trembling tongue, shall perform that which the far superior talents of many have not been able to effect. A multitude of such instances have been found, and perhaps seldom in these latter ages more observable than in the compass of our own observation.

Now whenever this work is accomplished by the preaching of the gospel in a Christian country, there is generally some circumstance that shows it is a divine, and not a human, work. It is not the

novelty of the doctrine which strikes; for all the main truths, on which the conviction and impression turns, have been known even from early infancy. No miracles awaken the attention, no new discoveries astonish the mind: but what has a thousand times been heard, and as often neglected, breaks in upon the mind with an almost irresistible energy, and strikes it as if it never had been heard of before. They seem, as it were, when the Lord turneth again their captivity, to awaken out of a dream, and wonder at the accident that has awakened them. The ministry of the word may seem but feeble, when compared to such an event: and yet sometimes even less solemn methods than that shall be effectual. One single text of Scripture accidentally occurring to the sight or thought, one serious hint dropped in conversation, shall strike the mind, and pierce it through with an energy that plainly shows, that from whatever feeble hand it might seem to come, it was shot out of the quiver of God, and intended by him that made the heart to reach it: since there is almost as much disproportion between the cause and the effect, as between Moses lifting up his rod, and the dividing of the water of the sea before Israel. In many instances, remarkable providences, which one would have thought should have struck the soul as it were to the centre, have produced no effect; and yet a word, or a thought, has accomplished it: and after the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire have made their successive efforts in vain, it has appeared that the Lord has been in the still small voice. On the whole, a variety of circumstances may illustrate the matter in different degrees; but, taking it in a general view, the remark appears to be well-founded, "that the weakness of the means by which the saving change is wrought, argues plainly that the hand of God is in it;" as when anointing the eyes with spittle gave sight to the blind, it was evidently the exertion of a miraculous power.—But now, agreeably to what has been advanced under these several heads, I shall proceed to show at large,

[5.] "That the Scripture teaches us to ascribe this great change on the mind to a divine agency and operation."

And here you will see, that it does not merely drop here and there an expression which is capable of such an interpretation, but that the whole tenor of the word of God leads to such a conclusion; and surely, if we own the word to be divine, we need no more convincing argument of the truth of this remark. The only difficulty I shall here find, will be like that which occurred under the former head, and proceeds from the variety and multiplicity of texts which offer themselves to me while reflecting on this subject: however, I will endeavour to rank them in the plainest and best order I can, under the following particulars.—We find God sometimes promises to produce such a change in men's minds;—and at other times he speaks of it as his own work, when it has been already produced:—the Scripture represents even the increase of piety in a regenerate heart, as the effect of a divine power; and how much more must the first implanting of it be so?—nay, it goes yet further than this, and expresses the necessity, as well as the reality, of a divine influence on the mind to make it truly religious, and resolves the want of true religion into this, that God withholds his influence.—If, therefore, any one, and much more if all these particulars, can be made out, I think it must force a conviction on your judgments at least, that what we are endeavouring to confirm in this discourse is the doctrine of Scripture.

1. There are various places in Scripture wherein "God promises to produce such a change in men's minds as we have before described;" which plainly shows that it is to be acknowledged as his work.

Thus Moses says to Israel, without all doubt by the divine direction, The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And this circumcision of the heart must surely be the removal of some insensibility and pollution adhering to it, and bringing it to a more orderly, regular, obedient state; which, as it is sometimes made matter of exhortation, and thus indeed proves that there is a view in which it may be considered as a duty incumbent upon us; as when Moses said, Circumcise the fore-skin of your heart; and Jeremiah, in imitation of him, Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skin of your heart; so here it is put in the form of a promise, to signify that, wherever it was done, it was in consequence of God's preventing and assisting grace. On the same principle, the Father promises to Christ, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power; and if any pretend that these words may possibly admit of another version, though I know none more just than this, there are many other parallel places which are not attended with any ambiguity at all.—Such, in particular, is that gracious promise, (which, though it was immediately made to the house of Israel, is nevertheless quoted by the apostles as expressive of God's gospel covenant with all believers,) After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; or, as it is elsewhere expressed by the same prophet, Jeremiah, I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.—And Ezekiel echoes back the same language by the same Spirit; I will give them

one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them: which is afterwards repeated again almost in the same words: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Now, such a transformation of the heart and spirit as may be represented by a thorough renovation, or by changing stone into flesh, speaks the doctrine I am asserting in as plain terms as we could contrive or express, and beautifully points out at once the greatness and excellency of the change, and the almighty power by which it is effected; for we may assure ourselves God would never promise such influences, if he did not really mean to impart them. But again,

2. Agreeably to the tenor of these promises, the "Scripture also ascribes this work to a divine agency, when it is effected."

Thus the apostle John, when he is speaking of those who, on receiving Christ, become the sons of God, declares concerning them, that they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; plainly intimating that it was to him, and not only or chiefly to themselves or others, that this happy change was to be ascribed; which is well explained by those words of St. James, in which he says, Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Accordingly our Lord, as you have heard at large, insists upon it as absolutely necessary to a man's entering into the kingdom of God, not only that he should be born again, but more particularly that he should be born of the Spirit, *i. e.* by the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God operating upon his soul, to purify and cleanse it. And as this great work of regeneration chiefly consists in being brought to faith and repentance, you may observe, that each of these are spoken of as a divine production in the mind, or as the gift of God to it. Thus the believing Jews, with one consent, expressed their conviction when they heard the story of Cornelius, and declare, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. And so the apostle Paul expresses it, when speaking of the possibility that some might be recovered out of the snare of the devil, he says, If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. That very attention to the gospel, which is the first step towards the production of faith in the soul, is resolved into this, when it is said, that the Lord opened Lydia's heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul. And with regard to the progress of it, it is not only said in general, You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; but faith expressly declared to be the gift of God; and the apostle says to the Philippians, that it was given to them to believe; nay, it is represented as a most glorious and illustrious effort of divine power, and ascribed to the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And in this view it is, that this change is called a new creation; plainly implying, as a celebrated writer well expresses it, "that something must here be done in us, and for us, which cannot be done by us." Wherefore, it is said, that the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; and we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works: not to insist upon the great variety of parallel passages in which the same thoughts are expressed almost in the very same words. But he indeed who would reckon up all the scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, which directly or indirectly refer to this, must transcribe a larger part of both than would be convenient to read at one time in a worshipping assembly. But we may further, by a very strong consequence, infer the doctrine I am now maintaining from those various passages of the sacred writers, in which,

3. "The increase of piety in a heart already regenerated, is spoken of as the work of God."

Thus David, even when he felt himself disposed to the most vigorous prosecution of religion, solemnly declares his dependence upon continued divine influences, to enable him to execute the holy purpose he was then most affectionately forming: I will run the way of thy commandments, says he, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, or when thou shalt influence it with a steady principle of zeal, and with those devout passions which make every branch of my duty easy and delightful. And the apostle Paul declares his persuasion, that God would continue those gracious influences which he had already imparted: He that has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And when he speaks of the ardent desire with which Christians were aspiring towards a better world, he adds, He that hath wrought us for the self same thing, is God. Thus also he ascribes his continued fidelity in the ministry to the grace of God that was with him, as being one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful: And by the grace of God, says he, I am what I am; and if I have laboured more abundantly than others, it is not I, but the grace of God which was with me. On the same principle he acknowledges, that the success of Apollos in watering, as well as his own in

planting, was to be referred to this, that God gave the increase in the one case as well as the other. And he concludes his epistle to the Hebrews with this remarkable prayer: The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. But, indeed, as every prayer that the apostles offer for any of their Christian brethren and friends, that they may grow in grace, might be urged for the illustration of this head, I choose rather to refer the rest to your own observation on this general hint, than to enter into a more particular enumeration. I shall only add, to complete the argument,

4. That the Scripture often declares "the necessity as well as the reality of such influences, and refers the ruin of man to this circumstance, that God in his righteous judgment had withheld or withdrawn them."

When Moses would upbraid the obstinacy of the Israelites, that all the profusion of wonders wrought for them in Egypt, and in the wilderness, had not produced any suitable impressions; so much was he accustomed to think of every thing good, in the moral, as well as in the natural, world, as the gift of God, that he uses this remarkable expression: Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.—And our Lord, the propriety of whose expressions surely none can arraign, speaks to the same purpose, when adoring the divine conduct with respect to the dispensation of saving light and gospel blessings, he says, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. If some of the plainest and lowest of the people, who were in comparison to others but as little children, understood and received the gospel, while the learned men and politicians of the age despised it, God revealed it to the former, while he suffered the veil of prejudice to remain on the mind of the latter, though his almighty hand could easily have removed it.—Those other words of our Lord must not be omitted here, in which he says, No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and what this drawing of the Father means, he himself has explained by saying, No man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father; and elsewhere he expresses it, by learning of the Father; all which must undoubtedly signify a divine agency and influence on the mind.—Nay, a more forcible expression than this is made use of by the evangelist, where he takes notice of the unbelief of those that saw the miracles of Christ, Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said, He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts: which is agreeable to that expression of the apostle Paul, He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth: a thought which the apostle pursues at large through the following verses.

These, to be sure, are very emphatical scriptures: and though it is necessary to understand them in such a qualified sense as to make them consistent with other scriptures which charge men's destruction, not on any necessitating decree of God, but upon themselves, and the abuse of their own faculties; yet still these expressions must stand for something: and in the most moderate sense that can be put upon them, they directly confirm what I have here brought them to prove. So that on the whole, the matter must come to this, "That the cause of men's final and everlasting ruin may be referred, in one view of it, to God's withholding those gracious influences, which, if they had been imparted, would indeed have subdued the greatest perverseness: but his withholding these influences is not merely an arbitrary act, but the just punishment of men's wickedness, and of their obstinate folly in trifling with the means of his grace, and grieving his Spirit till it was provoked to withdraw." This thought, which I might largely prove to you to be a compendium of the Scripture scheme reconciles all; and any consequences drawn from one part of that scheme to the denial of the other, how plausible soever, must certainly be false.

I hope what I have here said may be sufficient to fix a conviction in your judgments and consciences, "that regeneration is ultimately to be referred to a divine influence upon the soul;" or as the apostle expresses it in the text, that God saves us of his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

I shall conclude with two or three reflections, which though so exceeding obvious, I shall touch upon, in regard to their great importance, without offering, as I might, to dilate on each of them at large.

[1.] Let those who have experienced this divine change in their souls give God the glory of it.

Perhaps there are many of you who may see peculiar reason to do it; perhaps you may be conscious to yourselves, that the arm of the Lord was remarkably revealed in conquering every sensible opposition, and getting itself the victory, even when you seemed as if you had been resolutely bent upon your own destruction, to struggle to the utmost against the operation of his grace on your soul. Others may perhaps have perceived the strength of the divine agency in the slightness of the occasion, or in the weakness of the means by which he wrought; which indeed is often matter of astonishment to those that seriously reflect upon it. But whatever your inclinations may have appeared,

and whatever means or instruments were used, give God the glory of all.

If you have found yourselves, from your early years, inclined to attend to divine things, and susceptible of tender impressions from them, that attention and those impressions were to be resolved into this, that God prevented you with the blessings of his goodness. If you have enjoyed the most excellent public ordinances, even with all the concurrent advantages that the most pressing exhortations, and the most edifying example of parents, ministers, and companions could give, it was divine providence that furnished you with those advantages, and divine grace that added efficacy to them, else they had only served to display their own weakness, even where they might have appeared most powerful, and to illustrate that insensibility or obstinacy of heart which would have rendered you proof against all. You do well indeed to honour those whom God has blessed as the means of your spiritual edification: but if they think aright, it would grieve them to the very heart to have those applauses given, and those acknowledgments made, to them, which are due to God alone. All they have done is so little, that it deserves not the mention; and the greater attainments they have made in religion, the more cordially will they join with the holy apostle in saying, "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

[2.] We may further infer, that they who attempt the conversion of sinners, should do it with a humble dependence on the cooperation of divine grace.

Otherwise they will probably find themselves fatally disappointed; and after their most skilful or most laborious attempts, they will complain that they have laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought; and find reason to say, The bellows are burnt, and the lead is consumed of the fire, yet the dross is not taken away. A dependence upon God, in all the common affairs of life, becomes us, as we are creatures; and it is most necessary that we should, in all our ways, acknowledge him, as we expect or desire that he should direct or prosper our paths: but the greater the undertaking is, the more solemn should the acknowledgment of God be.

Let me therefore especially recommend this to those who are coming forth as young officers in the army of Christ. See to it, my brethren, that in the name of your God you set up your banners; that you apply from time to time to your public work with a deep conviction upon your minds, that no strength of reason will effectually convince, that no eloquence will effectually persuade, unless he that made men's hearts will plead his own cause, and bow those hearts in humble subjection. With these views I have often known the feeblest attempts successful, and the meek and lowly have out of weakness been made strong: while the want of this, all the charms of composition and delivery have been, at best, but like the lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, or the art of one that can play well on an instrument. It is those that honour God by the most cordial dependence upon him that he delights to honour; and I will presume to say, that it is the inward conviction of this important truth, which I feel upon my soul while I am confirming it in you, that encourages me to hope, that this labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, but that a divine blessing shall evidently attend what has already been delivered and what shall further be spoke. Only let me conclude my present discourse with this one necessary caution,

[3.] That you do not abuse this doctrine of the necessity of divine influences, which, from the word of God, has been so abundantly confirmed.

God does indeed act upon us, in order to produce this happy change; but he acts upon us in a manner suitable to our rational nature, and not as if we were mere machines. He saves us, as the Scripture expresses it, by awaking us to save ourselves: a new heart does he give us, and a new spirit does he put within us, to stir us up to be solicitous to make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit: he circumcises our heart to love him, by engaging us to take away the fore-skin of our hearts. You see the correspondency of the phrases, and it is of great importance that you attend to it.—If any therefore say, "I will sit still, and attempt nothing for my own recovery, till God irresistibly compels me to it;" he seems as like to perish, as that man would be, who, seeing the house in flames about him, should not attempt to make his escape, till he felt himself moved by a miracle. Sirs, the dependence of the creature on God, though it be especially, yet it is not only, in spiritual affairs: it runs through all our interests and concerns. We as really depend upon his influence to stretch out our hands, as we do to raise our hearts towards him in prayer. Your fields could no more produce their fruit without his agency, than his word could without it become fruitful in your hearts: yet you plough and sow, and would look upon him as a madman, that upon this principle should decline it, urging that no crop could be expected if God did not produce it; and that if he pleased to produce it, it would come up without any human labour. The argument is just the same in that case, as when men plead for the neglect of means or endeavours, from the futility and necessity of a divine concurrence. And if they apply this argument to the concerns of their souls, when they do not apply it to those of their bodies, it plainly shows, that they regard their bodies more than their souls, and that, in pretending to make

these excuses, they belie their conscience, and act against the secret conviction of their own heart. Such persons do not deserve to be disputed with, but rather should be solemnly admonished of the danger of such egregious trifling, where eternity is at stake. And sure I am, that it is offering a great affront to the memory of the blessed Paul, when men pretend to encourage themselves in this perverse temper from any thing he has said. For when he gives us, as it were, the substance of all I have been saying in those comprehensive words, "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;" he is so far from mentioning it as any excuse for remissness and sloth, that he introduces it professedly in the very contrary view, as engaging us to exert ourselves with the utmost vigour in a dependence upon that divine operation. And therefore, as he there expresses it, I say with him, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; and if you will not do it, you have reason to tremble in the prospect of a final condemnation from God, aggravated by your having thus irrationally and ungratefully abused the revelation of his grace.

SERMON XXIX.

OF THE VARIOUS METHODS OF THE DIVINE OPERATION IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS SAVING CHANGE.

1 Cor. xii. 6.

There are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Whatever the original sense of these words was, and how peculiarly soever they may relate to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, the whole tenor of the discourse now intended will show, with how much propriety they may, at least, be accommodated to the operations of his grace. I have proved to you in the last of these Lectures, that wherever regeneration is produced, it is ultimately to be ascribed to a divine agency; and though I cannot say it is equally important, yet I apprehend it may be both agreeable and useful, to proceed,

Fifthly, To survey the variety of those methods, which God is pleased to take in producing this happy change; or, to borrow the language of the text, to consider the diversity of operations, by which the same God, who worketh all in all, (*i. e.* who produces all the virtues and graces of the Christian character, in some degree, in all his people,) is pleased, according to his own wise and gracious purposes, to proceed in his agency on those whom he regenerates and saves.

And this survey will not be matter of mere curiosity, but may probably revive the hearts of some amongst you by the recollection of your own experience: and it may be a caution to others, who, for want of due compass and extent of thought and knowledge, are ready to argue, as if God had but *one* way to work on the human heart, and *that one* the particular manner by which he recovered them. Of this I shall speak more largely hereafter. In the mean time, I judged it necessary to premise this hint, to direct us as to the temper with which this discourse should be heard, as well as to the purpose to which it is to be improved.

Now what I have to offer on this subject will be ranged under these three heads. There is a diversity and variety observable—in the time,—the occasion,—and the manner, of the divine operations on the soul.

I. There is an observable variety, "as to the time of God's gracious operations on different persons."

Some are called in their infancy;—others, and these perhaps the greatest part, are wrought upon in youth;—and some very few in the advance, and even in the decline, of life.

1. Some are wrought upon by divine grace "in their infancy."

This is often the case; and I doubt not, but if parents were to do their duty, it would much more frequently be so. And it is an honour which God is pleased, in some instances, remarkably to confer on a good education; which is indeed so important a duty on one side, and so great a privilege on the other, that it is the less to be wondered at, that he so mercifully encourages Christian parents in the discharge of it; thus granting, as it were, an immediate reward for this labour of love. And I must here take the freedom, on my own observation, to say, that God seems especially to own the faithful endeavours of pious mothers in this respect. He has wisely and graciously given that sex a peculiar tenderness of address, and an easy and insinuating manner, which is admirably adapted to this great end, for which, no doubt, he especially intended it, that of conveying knowledge to children, and making tender impressions on their minds: and there is hardly any view in which the importance of the sex more evidently appears.

We have encouragement to believe, there are a considerable number who are, as it were, sanctified from the womb, and in whom the seeds of divine grace are sown, before they grow up to a capacity of understanding the public preaching of the word: a remark, which Mr. Baxter carries so far as to say, "that he believes, if the duties of religious education were conscientiously discharged, preaching

would not be God's ordinary method of converting souls; but the greater part would be wrought upon before they were capable of entering into the design of a sermon." And indeed it seems to me, that children may early come to have some apprehensions of what is most important in religion. They may have a reverence for God, and a love for him, as that great Father who made them, and that kind Friend who gives them every thing that they have; they may have a fear of doing any thing that would displease him: and though it is not so easy for them to understand the doctrines peculiar to a Redeemer, yet when they hear of Christ, as the Son of God, who came down from heaven to teach men and children the way thither; who loved them, and did them good every day, and at last died to deliver them from death and hell; their little hearts may well be impressed with such thoughts as these, and they may find a growing desire to be instructed in what Christ is, and what he taught and did, and to do what shall appear to be his will. And wherever this is the prevailing disposition, it seems to me that the seeds of holiness are sown in that soul, though but small proficiency may be made in knowledge, and though the capacities for service may be very low.

I will add, that some remarkably pertinent and solid things, which little children have said concerning religion, seem to me plainly to evidence, that they have been, in many instances, under some uncommon teachings of the divine Spirit: and it seems perfectly suitable to the genius of Christianity, that in this sense God should ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, and should reveal to them what he has suffered to be hidden from the wise and prudent. Nor can I suppose it hard for any, who have been for a considerable time acquainted with the state of religion in Christian societies, to recollect various instances, in which persons thus early taught of God, who have heard, and known, and loved the Scriptures, and delighted in ordinances and serious discourse from their childhood, have been, in some measure, like Samuel, Obadiah, Jeremiah, Josiah, and Timothy, honoured with eminent usefulness in the church, and have happily filled some of its most important stations of service. Almost every age has afforded instances of this; and I am persuaded, many are now growing up amongst us, who will be instances of it in ages yet to come.

2. Others, and these perhaps the greatest part of real Christians, are wrought upon "in their youthful days."

Many parents are very deficient in a due care to cultivate the infant minds of their little ones; or the feeble and general impressions then made, are, perhaps, worn out and lost, in the growing vanities of childhood and youth. They begin to be drawn away by evil inclinations and examples, and by the delusions of a flattering world, which then puts on its most attractive charms, to gain upon their unexperienced minds: and hereupon they follow after vanity, and become vain: of the Rock which begat them they grow unmindful, and forget the God that formed them. But by one method or another, God often stops them in this dangerous career; and awakening ordinances, or more awakening providences, bring them to a stand, and turn them the contrary way. The terrors of the Lord set themselves in array against them; or his mercy melts their souls, and they yield themselves its willing captives. They consecrate their hearts, warm as they are with youthful vigour, to be the sacrifices of divine love, and enter, it may be, very early into the bonds of God's covenant; and so prove such a seed to serve him, as is accounted to the Lord for a most honourable and useful generation. Blessed be God, I speak to many who know this by experience! By far the greater part of those who have been admitted to your communion, since I settled among you, have been, as I apprehend, under the age of twenty-four years: and several of those, who were further advanced in life when they first approached the table of the Lord, had been brought to real religion in their much earlier years; though particular circumstances, or some mistaken apprehensions, might prevent their giving up their names publicly to the Lord, so soon as they might, and as they ought to have done it.

3. Some few are wrought upon by divine grace "in the advance, and even in the decline, of life."

I confess that the number of these is comparatively small: and it is not to be wondered at, that it is so. There are not many who arrive to what can properly be called old age; and of them but a very inconsiderable part are then brought to any thing which looks like a saving change. Nor shall we be much surprised at this, if we consider the inveterate nature of bad habits, which renders it almost as hard for them that are accustomed to do evil, to learn to do good, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots. To such a degree are prejudices rivetted in the mind, so insensible is it rendered of tender and generous impressions, so cold are the affections, and the memory (if the phrase may be allowed) so rigid, that, humanly speaking, there is much less probability of their being impressed with religion, than there was when they were in the bloom of life; notwithstanding all the seeming advantages which might arise from riper reason, deeper experience, and a nearer prospect of eternity. In all these things, it is in vain to reason against observation of fact, since we evidently see how uncommon a thing it is, for persons to be awakened and reformed in old age, especially if they have been educated in

the principles of religion, and have made a florid profession of it in their youth, from which they have afterwards apostatized, out of a love to the wealth or honours of the world, or a relish for sensual delights. Such persons generally live and die monuments of divine wrath, bearing, as it were, in characters dreadfully legible, the sad inscription of those, "who, having forsaken God, are finally forsaken of him." They appear as dry trees, twice dead, and fit for nothing but to be plucked up by the roots, and cast into the fire.

Nevertheless, to prove the infinite energy and sovereignty of divine grace, God is sometimes pleased to work even on such. He touches the rock which has stood for ages unmoved, and the waters flow forth: he says to the dry bones, Live, and they obey; they are clothed with beauty, they are animated with life, and stand up as with the vigour of a renewed youth, to pursue the labours of religion, and to fight the battles of the Lord. Such instances, in which aged sinners have been thus wrought upon, I have read and heard; though (I grieve to say it) I can recollect very few, if any, that have occurred to me within the sphere of my own personal observation and acquaintance.

But besides this variety in the time, there is also,

II. An observable diversity "in the occasion which divine grace takes to operate upon different persons."

The occasions are indeed so various, that it would be impossible to enumerate them: I shall, however, just touch on some of the chief.

And here I might particularly consider a religious education in this view, and that daily converse with pious friends, which is of course connected with it. But though, perhaps, there may be no occasion more considerable in itself, and none that has been more eminently honoured of God; yet it is proper to wave it here, as having been mentioned under the former head, as well as much more largely illustrated in my sermons on that subject, which are in most of your houses, and which, I hope, you will often review.

I proceed, therefore, further to observe,—that some are wrought upon by the word of God;—others by some remarkable providence;—some by little incidents, which, inconsiderable as they seem in themselves, grow memorable by the noble effects they are made to produce;—and others by secret and immediate impressions of God upon their spirits, which cannot be resolved into any external cause, or any visible occasion at all.

1. "The administration of divine ordinances, and especially the word of God and prayer," is an occasion, which he most frequently takes to work upon men's hearts by his grace.

I do not mention the administration of the sacraments upon this occasion; because, though they have so noble and effectual a tendency to improve men's minds in piety, and to promote Christian edification; yet I do not remember to have heard of any instance, in which they have been the means of men's conversion; which is the less to be wondered at, as they are appointed for a very different end.

There are many, however, that have been wrought upon in prayer, as there are many things concur in this to awaken and impress the mind. The solemn acknowledgments then made of the divine perfections, the praises offered to his tremendous Majesty, the deep and humble confession of our various and aggravated guilt in his holy presence, the lamentations over it, the importunate pleadings for a variety of blessings, both for time and eternity; in a word, all the overflowings of pious affections in the breast of him that leads the devotion, and especially the earnest entreaties then offered for unconverted sinners, the genuine expressions of an undissembled apprehension of their danger, and the fervent breathings after divine grace, to be communicated to them for their spiritual life: all these things, I say, and many more, which occur in prayer, when it is managed aright, may, by the divine blessing, be singularly useful. And I am well assured, there have been happy instances, in which, while God's people have yet been speaking to him on this head, he has graciously heard and signally answered them.

But the reading, and especially the preaching, of the word, is the grand occasion and instrument in the conversion of souls. Of his own will he begets them with the word of truth: and it is admirably suited to those saving impressions which it is intended to make on the heart, being quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It was while Paul was preaching, that the Lord opened Lydia's heart, so that she attended to the things which were spoken by him: and it was while Peter was thus employed, that such vast multitudes were pricked in their hearts, and said to him, and to the rest of the apostles present, Men and brethren, what shall we do? And I am well persuaded, that, various and lamentable as the instances are, in which men stop their ears, and harden their hearts against it, God does not even to this day leave it without witness; but the terrors of the Lord, as displayed by his faithful ministers, have subdued their thousands, and the riches of his grace their ten thousands, when illustrated by those who have not only heard, but have themselves tasted, of their sweetness. The preaching of the cross may indeed to them that perish be foolishness; but blessed be his name that died upon it, there is still a happy remnant, to whom it appears to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Evangelical subjects, when opened with perspicuity, and enforced

with vigour and tenderness, by those that have experienced the transforming energy of them on their own hearts, and desire, above all things, to be wise to win the souls of others, are generally the occasion of producing the most immediate, and the most important, change: as I doubt not, but many now present have seen and felt. And the observation of every year of life convinces me more and more, that they who desire to be signally instrumental in this good work, this work, of all others, the most benevolent and important, must, in the account of a vain world, become fools, that they may be wise. How contemptuously soever it may be fashionable to treat such preaching, we must make these subjects familiar to our hearers, and must treat them with all plainness of speech, and all seriousness of address, or we shall generally labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought. Would to God, that the teachers of our Israel may consider the importance of it, and grow wise by such experiments as these! that they may act the part of prudent physicians, who prescribe the medicines they find in fact most useful, and not those concerning which the finest speculations may be framed. Till then, whatever their learning, politeness, and parade may be, it cannot be expected that our health should be generally recovered; but we are like to continue, what we have long been, a vicious people, amidst the finest encomiums of virtue, that are any where to be found: nor will there be much room to wonder, if some of its most eloquent advocates should appear, even in their own practice, insensible of those charms which they so gracefully recommend to others, and sink in their character below those heathen moralists, whom they may choose to imitate, rather than Christ and his apostles. Nevertheless I am persuaded, that if God intend mercy for us as a people, he will support among us a succession of those who shall dispense his ordinances in such a manner, as he has generally chosen to honour with success. But though the greater part of sincere converts are reduced by these, I am to add,

2. That "remarkable providences, whether merciful or afflictive," are occasions which God takes to work upon the hearts of many others.

When ordinances have long been attended in vain, God perhaps interposes, by other more peculiar and signal methods, to pluck the trifling and lethargic sinner as a firebrand out of the burning.

Sometimes remarkable mercies and deliverances accomplish the work. An appearance of God in their favour, when they are conscious to themselves that they are the unworthiest of all his creatures, shall shame and melt them, and powerfully prevail on their minds to turn unto the Lord, who daily loads them with his benefits, and thus seems, in more senses than one, to send from heaven to save them, and to draw them out of many waters, in which they had otherwise been lost.

But we more frequently see, that afflictions are the means of performing this happy work. By a gracious severity God is pleased to lay hold on many, and to give them reason to bless the hand, which, though by a rough motion, delivers them from the flames that were kindling around them, and shows the Lord to be merciful to them. Like Jonah in the ship, they are awakened by a storm, to call upon their God: like Manasseh, they are taken among the thorns, and laid in fetters, that they may be brought to know the Lord: like the jailer, they are shaken with an earthquake, and, trembling and astonished they fall down, and inquire what they shall do to be saved? The terrifying fear of the approach of death, or the distressing weight of some calamity, which threatens every moment to swallow them up in destruction, rouses their consciences to an attention to those divine truths which they had long forgotten, and open those records of guilt which they had studiously sealed up.

And there seems to be no affliction by which God more frequently works upon men than by sickness. When he weakens their capacity for the business of life, and spoils their relish for its enjoyments; when he confines them to their chambers, or even to their beds, and makes their chain strait and heavy; when he threatens to take them away in the midst of their days, to deprive them of the residue of their years, and immediately to bring them before that awful tribunal, for which they know, in their own consciences, they are so ill prepared: then do we often see the accomplishment of that observation which Elihu made so many ages ago; He chasteneth a man with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; his flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones, that were not seen, stick out; yea, his soul draweth near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers: but sending him an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him, and saith, in a spiritual as well as a literal sense, Deliver him from going to the pit, I have found a ransom. Blessed be God, instances of this kind have been known, and known among us, in which the sickness of the body has wrought the cure of the soul, under the conduct of the great Physician of both: and so has proved eminently to the glory of God, and the good of those who, for a while, have been in heaviness.

Yet it must be acknowledged, that, in other instances, the remorse which a man expresses upon a sick bed, and in the near views of eternity, proves but like that of some condemned malefactor, who, when he has obtained a pardon, throws off all those

appearances of repentance with which he had once deceived himself, and perhaps deceived others too, and plunges himself anew into capital crimes; it may be, into crimes for which he afterwards suffers death, without those compunctions of conscience which he before felt, being hardened by a return into sin, attended with such dreadful aggravations. —This has been the case of many; and I pray God it may not be thus with any of you. But if there be any among you that were once under powerful awakenings; any that have cried out of terrors on every side; that have confessed your sins, it may be, with greater freedom, and a more particular detail of circumstances, than the minister who attended you could have desired, and have resolved against them with all the appearances of the most determinate purpose; and yet, after all, have returned with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire; such have peculiar reason to be alarmed and terrified. Every day of divine patience toward such is astonishing. And if to all this have been added the returns of danger, and signal interpositions of Providence for your deliverance, and yet there be no kindly impressions of penitence and gratitude on your hearts, they who know the particulars of the case, must surely look upon you with horror as well as with wonder: for what can one imagine of such, but that they are given over by God to a darkness, which nothing but the flames of hell can enlighten, and a hardness, which nothing can penetrate but the sharpness of unquenchable fire, and the gnawings of the never-dying worm?

But to return from a digression, into which compassion towards such a deplorable case has insensibly led me, I would further observe, that as these various interpositions of a remarkable providence are often the means of working saving impressions on men's minds, so,

3. God is sometimes pleased to overrule "little and inconsiderable incidents in life," as the occasion of accomplishing this happy change.

As the treasure of the gospel was at first put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not of man; so God, to make his own praise glorious, is sometimes pleased to produce the most important effects, by causes which seem in themselves least considerable. And it is astonishing to see from how small and seemingly unpromising a seed this plant of paradise springs up, and with how little cultivation too in some instances, after Paul had long attempted in vain to plant, and Apollos to water.—A few lines in the Bible, or any other good book, perhaps taken up by chance, shall be the instrument; and a passage, on which the eye glances without expectation or design, shall strike to the heart, like an arrow from the bow of God himself, after quivers of the most pointed and polished shafts have been exhausted in vain, though such shafts were most skilfully aimed, and most vigorously discharged.—In other instances, a word dropped in conversation, and that perhaps no way remarkable either for its spirit and propriety, shall do that which the most solemn ordinances have not been capable of doing: an important encouragement, by the way, to abound in religious discourse, which God has sometimes been pleased to honour as the happy means of saving a soul from death, and laying a foundation for the delights of an everlasting friendship with those who have been so recovered.

4. Sometimes this great work is accomplished "by secret and immediate impressions from God upon the mind," without any visible means, instruments, or occasions at all.

These things do not frequently happen; nor does it seem fit they should, lest any should be encouraged to expect them in the neglect of the appointed means. Nevertheless it is plain, in fact, that God is sometimes pleased to go out of the common way; and his mighty hand is to be acknowledged in it. The reasons are known to himself; and the praise is humbly to be ascribed to him, who giveth not an account of any of his matters.

It is not, to be sure, so common now as it was in the days of Elihu, that God should speak to men in a dream, or seal instructions to them in slumberings on their bed: yet I have myself known several who have ascribed their first religious awakenings to some awful dream, in which the solemnity of the judgment-day, or a view of the invisible world, has been represented to them with unspeakable terror; and others to whom, when they have waked in the night, some words of Scripture have occurred with such power, that they have not been able to divert their thoughts to any thing else; and that, when they themselves have not certainly known whether they were in the Bible or not.

I have known those that, in the circle of their vain companions, and in the midst of their sensual delights, have been struck to the very heart with some such scripture as this; To be carnally minded is death: or such a text as this has on a sudden darted into their minds; The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Such passages have seemed to ring and thunder in their ears, till the sound of their music, and the noise of their mirth, have been quite overpowered, so that they have been driven from their revels to their knees, and have returned no more into the paths of the destroyer.

Yea, to add no more instances of this kind, I have known those of distinguished genius, polite manners, and great experience in human affairs, who, after having outgrown all the impressions of

a religious education; after having been hardened, rather than subdued, by the most singular mercies, even various, repeated, and astonishing deliverances, which have appeared to themselves no less than miraculous; after having lived for years without God in the world, notoriously corrupt themselves, and labouring to the utmost to corrupt others, have been stopped on a sudden in the full career of their sin, and have felt such rays of the divine presence, and of redeeming love, darting in upon their minds, almost like lightning from heaven, as have at once roused, overpowered, and transformed them, so that they have come out of their secret chambers with an irreconcilable enmity to those vices, to which, when they entered them, they were the tamest and most abandoned slaves; and have appeared from that very hour the votaries, the patrons, the champions of religion; and after a course of the most resolute attachment to it, in spite of all the reasonings or the railleries, the importunities or the reproaches, of its enemies, they have continued to this day some of its brightest ornaments; a change which I behold with equal wonder and delight, and which, if a nation should join in deriding it, I would adore as the finger of God.

In mentioning these things thus publicly, I do indeed take an uncommon freedom, which some may perhaps censure; but so far as human testimony can give an assurance of truth, I may justly say that I speak what I know, and testify what, in its genuine and powerful effects, I have myself seen. And since the possibility of abusing such condescensions of divine mercy did not prevent their being granted, I cannot think it ought to engage me to be silent, when so natural an opportunity offered of declaring them, to the glory of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Yet I must repeat the caution which I before suggested, that it would be madness for any to neglect God's appointed means of operation, on presumption that they shall be added to the small list of those who have been such uncommon and astonishing trophies of the efficacy and sovereignty of divine grace.

These remarks must for the present suffice, with regard to the various occasions by which God works upon men's minds; and I hope you will excuse me, if, in illustrating some of them, I have a little anticipated some things which might have been mentioned under the third head, in which I proposed,

III. To consider some varieties observable in "the manner in which divine grace operates on the mind."

And this variety, by the way, will be observable in many instances where the occasions are in general the same. Thus among those that are awakened by the word of God, or by his providence,—some are shaken by strong terrors;—some are melted down into deep sorrow;—others are astonished, as it were, and captivated at once, by the discovery of the love of God in Christ;—and others are led on by such gentle and gradual impressions, that they can hardly recollect any remarkable circumstance at all relating to the manner in which this blessed work was begun or conducted in their souls.

1. Some converts are "awakened by strong terrors."

It is obvious, that conviction of sin, in some degree or another, is absolutely necessary to make way for the entrance of the gospel into the soul. But the degrees are various in different persons; and as for those of whom we now speak, God reproves them aloud, and sets their sins in order before them, marshals them in dreadful array, as the expression imports; so that they seem like defenceless creatures surrounded with a whole host of enemies, whose weapons are raised for their destruction. Yea, God himself, the great, the terrible, the eternal, and omnipotent God, seems to set them up as a mark for those arrows, the poison of which drinketh up their spirits; and, as he himself expresses it, He is unto them as a bear, or a lion, ready to tear and rend the very caul of their heart. They come, as it were, to the trembling and terrifying mountain of Sinai, to blackness, and darkness, and tempest. The conviction of guilt is attended with such a sense of the demerit of sin, as fills them with horror and astonishment, and engages them to wish, in the bitterness of their souls, that they had never been born. They are left for a time, and that perhaps for weeks and months, to be, as it were, deafened with the loud thunders of the law: a dreadful sound, as Eliphaz expresses it, is in their ears, even the sentence of their own damnation; and the awful curse of an almighty sin-avenging God comes into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones. They are filled with such deep remorse for their past sins, that they verily think no iniquity was ever like theirs, and that no punishment will be like theirs. They hardly see a glimmering of hope that they shall obtain deliverance, but expect, in a very little while, to be sealed up under wrath, if they are not already so. When they hear the offers and the promises of the gospel, they can apply none of them to themselves, and find comfort in none: but every threatening and every curse of the book of God seems to have been written as their intended portion. And thus, perhaps, they continue for weeks or for months together, expecting every day and every night that destruction from God, which is now a terror to them, should utterly swallow them up, and leave them neither root nor branch, neither comfort nor hope. The law is a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, and it scourges them with most rigorous discipline: yea, the in-

fernal lion roars over them, though he is not permitted to devour them: he particularly terrifies them when they think of approaching God, as if they were to meet with some peculiar danger there, where alone they can find their relief: or, if they do in broken accents utter their prayer before God, it seems to be shut out, and they are apprehensive that it is turned into sin. Yet there is one thing to be observed in the midst of this scene of horror, and it is a circumstance of great importance; "that they justify God when he seems most inexorable, and subscribe to that sentence as righteous which dooms them to eternal ruin."

2. Others are "melted into deep sorrows."

Their eyes run down with tears; and they are ready to wish that their head were waters, and their eyes fountains, that they might continue to weep day and night. They see the evil of sin, and the misery to which it has reduced them, in a most deplorable view; and it may be, while those described under the former head are ready to tremble because they cannot weep, these are ready to weep because they cannot tremble. They lament, among other things, the want of those strong horrors which some have felt: they cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone; I have destroyed myself, and in myself is not my help found:" and it may be, they are a considerable time before they can persuade themselves there is any help for them, even in God. They know there is help in him through Christ for penitent and believing sinners: but they cannot easily be convinced that they believe, because they do not feel that confident trust which some others have much sooner been brought to; and they are afraid, lest whatever they experience, which looks like repentance, should be only the false appearance of it, proceeding from mere self-love, and a natural dread of future misery. They dwell perpetually on the dark side of things; they read over the catalogue of their iniquities again and again, and attend to those passages in which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against every kind and degree of sin; while they are slow of heart to admit those reviving consolations which the various rich and precious promises of the gospel are so admirably well calculated to administer.

The state of such souls, when they are first savingly enlightened, is like that of the earth, when fogs and mists have veiled the face of the sun after it is risen. But it very often happens, with respect to such souls, that when these mists are at length dispersed, a very bright and cheerful day opens; they are comforted by the warmer beams of the Sun of righteousness, according to the hours in which they have been beclouded, and are made glad according to the days in which they were afflicted; and going on to fear the Lord, and to obey the voice of his servant, though they have long walked in darkness, and seen no light, they are at length encouraged by his Spirit enforcing the exhortations of his word, to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God.

3. Some are "captivated with astonishing and delightful views of the love of God in Christ."

There is always, as we observed before, in the awakened soul some conviction of sin and apprehension of danger; nevertheless, there are instances in which God heals almost as soon as he wounds, and speaks peace almost as soon as he speaks trouble. He graciously shortens, to some souls, the pangs of the new birth, and gives them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The news of salvation by the blood, and righteousness, and grace of Christ, is received with so thankful a sense, with so joyful a compliance, that the soul, feeling beyond all doubt the cordial sincerity with which it embraces the offer, is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; the heart does magnify the Lord, and the spirit rejoices in God its Saviour.

This was remarkably the case of the jailer, who in the very night in which he was converted, that same night in which the foundation of his house had been shaken, and his own soul too shaken, by an earthquake, so that he had endeavoured to lay violent hands upon himself: yet, I say, that very night, before the day appeared, having been directed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might be saved, and been enabled, by divine grace, to comply with the exhortation, it is added concerning him, that he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.—Thus too the Thessalonians, though they received the word in much affliction, and ran the risk of losing their possessions and their lives in adhering to it, yet received it with joy of the Holy Ghost. And though I cannot say this is God's most ordinary way of dealing, and though I fear the counterfeit appearance of such a work as this often leaves men in the number of those whom our Lord represents by stony-ground hearers; yet it is certain, some instances of this kind are still to be found. But then I must observe, this is a joy attended with the deepest humility, and animates the soul to the most ardent and affectionate resolution of walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing: being strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness.

4. Others, and these perhaps the greatest part of such as are religiously educated, are "led on by such gentle and insensible degrees, that they can hardly recollect any remarkable circumstances that have attended their conversion, nor can certainly fix on the particular time of it."

God is sometimes, as in the preceding instances, in the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire; but

he is also frequently in the still small voice. The operations of the Holy Spirit on the soul are often, and perhaps generally, of such a nature, that it is difficult exactly to distinguish them from the rational exercise of our own thoughts, because the Spirit operates by suggesting rational views of things, and awakening rational affections. For whatever some have vainly and dangerously insinuated, nothing is so rational as the sentiments and temper which prevail in renewed souls, and to which it is the work of God's regenerating Spirit to bring them.

These operations, where there is a religious education, often begin very early; but then, in some degree, the impressions wear off from the weak and flexible mind; and perhaps there are various instances in which they alternately revive and decay again. And this vicissitude of affectionate applications to religion, (under moving ordinances, afflictions, or deliverances,) and of backslidings and remissness in it, may be permitted, with respect to many, to continue for a long time. At length, under the various methods of providence and grace, the soul arrives to greater steadiness, and a more habitual victory over the remainders of indwelling sin: but it may be exceeding hard, and perhaps absolutely impossible, to determine concerning some remarkable scenes through which it has passed, whether such a one in particular, perhaps the last which strikes the memory, were the season of its new birth; or whether it were merely a recovery from such a degree of negligence and remissness, as may possibly be consistent with real religion, and be found in a regenerate soul.

These balancings of backsliding and recovery often occasion very great perplexity; and such sort of converts are frequently much discouraged, because they cannot give the history of their religious experiences in so clear and distinct a manner as others; and particularly, because they have not passed through such violent terrors and agitations of mind as many, who were perhaps once sunk into much deeper degeneracy, have done. Nevertheless, where there is a consciousness of an undissembled love to God, an unreserved devotedness to his service, a cordial trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sincere affection to mankind in general, and especially to those of the household of faith, a man ought not to perplex himself on this account. For as every man knows he was born into the world, by a consciousness that he now lives and acts here, though it is impossible he should remember any thing of the time or circumstances in which he was first produced into it; so may a Christian be assured that, some way or another, he was born of the Spirit, if he can trace its genuine fruits and efficacious influences in a renewed heart and life.

I have thus laid down several particulars which appeared to me important, in order to illustrate that diversity which is observable in the methods of the divine operation on the heart; and they will naturally lead us to these three reflections, with which I shall conclude my present discourse.—Let us not make our own experiences a standard for others;—nor the experiences of others a standard for ourselves;—nor let us be unwilling, in a prudent manner, to communicate our spiritual experiences to each other.

[1.] Let us not make our own experiences a standard for others.

Let us remember that there is, as we have heard, a diversity of operations; and that many a person may be a dear child of God, who was not born just with those circumstances which attended our own regeneration. Others may not so particularly have discerned the time, the occasion, the progress of the change; they may not have felt all that we felt, either in a way of extraordinary terror or extraordinary comfort; and yet, perhaps, may equal, or even exceed, us in that holy temper, to which it was the great intention of our heavenly Father, by one method or another, to bring all his children. Nay, I will add, that Christians of a very amiable and honourable character may express themselves but in a dark, and something of an improper, manner, concerning the doctrine of regeneration; and may, in conscience, scruple the use of some phrases relating to it, which we judge to be exceeding suitable; and yet, that very scruple which displeases us may proceed from a reverence for God and truth, and from such a tenderness of heart as is the effect of his renewing grace. We should therefore be very cautious how we judge each other, and take upon us to reject those whom perhaps God has received.

I remember good Dr. Owen, whose candour was, in many respects, very remarkable, carries this so far, as somewhere to say, "that some may, perhaps, have experienced the saving influences of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, who do not in words acknowledge the necessity, or even the reality, of those influences." Judging men's hearts, and judging their states, is a work for which we are so ill qualified, that we have reason to be exceeding thankful it is not assigned to us. And when we are entering into such an examination of their character as our duty may in some particular circumstances seem to require, we should be very solicitous that we do not lay down arbitrary and precarious rules. It seems, indeed, that so far as we can learn it, we may more safely judge by their present temper and conduct, than by the history of any thing which has formerly passed in their minds.

And let me add it as a necessary caution here, that they who never felt any of the extraordinary emotions of the mind, which have been described

under some former heads, but have been brought to religion by less observable methods, perhaps by calm rational views of it, (of whom I believe there are great numbers,) should be very cautious that they do not rashly censure such things as I have now been representing, as if they were mere enthusiasm. I cannot but think this a criminal limiting the Holy One of Israel, and fear it will be found a boldness highly displeasing to him, and very injurious to the souls of those who allow themselves in it, and of others too, if they be such as are employed in the ministerial work: not now to insist on what, in comparison of this, is but a small matter, the apparent rudeness and petulancy of contradicting facts so well attested as many of this kind have been, and running counter to the solid effects which such impressions have produced. The rashness which prevails under different forms among men of the most opposite sentiments is too obvious; but if we would give ourselves leave calmly to weigh and consider matters, our spirits would be rendered on all sides more moderate, and many harsh and hasty censures would be suspended, which at present prove very little more than the ignorance, pride, and folly of those that pass them.

[2.] Let us not make the experiences of others a standard for ourselves.

This is frequently the case, and especially with those who are naturally of a humble and tender temper; for whose peace and comfort therefore one cannot but be peculiarly solicitous. Having heard of some extraordinary experiences of others, they are ready to imagine, because they can trace nothing correspondent to these in their own minds, that they are utter strangers to real regeneration, and have nothing more than such religious notions and forms, as natural men may easily learn of each other.

But what I have now been saying of the variety of the divine operations on the heart, affords a solid answer to such scruples, when they arise in a pious mind. Reflect, on this occasion, how it is in the works of nature: there we know that God works in all, so that he is the life and existence of the whole creation; and yet, as an excellent writer expresses it, "He alone seems not to work:" his agency is so invisible and secret, that, did not reason and Scripture join to teach it, one might live a great many years in the world without knowing any thing more, than that such and such effects are produced by correspondent second causes: though in strict propriety of speech they are no causes at all, but owe all their efficacy to the divine presence and operation. Sense tells us that the sun enlightens the earth, and warms it; that the rain waters it, the seeds produce vegetables, and the animals continue their proper race: but that God is the Father of lights; that he has prepared the light and the sun; that he visits the earth, and causes rain to descend into the furrows thereof, so as to make the grass to grow for cattle, and corn and herb for the service of man; that he sends forth his Spirit, and the animal race is created, and the face of the earth renewed; this, I say, is what multitudes of the human race are not aware of; because in all these things he acts in a gentle, stated, and regular manner, and employs inferior agents as the instruments of his providence. And just thus gentle, silent, and regular, are the influences of his Spirit upon men's souls; and it is often impossible exactly to distinguish them from the teachings of parents and ministers, and from those reflections which seem to spring from our own minds, though it is he that gives us counsel, while our reins instruct us in our secret musings, and that teaches us to profit by the lessons which others give us.

Be not therefore surprised, and be not dejected, though you cannot assign the place, the time, the manner, in which your conversion began; and though you are strangers to the terrors, the sorrows, or the transports of joy, which you have heard one and another express. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the Spirit dispenses his influences where and when, and in what measure and degree, he pleases: but while the way and manner of his operation may be secret and unknown, the effects of it are sensible and evident; and as with regard to the wind, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit. You may not certainly know when to fix the precise time of your conversion, or how to trace the particular steps by which it has been brought to pass; for as thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. But though you cannot trace the process of the operation, the effects of it are such as you may feel within you, and by its fruits it will be known. It is indeed desirable to be able to give an account of the beginning and the progress of the work of God upon your souls, as some that are regenerate can do; but this is not necessary to evidence the truth of grace. Happy is he who in this case can say, as the blind man in the gospel, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. For as you know that there is fire, when you see the flame, though you know not how or when it began; so also it may be discerned, that you have really undergone a saving change, though you know not how or when it was wrought in your hearts. If you answer the characters I laid down in the preceding Discourses, as essential to the truly regenerate, (which are all comprehended in repentance and faith, producing an unfeigned love and uniform obedience,) you may trace the cause from the effect

with far greater certainty than you could have traced such an effect, as what would infallibly follow from any cause which you could have perceived in your minds previous to it. There may be great awakenings, violent terrors, and ecstatic joys, where there is no saving work of God on the soul: but where the divine image is produced, and the soul is actually renewed, we are sure (as was before observed) that grace has been working, though we know not when, or where, or how.—And therefore on the whole, guarding against both these extremes, and to cure them both,

[3.] Let Christians, in a prudent and humble manner, be ready to communicate their religious experiences to each other.

God undoubtedly intended that the variety of his operations should be observed and owned in the world of grace, as well as in that of nature; and as these things pass in the secret recesses of men's hearts, how should they be known, unless they will themselves communicate and declare them? And let me caution you against that strange averseness to all freedoms of this kind, which, especially in persons of a reserved temper, is so ready to prevail. Let not any think it beneath them to do it. You well know that David, who was not only a man of an admirable genius, but a mighty prince too, was far from thinking it so; on the contrary, deeply impressed with the divine condescension in all the gracious visits he had received from him, he calls, as it were, the whole pious world around him, that they might be edified and comforted by the relation: "Come," says he, "and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." He proclaimed it, not with his voice and harp alone, but with his immortal pen: and many other noble and excellent persons concurred with him; and the invaluable treasure of their experiences, in as great a variety of circumstances as we can well imagine, is transmitted to us in the book of Psalms. Can any just reason then be assigned, why they who live under a nobler dispensation, and a more abundant communication of the Spirit, should be entirely silent on this subject?

There may, indeed, be an over-forwardness, which is the apparent effect of pride and self-conceit, and which, with thinking people, may bring even the sincerity of the speaker into question, or put his indiscretion beyond all possibility of being questioned. But it would be very unreasonable to argue, that because a thing may be done ill, it cannot possibly be done well.

Why may not intimate friends open their hearts to each other on such delightful topics? Why may not they, who have met with any thing peculiar of this kind, communicate it to their minister? And though I must in conscience declare against making it absolutely and universally a term of communion, yet I am well assured, that, in some instances, a prudent and serious communication of these things to a Christian society, when a person is to be admitted into fellowship with it, has often answered very valuable ends. By this means God has the honour of his own work; and others have the pleasure of sympathizing with the relater, both in his sorrows and his joys: they derive from hence too, additional satisfaction as to his fitness for an approach to the Lord's table; they learn with pleasure the divine blessing which attends the administration of ordinances among them; and make observations and remarks which may assist them in offering their addresses to God, and in giving proper advices to others who are in circumstances like those related. To all which we may add, that the ministers of Christ do, in particular, learn what may be a means of forming them to a more experimental manner of preaching, as well as in many instances discover those, before unknown, tokens of success which may strengthen their hands in the work of their great Master.

It is by frequent conversations of this kind, that I have learnt many of the particulars on which I have grounded the preceding discourse. I hope therefore you will excuse me, if, on so natural an occasion, I have borne my public testimony to what has been so edifying to me, both as a minister and a Christian. And the tender regard which I have for young persons training up for the work of the ministry, and my ardent desire that they may learn the language of Sion, and have "those peculiar advantages which nothing but an acquaintance with cases, and an observation on facts, can give," has been a further inducement to me to add this reflection, with which I conclude my discourse; humbly hoping that what you have heard upon this occasion will, by the divine blessing, furnish out agreeable matter for such conversation as I have now recommended, to the glory of God, and to the advancement of religion among you. *Amen.*

SERMON XXX.

DIRECTIONS TO AWAKENED SINNERS.

Acts ix. 6.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

These are the words of Saul, who also is called Paul, when he was stricken to the ground as he was going to Damascus: and any one who had looked upon him in his present circumstances, and known

nothing more of him than that view, in comparison with his past life, could have given, would have imagined him one of the most miserable creatures that ever lived upon earth, and would have expected that he should very soon have been numbered amongst the most miserable of those in hell. He was engaged in a course of such savage cruelty, as can, upon no principle of common morality, be vindicated, even though the Christians had been as much mistaken, as he rashly and foolishly concluded they were. After having dragged many of them into prison, and given his voice against some that were put to death, he persecuted others into strange cities; and had now obtained a commission from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to carry this holy, or rather this impious, war into Damascus, and to bring all the proselytes to the religion of the blessed Jesus bound from thence to Jerusalem; probably that they might be there animadverted upon with greater severity than could safely have been attempted by the Jews in so distant a city, under a foreign governor.

But behold, as he was in the way, Jesus interposes, clothed with a lustre exceeding that of the sun at noon. He strikes him down from the beast on which he rode, and lays him prostrate on the ground, calling to him with a voice far more dreadful than that of thunder, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Any one would have imagined, from the circumstances in which he now beheld Saul, that divine vengeance had already begun to seize him, and that full execution would quickly have been done. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts. Christ laid him almost as low as hell, that he might raise him as high as the third heaven; of which he afterwards gave him a view in vision, to anticipate his reception into it. This day of his terror and astonishment was, in a nobler sense than any other, the day of his birth; for he is brought to bow himself at the foot of an injured Saviour, to offer him, as it were, a blank upon which to write his own terms of peace: and as soon as he heard that this glorious person was Jesus, whom, in his members, he had so long persecuted, he makes his submission in these lively comprehensive words, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—This was not a time for a long speech; but he that discerns all the secret recesses of the Spirit, knew these few words were full of a most important meaning, and expressed not only a grief of heart, for all that he had before been doing against Christ and his kingdom, but the sincerest resolution for the future to employ himself in his service, waiting only the intimations of his wise and gracious will, as to the most proper and acceptable manner of beginning the attempt.

There is, methinks, a poignant kind of eloquence in this short expression, far beyond what any paraphrase upon it can give: and our compassionate Lord accepted this surrender. All his former rebellions were no more remembered against him; and before he rose from the ground, to which he fell on so terrible an occasion, Christ gave him an intimation, not only that his forfeited life should be spared, so that he should get safe into the city to which he was bound, but that he should there be instructed in that service which Jesus, whom he had persecuted, would now condescend to receive at his hands.

I represent the case thus largely, because I hope it is a case which, in some measure, suits the experience of some that hear me this evening. Paul tells us, it was for this reason, among others, that he himself obtained mercy, though he was the chief of sinners, that in him, as the chief, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should afterwards believe.

Is there then, in this assembly, any awakened and convinced sinner; any one that, apprized of his folly, and sensible of his misery, is desirous to fall at the foot of Christ, and say with Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? That which I see not, teach thou me; and wherein I have done iniquity, I will do so no more!"—To such would I now especially address: and while I put the question, Is there any such among us? I would fain persuade myself, there are several: for I humbly hope, that all the labours that have been bestowed in the preceding Discourses are not in vain, nor all the prayers that have been offered for their success in vain; prayers which, I doubt not, have been carried by many of you into your families and your closets, as well as jointly presented to God in this public assembly. Trusting therefore that it is thus with some, and praying that it may be a more frequent case, I proceed,

Sixthly, To give some directions to such who are awakened by divine grace to a sense of their misery in an unregenerate state, and are brought to desire recovery from it.

To such I propose to give directions: and to what purpose would it be to undertake to offer them to any others? Who would pretend to teach those who are unconcerned about their salvation, what methods they are to take in order to their becoming truly regenerate? This, methinks, would be like giving directions how those might learn to write who do not desire it, and will not take a pen into their hands. All I could say to such, while they continue in this character, would vanish into empty air: it would not, probably, be so much as observed and remembered. I speak therefore to awakened souls, and to such it is pleasant to address on this head. Ananias undoubtedly undertook this message to Saul with cheerfulness, to tell him what Christ

would have him to do: and I would with pleasure and cheerfulness engage in the like work, humbly hoping, that some will hear with observation and attention, will hear for themselves, and so hear for their good. And to this purpose let me advise you, —to attend to the impressions that have been made upon you with great seriousness,—to break off every thing that is contrary to them,—to seek for further knowledge in religious matters,—to pour out your souls before God in earnest prayer,—to communicate the state of your case to some experienced Christian,—to acquaint yourselves with such as are much in your own circumstances,—to fly immediately to Christ, as ready to receive all that come to him,—to dedicate yourselves to him, and to his service, in the most solemn manner,—to arm yourselves to encounter with the greatest difficulties in your Christian course,—and finally, to take every step in this attempt with a deep sense of your own weakness, and a humble dependence upon divine grace to be communicated to you as the matter requires. These are the several directions I would offer to you: and may they be impressed in such a manner on your souls, that none of you may lose the things that have been wrought, but by the effectual working of the mighty power of God, such as he graciously has been pleased to bring to the birth, may be brought forth, and such as are awakened may be savingly renewed!

1. I would advise you to "attend to the impressions made upon you with great seriousness."

They may perhaps take you a little off the world and its concernments; and some will blame you for suffering such an interruption: but regard not that censure. The time will come, if you pursue these things aright, when renewed diligence, prudence, and the divine blessing, will amply make amends for any present hinderance which these impressions may occasion. And if it should be otherwise, were there not a cause? If a man seized with a threatening distemper should choose, for a little while, to lay aside his usual business, that he might attend to the care of his health, before the symptoms grew incurable, would any body blame him for this? On the contrary, would it not be looked upon as acting a very wise, prudent, and necessary part? Much more may it be said here—It is not a light thing for you, because it is your life: and if the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, then surely the soul is more to be regarded than either. And therefore, what you do in your worldly affairs, do moderately; and do not grudge that retirement which is so necessary in such a tender circumstance as this.—I may apply to you, on this occasion, those words of Solomon; Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. If you desire to attain divine wisdom, you must separate yourself from all other things to pursue it.—And it is the more necessary to attend to this now, because the *tempter* may probably contrive to lay some more than ordinary avocation in your way, at a time when the interest of his kingdom requires you should be diverted from prosecuting those views which are presenting themselves to you, and by which you may so probably be rescued out of his hands, and put for ever out of his power.

2. Let me advise you to "break off every thing which is contrary to such impressions as these."

Sin will immediately appear to have been your disease and your ruin: and therefore, if ever you hope for recovery, you must resolutely break with that; not merely with this or that particular evil, but with every sin; and that not only for a little while, but entirely and for ever. A mortal irreconcilable war must be declared against it. Every fleshly lust must be denied, every immoral practice, for which your heart may at any time smite you, must be reformed; and if ever you expect to reap mercy and life, you must, as the prophet expresses it, break up your fallow ground, and not sow among thorns. For righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, and light no communion with darkness. And you may be assured, that as all sin grieves the Spirit of God, and strengthens the heavy fetters which lie upon the soul; so those sins which are committed after these awakenings and convictions, have a peculiar guilt attending them, and do greater despite to the Spirit of grace, in proportion to the degree in which his motions on the soul have been vigorous and warm.

3. "Seek further knowledge," especially from the word and ordinances of God.

The influences of divine grace are not to be considered as a blind impulse; but God's Spirit works on the spirit of man, as one rational being on another. The apostle, therefore, puts the question with great reason, How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And as some knowledge is the foundation on which the Spirit of God ordinarily operates in men's hearts: so in proportion to the degree in which you attain further light into the scheme of the gospel, and of salvation by Christ, it may be expected you will be more impressed by it. The mention of this is so much the more necessary, as mistaken notions of religion often expose people, on the one hand, to great perplexities, and on the other, betray them into a false peace, which one way or another will be bitterness in the end. Come therefore to the house of God, and attend spiritual preaching. The question is not about forms, but things. Be not, therefore, over-scrupulous about what is merely circumstantial in religion, on the one hand or the other; but where you find most spiritual light and improvement, there choose generally to attend; not confin-

ing religion to any particular party, nor judging those who differ from you in their sentiment or practice; but calmly and humbly seeking your own edification, leaving others to seek theirs where they are persuaded, in the sight of God, they may most probably find it.—Above all, remember, in this circumstance, to make the word of God the man of your counsel, and to judge of what you read and hear by the tenor of that, as the oracle of eternal truth; always attending the reading of it with earnest prayer to God for the illumination of his Spirit, as I shall afterwards more particularly direct.—No other books are to be set up in opposition to this, or in comparison with it; yet let it be your care, in subordination to Scripture, to study the writings of those faithful servants of God in latter ages, who themselves manifest a sense of practical religion. Especially endeavour to find out and peruse those writings which treat of conversion and regeneration, and which contain advice suited to your case. Blessed be God, our language abounds with such; and every truly Christian minister will be glad to direct you to them, and so far as he has a convenient opportunity, to furnish you with them.

4. "Pour out your soul before God in earnest prayer."

You cannot be unacquainted with the many promises God has made in Scripture, for the encouragement of those who desire to pray to him in the sincerity of their hearts. You know into how little a compass Christ has crowded together three equivalent promises;—Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: and you cannot but remember the three-fold encouragement, from the success of those who have recourse to this expedient, which he has added in the most express and general terms;—For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Go, therefore, in a cheerful dependence upon this promise; go, and try the truth of it. Whither should a creature in such circumstances go, but to that God, who has the hearts of all in his hand as the rivers of water, and turns them whithersoever he will? And who should go to him, rather than you? And in what circumstances should a distressed creature rather think of looking and crying to him, than in these; where it sees itself surrounded with so much danger, and yet feels an inward earnest desire, not only of deliverance, but of holiness too?—Go, therefore, and cast yourself at the feet of God this very evening; do it as soon as you return to your habitations: and if you cannot put your thoughts and desires into words, at least sigh and groan before the Lord. Mourn, if you cannot pray; and mourn that you cannot; or rather be assured, that unutterable groanings have sometimes the greatest efficacy, and prove the most prevailing eloquence.

It will be no wonder at all, if, in these circumstances, Satan should endeavour to terrify you. It is his common practice. So many souls have vanquished him, upon their knees, that he dreads and hates the posture; but draw an argument from that very opposition to make you so much the more eager and importunate: when your heart is overwhelmed within you, fly unto the Rock that is higher than you.

I will add, be not discouraged, though help be not immediately imparted. Though you may seem to be cast out of God's sight, yet look again towards his holy temple: though you seem to cry from the deeps, and almost from the belly of hell, the bowels of a heavenly Father will yearn over you as returning prodigals; and I doubt not you will meet with the reception that Ephraim found, when God saw him bemoaning and humbling himself, because he had been as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; when he cried, Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God: his heavenly Father answers him in these most affectionate words; attend to them, O thou returning sinner, for thy comfort in this hour of distress! Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, and I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

5. I would advise you further, that you "immediately communicate the state of your case to some experienced Christian."

I know there is a backwardness in persons of your circumstances to do it; and it has been surprising to me, to learn from the converse of some, who, in this respect, have afterwards grown wiser, how long they have been pining away in their sorrows before they could be persuaded to consult their ministers or Christian friends. It is a stratagem of Satan, against which I would by all means caution you. And one would think your own reason should suggest some very obvious advantages attending the method I propose, of opening your case freely to those whom you think to be more experienced in these things. The impression may be revived upon your own souls, even by the account you give them; and their advice may be exceeding useful to you, to guard you against the wiles of the enemy which they have known, though hitherto you are strangers to them; and to guide you into such methods as, by the divine blessing, may further promote that good work which seems, in any measure, to have been begun within you. You may also depend upon it, that it will engage their prayers for you, which, in this case, may have great prevalency. And it will also naturally lead them to inspect your conduct; and if they see you afterwards in danger

of being drawn aside, they may remind you of the hopes once entertained, and the impressions once made upon your mind.—In this respect you may hope, that by walking with wise men you will be yet wiser; and will soon find how happy an exchange you make, when you give up your vain, and perhaps wicked, companions, that you may become the companion of them that fear God, and that keep his precepts; and may have your delight in them, who, in the judgment of God, are the excellent of the earth, however they may be despised and derided by men.

6. I would also advise that you "endeavour to search out those, if there be any such about or near you, who are much in your own circumstances."

Observe, especially among young people, whether there are any that seem of late to have grown more serious than ordinary; and particularly more constant in attending the ordinances of God, and more cautious in venturing on occasions and temptations to sin: and if you can discover such, endeavour to form an acquaintance with them. Try, by proper hints, how far their circumstances resemble yours; and as you find encouragement, enter into a stricter friendship with them, founded on religion, and intended to promote it in each other's hearts. Associate yourselves in little bands for Christian converse and prayer; and by this means you will quicken and strengthen the hearts of each other. For, on the one hand, what they tell you of their own experience, will much confirm you in a persuasion that what you find in yourselves is not a mere fancy, but is really a divine work begun on your hearts, and will give you encouragement to pursue it as such; for, as face answers to face in water, so does the heart of man to man: and, on the other hand, the observation of your pious zeal will quicken others, and may occasion the revival of religion in the hearts of elder Christians; as, I bless God, I have found some things of this kind have done, and hope (and through the divine blessing expect) to find it more and more. Therefore, exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; and be assured that, while you are endeavouring to help others, you will find in yourselves the first fruits of this happy attempt, and while you water others, you will be watered also yourselves.

7. It is an advice of the highest importance, that, "whoever you are, you should immediately fly to Christ, and repose the confidence of your souls upon him."

Observe that I urge you, whoever you are, to fly immediately to Christ; and this I do to guard against a strange notion which some are ready to entertain, as if we were to bring something of our own righteousness and obedience to him, to render us worthy of being accepted by him. But this is a grand mistake. The blessings of the gospel are not to be considered as matter of bargain and sale: no, if we come to buy wine and milk, it must be without money and without price; and whoever will take of the water of life, must do it freely. If he pretend to offer an equivalent, he forfeits his share in the invitation, and must be made to know, that the price he offers is a great affront to the value of the blessings for which he would thus barter.—Let this then be your language, "Lord, I have undone myself, and in me is no help: I see nothing in myself which makes me worthy of thy regard; but this I know, that where sin has abounded, grace does much more abound, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ; through whom thou hast assured me in thy word that eternal life is the gift of God. As such let me receive it; and by how much the more undeserving I have been, by so much the more will I celebrate the riches of thy grace in making me a vessel of mercy, and a monument of love, throughout all eternity.—Blessed Jesus, thou hast said, that him who comes unto thee thou wilt in nowise cast out: behold, I come and cast myself at thy feet; receive me, and put me among the children, though I deserve not the very crumbs that fall from thy table."

You will not I hope imagine, that when I give such advice as this, I mean to insinuate that a person, purposing to continue in his sins, may nevertheless come and receive the blessings of the gospel; for that would be no other than in the grossest manner to pervert and contradict the whole tenor of it. But this I say, and repeat it, that when once a sinner finds himself by divine grace disposed to turn from his sins to God, and made willing to accept the mercy tendered in the gospel, of which a deliverance from sin and a renovation of nature are a great, important, and essential, part; he may with cheerfulness apply himself to the great Redeemer, as one of those whom he came on purpose to deliver; and in proportion to the degree in which he can discern the sincerity of his sentiments, he may open his heart to comfort, how great soever his former unworthiness has been, and how lately soever such impressions may have been made upon his heart.

8. "Make the dedication of yourselves to Christ and his service as solemn a thing as you can."

We read in the *Acts* of some that were baptized, and publicly received into the church the very same day in which they were converted: and though a change of circumstances may at present render it convenient to defer doing it for some time with the solemnity of the ordinance of the *Lord's supper*, which is peculiarly intended for that purpose; be-

cause it is proper that the efficacy of your repentance and conversion should first of all be so far seen, as in the judgment of charity to approve the sincerity of it: yet I think, when you feel your hearts absolutely determined for God, you should in a solemn manner lay hold of his covenant, in secret at least, as soon as possible; and declare, as before him that searcheth all hearts, the sincerity of that acceptance.—Some have recommended the doing this in a written engagement; and there are several very affecting forms of this kind in books on this subject, which may very profitably be used. But I hope the fulness of your heart will dictate something of this kind, if such helps should be wanting, or if any peculiar considerations should prevent their being used.—And surely, if you feel the love of the blessed Jesus glowing in your hearts as you ought, you will need no other engagement to yield yourselves to him: that love will be instead of ten thousand arguments; and you will see a secret charm in the view of serving him, which will engage your very soul to spring forward with vigour and eagerness to every proper instance of it. The dread of future punishment has certainly its use to restrain from the commission of sin, especially in an hour of pressing temptation; and the hope of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory which the gospel promises, will have a greater efficacy upon a generous mind: yet I will venture to say, that a heart powerfully impressed with the love of Jesus, will have a yet stronger influence than either of these. Cordial friendship needs not to be hired to perform its proper office. Love is a law to itself; it adds a delightful relish to every attempt for the service of its object; and it is most evidently thus in the present case. "Lord," will the Christian say, "wilt thou do me the honour to accept any feeble attempt for thy service which I can form? I thank thee for it, and bow my head before thee in the most grateful acknowledgments, that thou favourest me with an ability to discharge, in any degree, the fulness of my grateful heart in presenting them: O that my whole soul might daily rise before thee as an acceptable sacrifice in the flame of love! O that I might always feel my heart enlarged to run the way of thy commandments! Were the degree of my future happiness from this moment invariably fixed, I would still pursue this delightful business; for there is no other in which my soul could find a pleasure equal or comparable to it." If you feel such thoughts as these rising in your mind, breathe them out before the throne from day to day; and when you have done it, recollect frequently the vows of God that are upon you; and see, that having sworn, you perform it, and maintain in the whole of your lives a conduct agreeable to such a profession as this.

9. "Gird up the loins of your mind, to encounter with a great deal of difficulty in your Christian course."

Many are the difficulties that you must expect; great, and possibly for a while increasing, difficulties. It is commonly said indeed, that those difficulties which attend the entrance on a religious life, are the greatest; and in themselves considered, no doubt but they are so: they arise from many quarters, and unite all together in the same design of keeping you from a believing application to Christ, and a resolute closure with him. In this respect, evil sometimes arises to a man in his own house: and those whose near relation should rather engage them to give the young convert the best assistance, where his most important interests are concerned, are, on the contrary, ready to lay a stumbling-block in his way; and perhaps act as if they had rather he should have no religion at all, than change a few circumstances in the outward profession of it. Worldly interest too is perhaps to be sacrificed; and conscience cannot be preserved without giving up the friendship of those whom at any other expense but conscience a man would gladly oblige. And it is no wonder if Satan make his utmost efforts, and those very unwearied too, that he may prevent the revolt of these subjects, or rather the escape of his prisoners. The Christian is, therefore, called upon by the apostle, to arm himself as for a combat, and that at all points; to put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand.

Nor must you, my friends, though as soon as you have put on your harness you gain some important victory, boast as if you might securely put it off. Your whole life must be a series of exercise. Through much opposition, as well as much tribulation, you must enter into the kingdom of God; and though your difficulties may generally be greatest at first, yet your encouragements then may perhaps be so peculiarly great, and your spirits under their first religious impressions so warm, that other difficulties, in themselves smaller, may press more sensibly upon you. Endeavour therefore to keep yourselves in a prepared posture: put on a steady resolution; and to support it, sit down and count the cost, lest having begun to build, you shamefully desist, and be not able to finish it; or having put your hand to the plough, you should look back, and become unfit for the kingdom of God. And therefore,

10. "Let every step in this attempt be taken with a deep sense of your own weakness, and a humble dependence upon divine grace to be communicated to you as the matter requires."

Recollect seriously what I was telling you in a former Discourse, of the necessity of the divine agency and interposition; and remember, it depends upon God, not only to begin the good work,

but also to carry it on, and perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. If we trust in our own hearts, especially after this solemn admonition, this plain instruction, added to such frequent experience, we are fools indeed. Let us therefore trust in the Lord, and not lean to our own understanding. And do you, my friends, who have but just listed yourselves in this holy war, every one of you say, with a humble, yet cheerful, heart, In the name of our God will we set up our banners. And if thus you wait on the Lord, you shall renew your strength; and even the feeblest soul shall be enabled by divine grace to mount up with wings as eagles, and to press on from one degree of religious improvement to another; while the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. The apostle expresses, in the liveliest manner, his dependence on the divine Redeemer to communicate this grace in a proper degree, when he says, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need;" plainly implying, that it may be obtained if we have but hearts to seek for it; which, as on the one hand, it effectually takes off all idle excuses for the neglect of our duty, pleaded from our own acknowledged weakness any further than we are supported by the divine power; so on the other hand, it animates the heart, that, sensible of its various infirmities, desires nevertheless to go forth to the work of God, and to consecrate all its faculties to his service; using them, such as they are, for God, and humbly seeking from him the enlargement of them.

Go therefore, my friends, into the divine presence; and, while under a sense of this, be not discouraged, though mountains of opposition may lie in your way. Those mountains shall be made low, and spread themselves into a plain before you; while you go forth under the influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who is able to make all grace abound to his people. Of this *Paul* in our text was a most celebrated instance, who not only received, as was here promised, directions what he should do, but had strength also given him to perform it; a strength which was made perfect and illustrious in his weakness: and when, in consequence of this, he had attained to a very distinguishing improvement in religion, and had been enabled to act up in the most honourable manner, not only to the Christian character in general, but to that of a minister and an apostle, he acknowledges, in all his abundant labours, that it was not he, but the grace of God that was with him.

If it be thus with you, my brethren, you will be established and built up in your most holy faith. The most agreeable hopes we form concerning you, when we see you under such serious impressions as this discourse supposes, will be answered, and they who have spoken to you the word of God, on such occasions as these, will have the pleasure to think that they have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.

And now, if these directions, which I have offered to you with great plainness and freedom, but with the sincerest desire of your edification and establishment in religion, be seriously pursued, I shall have the satisfaction of thinking, that, though I might find you in the number of the unregenerate when I began these Lectures, I shall carry you on along with me through the only head that yet remains to be handled; and shall indeed address myself to you, as those who were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord, when I proceed to address those who have been renewed by divine grace, which I promised as my last general, and with which shall conclude my discourses on this important subject.

SERMON XXXI.

AN ADDRESS TO THE REGENERATE FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING DISCOURSES

JAMES i. 18.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

I INTEND the words, which I have now been reading, only as an introduction to that address to the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, with which I am now to conclude these Lectures; and therefore shall not enter into any critical discussion, either of them, or of the context. I hope God has made the series of these Discourses, in some measure, useful to those for whose service they were immediately intended: but if they have not been so to all, and if with relation to many I have laboured in vain from sabbath to sabbath, I cannot be surprised at it. What am I better than my fathers? It has, in every age, been their complaint, that they have stretched out their hands all the day to a disobedient and gainsaying people; that the bellows have been burnt, and the lead consumed of the fire, but the dross has not been taken away: such reprobate silver have multitudes been found. Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who spake with such unequalled eloquence, with such divine energy, yet met with multitudes, who were like the deaf adder, that would not hearken to the voice of the wisest charmer: and surely the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

When indeed we consider the infinite importance of the message we address to you, O ye perishing

sinners! we hardly know how to give over, or to take a denial. We feel a strong impulse on our hearts to give line upon line, and precept upon precept: as a physician that loves his patient, when he sees the distemper prevailing, and has run through the whole range of medicines, is ready, while life yet remains, not entirely to give over, but to repeat again what he had prescribed unsuccessfully before. And if God spare our lives, no doubt many of those things which I have before been urging, must, in substance, be repeated. But at present I will desist: I know not what more or further to say; and if you are utterly unimpressed with what I have already laid before you, especially with regard to the character of the unregenerate,—the nature of regeneration,—the absolute necessity of it,—and of the divine agency in producing it;—I know not what further to urge, and must leave you either to the grace or the judgment of God. The time will certainly come, when you will see and own the importance of these things. The word of God will, in one sense or another, take hold of every soul that hears it, and perhaps on some of you in a very terrible manner, and in a very little time. But if it do, I may say with the apostle Paul, when, in token of the solemnity with which he spoke, he shook his raiment, and took leave of his obstinate hearers, I am clean from your blood; and since you refuse to be instructed, I turn to those who will regard what I say. And thus, according to the method I at first proposed, I proceed,

Seventhly, To conclude these discourses with an address to those who, by divine grace, are experimentally acquainted with this great work of regeneration; to show them how they ought to be affected with the consideration of the truths that have been offered, and what improvement they should make of such a course of sermons as you have lately been attending.

Out of a general regard to the glory of God, and the good of souls, you have attended on what has hitherto been spoken to persons of a very different character; and I hope not altogether without some sensible refreshment and advantage: but now hear more immediately for yourselves, and suffer a word of exhortation in such particulars as these,—Be thankful to God for what you have experienced;—improve it as an engagement to behave in a suitable manner,—study to promote the work of God upon the hearts of others;—and long for that blessed world where the change that is now begun, and is gradually advancing, in your souls, shall be universal and complete.—Your own wisdom and piety have, no doubt, prevented me in each of these particulars; but you will be glad to enter more fully into the reflection than you could do, while it was intermingling itself with other thoughts.

[1.] "Return the most affectionate acknowledgments of praise to the God of all mercy, for the experience you have had of a regenerating change."

I would now address this exhortation and charge to every one of you, who, through divine grace, hope you can say, that you are born again; to all who can say, that God has, of his own will, begotten you with the word of truth, that you may be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. To you I would say, "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness and goodness." "Give thanks to the Father, who has made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Join your voices and your hearts in the most cheerful hymns of praise, whatever your different circumstances are. Let the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the honourable and the mean, rejoice together; if any may be called poor, who are thus enriched; if any may be accounted mean, who are thus honoured. Bless the Lord at all times, let his praise be continually in your mouths; and endeavour to carry along with you, through the darkest road you travel, and the bitterest sorrows you taste, cheerfulness in your hearts, and praise on your tongues; considering—how important the blessing is with which the Lord has favoured you;—how few there are who partake of it;—and in the midst of how much opposition the divine grace has taken hold of your souls, and wrought its wonders of love there.

1. Consider, my Christian friends, "how important this favour is which God has bestowed upon you, in thus begetting you as a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."

Justly indeed may I say, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be regenerated by his grace, and so be called, and that with propriety, the sons of God! Justly may I say to you, now you are assembled in the courts of the Lord, in those emphatical words of David, O come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker: for it is he that has made us, and not we ourselves, with regard to this second, as well as the first, creation; and we, in consequence of it, are in the noblest sense his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter therefore, into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

My brethren, it is a favour in which the salvation of your souls is concerned; and can that be small? or ought it ever to be thought of but with the highest emotion and enlargedness of heart? The gracious purposes of God towards his children are, to make every one of them higher than the kings of the earth, to give them more solid satisfaction than crowns and kingdoms can afford, and at length to raise them to a diadem of immortal glory. O what reason have you, with the apostle, to say, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who,

according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, even to the hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation! Survey this great privilege which God has already given you, this high security, these glorious hopes. Has he not brought the beginning of glory already into your souls? Has he not wrought you to a filial temper, and taught you to cry, Abba, Father? Has he not, in some measure, formed and fashioned your minds to a meetness to dwell with angels and perfected spirits in heaven? So that you can now say, even with relation to that which you already feel, that you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. You are even now the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what you shall be; but there is enough appears, and enough known, at present, of what you shall be, and of what you are, to revive, to delight, to transport the heart.

And is not this too, O thou afflicted soul, who art called to encounter with the most painful difficulties, enough to be the means of thy support, and to afford thee matter for thy strong consolation? You that are tossed with tempests, and obliged to struggle under various and long-continued burthens, have you not here a joy that the world can neither bestow nor impair, a pleasure in public and in secret duties, and a hope which is, as the anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the veil, and so enabling you to outride these storms and tempests? How glorious does your lot appear when viewed in the light of Scripture? You are expressly told, All things are yours: the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from you: all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to you; and ere long you shall see how they are so. You have a sight by faith of the inheritance appointed for his children; but he does not intend merely a distant prospect for you: you shall go in, and possess that good land, and shall ere long be absent from the body, and present with the Lord: yea, the Lord Jesus Christ, ere long, shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, to be glorified and admired, in and by you in particular; when bearing the image of your heavenly Father, you shall rise far beyond this earth, and all its vain anxieties, and vainer amusements, to dwell for ever in his presence. And what is there in this world that you imagine you want, which is by any means to be compared with these enjoyments and hopes? Surely, Sirs, in such a view, you should be much more than content; and should feel your inward admiration, love, and joy, bursting the bonds of silence, and tuning your voices, that have been broken by sighs, into the most cheerful and exalted anthems of praise: especially when you consider,

2. "How few there are that partake of this important favour, which God has extended to you."

I hope I need not, after all I have said, remind you at large, that I intend not by any means to speak, as excluding those of different forms and different experiences; as if, in consequence of that diversity, they had neither part nor lot in this matter. I hope that many who are not so ready, as it were to be wished, to receive one another, are nevertheless, in this respect, received by Christ to the glory of God. Yet the temper and conduct of the generality of mankind, even under a Christian profession, too plainly shows, that they have the marks of eternal ruin upon them: and one can form no hope concerning them, consistent with the tenor of the whole word of God, any other than this, that possibly they may hereafter be changed into something contrary to what they are, and in that change be happy.

Now, that you are not left among the wide extended ruins of mankind, but are set as pillars in the building of God, is what you have been taught by the preceding Discourses to refer to the grace of God, which has taken and polished you to the form you now bear: or, as the evangelist expresses it, in language more suitable to the subject before us, The power, or privilege, to become the sons of God, is what he gives to as many as receive him; and it is manifest as to your regeneration, that you are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; for we love him because he first loved us: and whatsoever our attainments be, there is no true believer but will be ready, with the apostle Paul, to say, By the grace of God I am what I am.

And now, when these two thoughts are taken in this comparison with each other, how deeply should they impress our minds! and how should it excite us to the most lively gratitude, to consider, that when so many of our fellow-creatures perish, even under the sound of the gospel; that when they live and die under the power of a corrupt and degenerate nature, despising all the means which God has given them of becoming better, and turning them into the occasion of greater mischief; God should graciously incline our hearts to a wiser and better choice! It is indeed a melancholy reflection, that the number of those who are made wise to salvation should be so small; yet it is an endearing circumstance in the divine goodness to us, that when it is so small we should be included in it: as no doubt it would appear to every truly religious person in the ark, that when but eight souls were saved from the deluge, he should be one. There is now a remnant, says the apostle, according to the election

of grace: to that grace therefore should we render the praise. We have indeed chosen him; but it is in consequence of his choosing us. We have said, The Lord is my portion; but let us remember to bless him, that he has given us that counsel, in consequence of which we have been inclined to do it. Again,

3. Consider, "in the midst of how much opposition the grace of God has laid hold on your souls, and wrought its wonders of love there."

Christians, look into your own hearts; yea, look back upon your own lives, and see whether many of you have not reason to say, with the great apostle, It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief: and yet to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should be a regenerate adopted child of God, begotten to an inheritance of eternal glory.

"O," may one Christian say, "how obstinately did I strive against my own happiness! like a poor creature, that having received some dangerous wound, and being delirious with a fever attending it, struggles with the hand that is stretched out to heal him. How did I draw back from the yoke of God! How did I trifle with convictions, and put them off from one time to another! So that God might most righteously have awakened any heart rather than mine. He admonished me by his word, and by his providence; he sent afflictions; he wrought out deliverances for me; and yet I went on to harden my heart, as if I had been afflicted, and delivered, that I might work greater abominations; till the Lord being merciful unto me, laid hold upon me, and drew me out of Sodom."

And here another Christian will be ready to say within himself, "If the grace of God wrought sooner upon me when my soul was more pliant, when my heart was comparatively tender, in infancy or childhood, or in early youth; yet what ungrateful returns have I since made for his mercy! How defective have I been in those fruits of holiness which might reasonably have been expected from me, who have so long a time been planted in the house of the Lord! Alas for me! that I have flourished no more in the courts of my God. How often have I forgotten and forsaken him, how cold and negligent has my spirit been, how inconstant my walk, how indolent my behaviour, for these many years that have passed since I was first brought into his family! How little have I done in his service in proportion to the advantages I have enjoyed! All this he foresaw; all the instances in which my goodness would be as a morning cloud, and as the early dew; all the instances in which this perverse, heart of mine, so prone to backslide, should turn aside, and start back from him like a deceitful bow: and yet he has mercy upon me, I know not why: I cannot pretend to account for it any otherwise than by saying, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight: thou hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy, and thou hast compassion on whom thou wilt have compassion. I have revolted deeply from thee again and again; yet thou sufferest me not to be lost to this very day, nor wilt thou ever suffer it: Thou restorest my soul; thou leadest me in the paths of righteousness for thy name's sake. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue to this day: and surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and unworthy as I am so much as to enter into thy house below, I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever above. Thus, Lord, thou makest me, as it were, a wonder to myself; and I hope to express my admiration and my gratitude throughout eternal ages: and if I can vie with the rest of thy redeemed ones in nothing else, I will at least do it in bowing low before thy throne, and acknowledging that I am of the number of the most unworthy, in whom my Lord has been pleased to glorify the riches of his mercy, and the freedom of his grace."

In the mean time, Christians, I call you, often to entertain yourselves with such views as these, often to excite your hearts by such lively considerations: I call you, in the name of your Father and your Saviour, to a whole life of gratitude and praise. And this leads me to add,

[2.] "Improve those experiences you have had of divine grace, as an engagement to behave in a suitable manner."

Remember the lively admonition of the text, that you were begotten by him for this very purpose, that you should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. See, therefore, that you be entirely consecrated to him, and behave as becomes the children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; being not only harmless and blameless among them, but shining as lights in the world, and holding forth that word of life, by which he has begotten you to himself, and quickened you when you were dead in trespasses and sins. God has now brought you into a most honourable relation: he may, therefore, well expect more, much more, from you than from others. He has made you priests to himself, and you are therefore to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. You were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk therefore as children of light. Remember you are not your own; your time, your possessions, and all your capacities for service, are the property of your heavenly Father.—And permit me to remind you, that if you desire to see this doctrine of regeneration prevail, you, who pretend to be experimentally acquainted with it, must take care that your behaviour may not only be innocent,

but exemplary: otherwise many will be ready to blaspheme the holy name of that God, whom you call your Father; and you are like to bring a reproach upon the household of faith, which probably you will never be able to roll away.

Christians, the dignity of our birth and our hopes is too little considered and regarded: and the reason why the world thinks so meanly of it, is because we ourselves are so insensible of its excellency. Did we apprehend it more, we should surely be more solicitous to walk worthy of that calling wherewith we are called, that high and holy calling. Let me therefore exhort you to endeavour to loosen your affections more from these entanglements of time and sense, which so much debase our minds, and dishonour our lives. Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; employing with a growing zeal, to the honour of God, that renewed life which he has given you. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds: and let your conversation and behaviour be like those who feel the constraining influences of divine love; who are, not in form, but in reality, devoted to God; and who would be continually waiting for his salvation, with that temper in which you could most desire that salvation to find you when it comes.

[3.] Let those who have experienced the power of divine grace themselves, "study to promote the work of God upon the hearts of others."

Labour, as much as possible, to spread this temper which God has wrought in your hearts; for you cannot but know that with it you spread true happiness, which alone is to be found in that intercourse with the great Author of our being, for which this lays a foundation, and in the regular exercise of those powers which are thus sanctified. No sooner was Paul converted himself, but he presently set himself to bring others to Christ, and to preach the faith which once he destroyed. And David speaks of it as the effect of God's pardoning love to him, Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

If, therefore, God has called us to the office of the ministry, as the experience of this change on our own hearts will be our best qualification for our public work, (and indeed such a qualification that nothing else can supply the want of it,) so it will surely excite us in a very powerful manner to apply vigorously to this care. That which we have not only heard, but seen with our eyes, and looked upon, and handled of the word of life, let us declare to others; that their fellowship also may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Let us declare it in our public discourses, and never be ashamed to bear our testimony to that grace to which we are so much indebted, to that grace by which we are what we are. Let us warn every man, and teach every man the absolute necessity of regeneration; and expose the vanity of all those hopes which are built upon any fair outside, on any moral decency of behaviour, on any humane turn of temper, on any warm flight of imagination or emotion of passions, while the soul continues unrenewed and unsanctified. Let us endeavour to save men with fear, pulling them out of the fire, which, if they are yet unregenerate, is just ready to kindle upon them. And let us be often reviewing our respective flocks, that we may see who they are, concerning whom there is reason to entertain this fear; that proper applications may be made to them in private, as well as in public; that joining our admonitions to our sermons, and our prayers and examples to both, we may at least deliver our own souls, if we cannot deliver theirs. But, in proportion to the degree that such a spirit prevails in us, there is very great encouragement to hope it will be propagated to them, and that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

And let me beseech you, my beloved hearers in other stations of life, that you would not imagine the work is so entirely ours, that you have nothing to do with it. Are we alone redeemed by the blood of the Son of God? Are we alone renewed and sanctified by his grace? Are we alone the brethren and friends of mankind, that the generous care and endeavour to promote their eternal happiness should be entirely devolved upon us? We wish so well to the world, and permit us to say, we wish so well to you, to your own religious consolation and establishment, to your comfortable account, to your eternal reward, that we cannot but earnestly exhort you all, even as many as have tasted that the Lord is gracious, that in this respect you join, not only, as I trust you do, your prayers with ours, but that you also join your endeavours.

Let me particularly address this exhortation to those of you who bear any distinguished office in the society, to whom therefore its religious interests are dear by additional ties. Let me address those of you whose age and experience, in the human and the divine life, give you something of a natural authority in your application, and command a distinguished regard. Look round about you, and observe the state of religion in your neighbourhood; and labour to the uttermost to propagate not so much this or that particular opinion, or form of worship, but real vital Christianity in the world. Bear your testimony to it on all proper occasions: be not ashamed of it in your familiar discourse; and above all, labour to adorn it by your actions. And when you see any under serious impressions, as it is certain they will have a great deal discouraging and difficult to break through; and as the devil and his instruments, among whom I must necessarily reckon licentious company, will be doing their utmost to

draw them back into the snare of the fowler; let me exhort and charge you to be as solicitous to save as others are to destroy. I know how many excuses our cowardly and indolent hearts are ready to find out upon such an occasion; but I think those words of Solomon are a sufficient answer to all, and I beg you would seriously revolve them; If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul (thine, O Christian, with such peculiar and gracious care,) doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? He will assuredly remember, and will abundantly reward, every work of faith, and every labour of love; and we are insensible of our own truest interest, if we do not see how much it is concerned here.

Let me especially leave this exhortation with you, who are parents and heads of families. And one would imagine there should need but little importunity in such a case as this; one would think your own hearts should speak to you, upon such an occasion, in very pathetic language. Look upon your dear children, to whom you have conveyed a nature which you know to be degenerate and corrupt; and be earnest in your prayers before God, and your endeavours with them, that it may be renewed. And take care that you do not in this sense despise the soul of your man-servant, or of your maid-servant. God has brought them under your care, it may be, in those years of life in which, on the one hand, they are most capable of being instructed and seriously impressed; and in which, on the other hand, they are also most in danger of being corrupted. Perhaps their relation to you, and abode with you, is the most advantageous circumstance which may occur in their whole lives: see, therefore, that you seize it with a holy eagerness; and amidst all the charges you give them relating to your own business, neglect not that of the one thing needful; and labour heartily to bring them to the honour and happiness which is common to all God's servants, and peculiar to them alone.

Let me conclude this part of my address with entreating you all to express your concern for the souls of others, by your importunate prayers to God for them. Pray for the success of gospel ordinances; and for a blessing on the labours of all God's faithful servants throughout our whole land, of one or another denomination in religion. Yea, pray that throughout the whole world, God would revive his work in the midst of the years; that the religion of his Son, by which so many souls have been regenerated, refined, and saved, may be universally propagated; and that all who are vigorously engaged in so important, though so self-denying, a work, may find that the hand of the Lord is with them, and so multitudes believe and turn unto the Lord; so that his sons may be brought from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth; that the barren may rejoice, and she that did not travail with child, may break forth into singing, and cry aloud; that the children of nations now strangers to Christ, may be more than of those that are already espoused to him. And then,

[4.] Let all that are born again, "long for that blessed world, where the work of God shall be completed, and we shall appear with a dignity and glory becoming his children."

As for God, his work is perfect; and the time, the happy time, is approaching, when we shall know, and the whole world shall know, in another manner than we now do, what our heavenly Father has intended for us in begetting us to himself.—Whatever our attainments here may be, we know at present but in part; and with whatever integrity of soul we now walk before God, we are sanctified but in part: and hereupon we find, and must expect to find, the flesh striving against the Spirit, as well as the Spirit against the flesh; so that, in many respects, we cannot do the things that we would: and in proportion to the degree in which our nature is refined and brightened, we are more sensible of the evil of these corruptions that remain within us; so that though we are not, in a strict propriety of speech, carnal and sold under sin, but do indeed delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet in the humility of our hearts we are often borrowing that pathetic complaint, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"—But let it be remembered, Christians, as the matter of your joy, that the struggle shall not be perpetual, that it shall not indeed be long. Look up with pleasure then, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh: the time is approaching, when that which is perfect shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away. You are now the children of God: but it does not appear to every eye that you are so: the world knows us not, nor are we to wonder at it; for even Christ our Lord was once unknown, and appeared in so much meanness, and so much calamity, that an undiscerning and carnal eye could not have discovered who and what he was. But there is a day appointed for the manifestation of the sons of God, (as the apostle Paul most happily expresses it,) when he will manifest them to each other, and manifest them also to the whole world. They shall not always live thus at a distance from their Father's house, and under those dispensations of Providence, that look so much like disregard and neglect; but he will take them home, and gather them to himself. Ere long, Christians, he will call these heaven-born spirits of yours, that are now

aspiring towards him, to dwell in his immediate presence: he will receive you to himself; and you shall stand where no sinner shall have a place, in the congregation of the righteous, and shall have an inheritance among the saints in light, the saints in holiness and glory. O happy day! when dropping this body into the grave, we shall ascend pure and joyful spirits to that triumphant assembly, where there is not one vitiated affection, not one foolish thought, to be found among the thousands and ten thousands of God's Israel! O blessed period of a regenerate state! Though all the schemes of the divine love were to rest here, and these bodies were for ever to be laid aside, and utterly to be lost in the grave; the rejoicing soul might say, "Lord, it is enough!" And it might be indeed enough for us; but it is not enough to answer the gracious purposes of God's paternal love. God will show, in the most conspicuous manner, what a family he has raised to himself among the children of men; and therefore he will assemble them all in their complete persons, and will do it with solemn pomp and magnificent parade. He will, for this purpose, send his own Son, with all his holy angels, and will cause the bodies of millions of his children, that have long dwelt in the dust, to spring out of it at once in forms of beauty and lustre, worthy their relation to him. This therefore is, with beautiful propriety, called by the apostle the adoption, even the redemption of our body; alluding to the public ceremony, with which adoptions among the ancients were solemnly confirmed and declared, after they had been more privately transacted between the parties immediately concerned.

O Christians, how reasonable is it that our souls should be rising with a secret ardour towards this blessed hope, this glorious abode!—It is pleasant for the children of God to meet and converse with one another upon earth; so pleasant, that I wonder they do not more frequently form themselves into little societies, in which, under that character, they should join their discourses and their prayers.—It is delightful to address to those that, we trust, through grace are born of God. No discourses are more pleasant than those that suit them; and could we, that are the ministers of Christ, reasonably hope, that we had none but such to attend our labours, we should joyfully confine our discourses to such subjects.—Yet, while we are here, we see imperfections in others, we feel them yet more painfully in ourselves; and as there is no pure unmixed society, no fellowship on earth that is completely holy and without blemish, so there is now no pure delight, no perfect pleasure, to be met with here.—O, when shall I depart from this mixed society, and reach that state where all is good, all glorious? where I shall see my heavenly Father, and all my brethren in the Lord; and shall behold them all for ever acting up to their character! All giving thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light! All for ever blessing and serving the great Redeemer; and without one ungenerous action, one reflecting word, one suspicious thought, for ever serving each other in love, rejoicing in each other's happiness, and with the most prudent and stedfast application for ever studying and labouring to improve it!

With the most earnest desire that you, my dear brethren and friends, may at length attain to this state of perfection and glory; and with a cheerful expectation, through divine grace, that I shall, ere long, meet many of you in it; I close this Sermon, and these Discourses: not without a humble hope, that when we arrive at this blessed world, these hours which we have spent together in the house of God in attending them, will come into a pleasant remembrance; and that the God of all grace, to whose glory they are faithfully devoted, and to whose blessing they are humbly committed, will honour them as the means of increasing his family, as well as of feeding and quickening those who are already his regenerate children! Amen.

SINGLE SERMONS,

AND

DISCOURSES ON PARTICULAR OCCASIONS.

PRACTICAL SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE CARE OF THE SOUL THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

ADVERTISEMENT.

As I would not willingly incur the censure of being over-forward in publishing so plain a Sermon on so common a subject, I beg leave to inform the reader of the occasion that determined me to do it.

The following Discourse was first preached to a very numerous auditory at the funeral of a young person, who being seized on a sudden with a violent and mortal illness, which nevertheless did not destroy the exercise of her reason, was deeply impressed with a sense of her eternal interest, and expressed that sense in a manner which affected me as much as any thing of that nature which I had ever seen; not only recommending the text to me, but also charging this one thing needful on her brother and sisters in my hearing, with a solemnity and earnestness, which I hope neither they nor I shall ever forget. But I imputed the remarkable attention with which the Sermon was heard, and the kind notice which was afterwards taken of it by many, to that awful circumstance, rather than to any thing in the Discourse itself.

I had afterwards the honour to preach it, with some proper alterations, before some worthy and excellent persons of considerable rank and eminence in life, who are not ashamed publicly to own, that religion is their greatest concern. They were pleased to express such satisfaction in the seriousness and plainness with which this important subject was handled, that they urged me, with an earnestness which I did not at all expect, to let them have some printed copies of it, that they might disperse them amongst their tenants and servants. I think too highly of these valuable friends to prefix their names to so inconsiderable a performance, which would do a great honour to a book, far superior to any I can ever hope to present them with. But as I am well assured of their continued candour towards me, so I hope the authority of their command will be allowed as a sufficient apology for this publication.

We are so near the eternal state, and must so soon be silent in the dust, that methinks nothing which looks like a call of Providence, directing to any opportunity of doing good to the souls of men, should be neglected. And if these obvious but weighty truths may, through the concurrence of divine grace, be made useful for the conversion of one of the lowest of those for whose service this Discourse was asked and transcribed, I shall think this little labour abundantly repaid, even though many others should say, as they probably will, that I have made a little addition to the number of unnecessary books with which the world is already encumbered.

LUKE x. 42, former part.

One thing is needful.

It was the amiable character of our blessed Redeemer, that he went about doing good. This great motive, which animated all his actions, brought him to the house of his friend Lazarus, at Bethany, and directed his behaviour there. Though it was a season of recess from public labour, our Lord brought the sentiments and the pious cares of a preacher of righteousness into the parlour of a friend; and there his doctrine dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew, on the little happy circle that were then surrounding him. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, with great delight made one amongst them; she set herself down at the feet of Jesus, in the posture of a humble disciple; and we have a great deal of reason to believe, that Martha, his other sister, would gladly have been with her there

but domestic cares pressed hard upon her, and she was cumbered with much serving, being, perhaps, too solicitous to prepare a sumptuous entertainment for her heavenly Master, and the train that attended him. Happy are they, that in a crowd of business do not lose something of the spirituality of their minds, and of the composure and sweetness of their tempers! This good woman comes to our Lord with too impatient a complaint; insinuating some little reflection, not only on Mary, but on himself too. Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. Our Lord, willing to take all opportunities of suggesting useful thoughts, answers her in these words, of which the text is a part, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her, *q. d.* Alas, Martha! the concerns of the soul are of so much greater importance than those of the body, that I cannot blame your sister on this occasion: I rather recommend her to your imitation, and caution you, and all my other friends, to be much on your guard, that in the midst of your worldly cares, you do not lose the sight of that which so much better deserves your attention.

I shall consider the words, *one thing is needful*, as a kind of aphorism, or wise and weighty sentence, dropped from the mouth of our blessed Redeemer, and evidently worthy of our most serious regard. In handling them I shall,

I. Consider what we are to understand by the *one thing* here spoken of.

II. Show you what is intended when it is represented as the one thing *needful*.

III. I will show how justly it may be so represented, or prove that it is indeed the one thing needful.

IV. Conclude with some reflections and application.

My friends, the words which are now before us are, to this day, as true as they were seventeen hundred years ago. Set your hearts to attend to them. O that you might, by divine grace, be awakened to hear them with a due regard, and might be so impressed with the plain and serious things which are now to be spoken, as you probably would, if I were speaking by your dying beds, and you had the full exercise of your reason, and the near and lively view of eternity!

I. I am briefly to consider what we are to understand by the *one thing needful*.

Now I answer, in a few words, It is the care of the soul, opposed, as you see in the text, to the care, *i. e.* the excessive care, of the body, for which Martha was gently admonished by our Lord. This is a general answer, and it comprehends a variety of important particulars, which it is the business of our ministry often to open to you at large. The care of the soul implies a readiness to hear the words of Christ, to set ourselves, with Mary, at his feet, and to receive both the law and the gospel from his mouth. It supposes, that we learn from this divine Teacher the worth of our souls, their danger, and their remedy; that we become above all things solicitous about their eternal salvation; that, heartily repenting of all our sins, and cordially believing the everlasting gospel, we receive the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and life, resting our souls on the value of his atonement, and the efficacy of his grace. It imports the sincere dedication of ourselves to the service of God, and a faithful adherence to it, notwithstanding all the oppositions arising from inward corruptions, or outward temptations, and a resolute perseverance in the way of gospel dependence, till we receive the end of our faith in our complete salvation. This is the one thing needful, represented indeed in various Scriptures by various names. Sometimes it is called regeneration, or the new creature, because it is the blessed work of God's efficacious grace; sometimes the fear of God; and sometimes his love, and the keeping his commandments: and very frequently in the New Testament it is called faith, or receiving Christ, and believing on him, which therefore is represented as the great work of God, *i. e.* the great thing which God in his glorious gospel requires, as well as by his Spirit produces in us: each of these, if rightly understood and explained, comprehends all that I have said on this head. On the whole, we may say, that, as the body is one, though it has many members, and the soul is one, though it has many faculties; so, in the present case, this real, vital religion is *one* thing, one sacred principle of divine life, bringing us to attend to the care of our souls, as of our greatest treasure. It is *one* thing, notwithstanding all the variety of views in which it may be considered, and of characters under which it may be described. I proceed,

II. To consider what may be intended in the representation which is here made of it, as the one thing needful.

Now I think it naturally includes these three particulars: It is a matter of universal concern,—of the highest importance,—and of so comprehensive a nature, that every thing which is truly worthy of our regard may be considered as included in it, or subservient to it. Let me a little illustrate each of these particulars, reserving the proof of what I now assert to the third general, where it will abundantly appear.

1. The care of the soul may be called the one thing needful, "as it is matter of universal concern."

Our Lord, you see, speaks of it as needful in the general. He says not for this or that particular person; or for those of such an age, station, or circumstance in life, but needful for all. And indeed, when discoursing on such a subject, one might properly introduce it with those solemn words of the Psalmist, Give ear, all ye people, hear, all ye inhabitants of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor together. For it is the concern of all, from the king that sits upon the throne, to the servant that grindeth at the mill, or the beggar that lieth upon the dunghill. It is needful for us that are ministers, for our own salvation is concerned. And woe, insupportable woe will be to our souls, if we think it enough to recommend it to others, to talk of it in a warm, or an awful, manner, in public assemblies, or in our private converse; while it does not penetrate our hearts as our own greatest care. Our case will then be like that of the Israelitish lord in Samaria, who was employed to distribute the corn when the siege was raised, seeing it with our eyes, and dispensing it with our hands, we shall ourselves die miserably, without tasting the blessings we impart. It is needful to all you that are our hearers, without the exception of one single person. It is needful to you that are rich, though it may on some accounts be peculiarly difficult for you; even as difficult, comparatively speaking, as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle: yet if it be neglected, you are poor in the midst of all your wealth, and miserable in all your abundance; and a wretch starving for hunger, in a magnificent palace and a rich dress, would be less the object of compassion than you. It is needful for you that are poor; though you are distressed with so many anxious cares, what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed. The nature that makes you capable of such anxieties as these, argues your much greater concern in the bread which endures to eternal life, than in that by which this mortal body must be supported. It is needful for you that are advanced in years, though your strength be impaired so that the grasshopper is a burthen; though you have by your long continuance in sin rendered this great work so hard, that were it less important, one would in pity let you alone without reminding you of it: yet, late as it is, it must be done, or your hoary heads will be brought down to the grave with wrath, and sink under a curse aggravated by every year and every day of your lives. It is needful to you that are young, though solicited by so many gay vanities to neglect it; though it may be represented as an unseasonable care at present, yet I repeat it, it is needful to you; immediately needful, unless you who walk so frequently over the dust of your brethren and companions, that died in the bloom and vigour of their days, have made some secret covenant with the grave for yourselves, and found out some wonderful method, hitherto unknown, of securing this precarious life, and of answering for days and months to come, while others cannot answer for one single moment.

2. The care of the soul is "a matter of the highest importance;" beyond any thing which can be brought into comparison with it.

As Solomon says of wisdom, that it is more precious than rubies, and that all things which can be desired are not to be compared with her; so may I properly say of this great and most important branch of wisdom, whatever can be laid in the balance with it, will be found altogether lighter than vanity. This is strongly implied when it is said, in the text, One thing is needful; *q. d.* one thing, and one thing alone, is so. Just as the blessed God is said to be only wise, and only holy, because the wisdom and holiness of angels and men is as nothing, when compared with his. What seems most great and most important in life, what kings and senates, what the wisest and greatest of this world, are employing their time, their councils, their pens, their labours upon, are trifles, when compared with this one thing. A man may subsist, he may in some considerable measure be happy, without learning, without riches, without titles, without health, without liberty, without friends, nay, though the life be more than meat, and the body than raiment, yet may he be happy, unspeakably happy, without the body itself. But he cannot be so in the neglect of the one thing needful. I must therefore bespeak your regard to it in the words of Moses, It is not a light thing, but it is your life.

3. The care of the soul is of so comprehensive a nature, that "every thing truly worthy of our regard may be considered as included in it, or subservient to it."

As David observes, that the commandment of God is exceeding broad, so may we say of this one thing needful; and, as Solomon very justly and emphatically expresses it, to fear God and to keep his commandments is the whole of man; his whole duty, and his whole interest; and every thing which is wise and rational does in its proper place and connexion make a part of it. We should judge very ill concerning the nature of this care, if we imagined, that it consisted merely in acts of devotion, or religious contemplation; it comprehends all the lovely and harmonious band of social and humane virtues. It requires a care of society, a care of our bodies, and of our temporal concerns; but then all is to be regulated, directed, and animated, by proper regards to God, Christ, and immortality. Our food and our rest, our trades and our labours, are to be attended to, and all the offices of humanity performed in obedience to the will of God, for the glory of Christ, and in a view to the

improving the mind to a growing meetness for a state of complete perfection. Name any thing which has no reference at all to this, and you name a worthless trifle, however it may be gilded to allure the eye, however it may be sweetened to gratify the taste. Name a thing which, instead of thus improving the soul, has a tendency to debase and pollute, to enslave and endanger it, and you name what is most unprofitable and mischievous, be the wages of iniquity ever so great; most foul and deformed, be it in the eyes of men ever so honourable, or in their customs ever so fashionable. Thus I have endeavoured to show you what we may suppose implied in this expression of one thing being needful. I am now,

III. To show you with how much propriety the care of the soul may be represented under this character, as the one thing needful, as a matter of universal and most serious concern, to which every thing else is to be considered as subservient, if at all worthy of our care and pursuit. Now let me appeal to the sentiments of those who must be allowed most capable of judging,—and to the evident reason of the case itself, as it must appear to every unprejudiced mind.

1. Let me argue "from the sentiments of those who must be allowed most capable of judging in such an affair," and we shall quickly see that the care of the soul appears to them the one thing needful.

Is the judgment of the blessed God according to truth? How evidently and how solemnly is that judgment declared! I will not say merely in this or the other particular passage of his word, but in the whole series of his revelations to the children of men, and the whole tenor of his addresses to them. Is not this the language of all, from the early days of Job and Moses to the conclusion of the canon of Scripture? If wisdom be hid from the eyes of all the living, surely God understandeth the way thereof, he knoweth the place thereof; and if he does, it is plainly pointed out; for unto man he still saith, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding. By Moses he declared to the Israelites, that to do the commandments of the Lord would be their wisdom and their understanding in the sight of the nations, who should hear his statutes, and say, Surely this is a wise and an understanding people. When he had raised up one man on the throne of Israel, with the character of the wisest that ever lived upon the face of the earth, he chose to make him eminently a teacher of this great truth. And now all that he spoke on the curious and less concerning subjects of natural philosophy is lost, though he spoke of trees, from the cedar to the hyssop, and of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes: that saying is preserved in which he testifies that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and those proverbs, in almost every line of which they who neglect God and their own souls are spoken of as fools, as if that were the most proper signification of the word: while the religious alone are honoured with the title of wise. But in this respect, as attesting this truth in the name of God and in his own, a greater than Solomon is here.

For if we inquire what it was that our Lord Jesus Christ judged to be the one thing needful, the words of the text contain as full an answer as can be imagined; and the sense of them is repeated in a very lively and emphatical manner, in that remarkable passage wherein our Lord not only declares his own judgment, but seems to appeal to the consciences of all, as obliged by their own secret convictions to subscribe to the truth of it. What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? If it were once lost, what would he not be willing to give to redeem it? But it depends not on the words of Christ alone. Let his actions, his sufferings, his blood, his death, speak what a value he set on the souls of men. Is it to be imagined that he would have relinquished heaven, that he would have dwelt upon earth, that he would have laboured by night and by day, and at last have expired on the cross, for a matter of light importance? Or can we think that he, in whom dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was mistaken in judgment so deliberately formed, and so solemnly declared?

If after this there were room to mention human judgment, and testimonies, how easy would it be to produce a cloud of witnesses in such a cause, and to show that the wisest and best of men in all ages of the world have agreed in this point, that amidst all the diversities of opinion and profession, which succeeding generations have produced, this has been the unanimous judgment, this the common and most solicitous care of those, whose characters are most truly valuable, to secure the salvation of their own souls, and to promote the salvation of others.

And let me beseech you seriously to reflect, what are the characters of those who have taken the liberty, most boldly and freely, to declare their judgment on the contrary side? The number of such is comparatively few; and when you compare what you have observed of their temper and conduct, I will not say with what you read of holy men of old, but with what you have yourselves seen in the faithful, active, and zealous servants of Christ, in these latter ages, with which you have conversed, do you on the whole find that the rejectors and deriders of the gospel, are in other respects so much more prudent and judicious, so much wiser for themselves, and for others that are influenced by them, as that you can be in reason obliged to pay any

great deference to the authority of a few such names as these, in opposition to those to which they are here opposed?

But you will say, and you will say it too truly, though but a few may venture in words to declare for the neglect of the soul and its eternal interest, the greater part of mankind do it in their actions. But are the greater part of mankind so wise, and so good, as implicitly to be followed in matters of the highest importance? and do not multitudes of these declare themselves on the other side, in their most serious moments? When the intoxications of worldly business and pleasures are over, and some languishing sickness forces men to solitude and retirement, what have you generally observed to be the effect of such a circumstance? Have they not then declared themselves convinced of the truth we are now labouring to establish? Nay, do we not sometimes see that a distemper which seizes the mind with violence, yet does not utterly destroy its reasoning faculties, fixes this conviction on the soul in a few hours, nay, sometimes in a few moments? Have you never seen a gay, thoughtless creature, surprised in the giddy round of pleasures and amusements, and presently brought not only to seriousness, but terror and trembling, by the near views of death? Have you never seen the man of business and care interrupted, like the rich fool in the parable, in the midst of his schemes for the present world? And have you not heard one and the other of them owning the vanity of those pleasures and cares, which but a few days ago were every thing to them; confessing that religion was the one thing needful, and recommending it to others with an earnestness, as if they hoped thereby to atone for their own former neglect? We that are ministers frequently are witnesses to such things as these, and I believe few of our hearers are entire strangers to them.

And once more, what if to the testimony of the dying we could add that of the dead? What if God were to turn aside the veil which separates between us and the invisible world, and to permit the most careless sinner in the assembly to converse for a few moments with the inhabitants of it? If you were to apply yourself to a happy spirit, that trod the most thorny road to paradise, or passed through the most fiery trial, and to ask him, "Was it worth your while to labour so much, and to endure so much, for what you now possess?" Surely, if the blessed in heaven were capable of indignation, it would move them to hear that it should be made a question. And on the other hand, if you could inquire of one tormented in that flame below, though he might once be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, if you could ask him, "whether his former enjoyments were any equivalent for his present sufferings and despair?" What answer do you suppose he would return? Perhaps an answer of so much horror and rage, as you would not be able so much as to endure. Or if the malignity of his nature should prevent him from returning any answer at all, surely there would be a language even in that silence, a language in the darkness, and flames, and groans of that infernal prison, which would speak to your very soul what the word of God is with equal certainty, though less forcible conviction, speaking to your ear, that one thing is needful. You see it is so in the judgment of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; of the wisest and best of men; of many, who seemed to judge most differently of it, when they come to more deliberate and serious thought; and not only of the dying, but of the dead too, of those who have experimentally known both worlds, and most surely know what is to be preferred. But I will not rest the whole argument here, I add therefore:

2. I appeal "to the evident reason of the case itself, as it must appear to every unprejudiced mind," that the care of the soul is indeed the one thing needful.

I still consider myself as speaking not to Atheists, or to Deists, but to those who not only believe the existence and providence of God, and a future state of happiness and misery, but likewise who credit the truth of the Christian revelation, as many undoubtedly do, who live in a fatal neglect of God and their own souls. Now on these principles a little reflection may be sufficient to convince you,—that it is needful to the present repose of your own mind;—needful if ever you would secure eternal happiness;—if ever you would avoid eternal misery, which will be aggravated, rather than alleviated, by all your present enjoyments.

(1.) The care of the soul is the one thing needful, because "without it you cannot secure the peace of your own mind, nor avoid the upbraidings of your conscience."

That noble faculty is, indeed, as you are often told, the vicegerent of God in the soul. It is sensible of the dignity and worth of an immortal spirit, and will sometimes cry out of the violence that is offered to it, and cry so loud, as to compel the sinner to hear, whether he will or no. Do you not sometimes find it yourselves? When you labour most to forget the concerns of your soul, do they not sometimes force themselves on your remembrance? You are afraid of the reflections of your own mind, but with all your artifice, and all your resolution, can you entirely avoid them? Does not conscience follow you to your beds, even if denied the opportunity of meeting you in your closets, and there, with an unwelcome voice, there warn you, "that your soul is neglected, and will quickly be lost!" Does it not follow you to your shops and your fields, when you are busiest there? Nay, I will add, does

it not sometimes follow you to the feast, to the club, to the dance, and perhaps, amidst all resistance, to the theatre too? Does it not sometimes mingle your sweetest draughts with wormwood, and your gayest scenes with horror? So that you are like a tradesman, who, suspecting his affairs to be in a bad posture, lays by his books and his papers, yet sometimes they will come accidentally in his way. He hardly dares to look abroad for fear of meeting a creditor or an arrest; and if he labours to forget his cares and his dangers, in a course of luxury at home, the remembrance is sometimes awakened, and the alarm increased, by those very extravagances in which he is attempting to lose it. Such, no doubt, is the case of some of your minds, and it is a very painful state; and while things are thus within, external circumstances can no more make you happy, than a fine dress could relieve you under a violent fit of the stone. Whereas if this great affair were secured, you might delight in reflection, as much as you now dread it; and conscience, your bitterest enemy, would become a delightful friend, and the testimony of it your greatest rejoicing.

(2.) The care of the soul is the one thing needful, "because without it you cannot possibly secure your eternal happiness."

A crown of everlasting glory is not surely such a trifle as to be thrown away on a careless creature, that will not in good earnest pursue it. God doth not ordinarily deal thus, even with the bounties of his common providence, which are comparatively of little value. As to these, the hand of the diligent generally makes rich, and he would be thought distracted, rather than prudent, who should expect to get an estate merely by wishing for it, or without some resolute and continued application to a proper course of action for that purpose. Now, that we may not foolishly dream of obtaining heaven in the midst of a course of indolence and sloth, we are expressly told in the word of God, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force; and are therefore exhorted to strive, with the greatest intenseness and eagerness of mind, as the word properly signifies, to enter in at the strait gate, for this great and important reason, because many shall another day seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Nay, when our Lord makes the most gracious promises to the humble petitioner, he does it in such a manner as to exclude the hopes of those who are careless and indifferent. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. If therefore you do not ask, seek, and knock, the door of mercy will not be opened, and eternal happiness will be lost.

And, surely, if I could say no more as to the fatal consequences of your neglect, than this, that eternal happiness will be lost, I should say enough to impress every mind that considers what eternity means. To fall into a state of everlasting forgetfulness might indeed appear a refuge to a mind filled with the apprehension of future misery. But oh, how dreadful a refuge is it! Surely, it is such a refuge as a vast precipice, from which a man falling would be dashed to pieces in a moment, might appear to a person pursued by the officers of justice, that he might be brought out to a painful and lingering execution. If an extravagant youth would have reason to look round with anguish on some fair and ample paternal inheritance, which he had sold or forfeited merely for the riot of a few days, how much more melancholy would it be for a rational mind to think, that its eternal happiness is lost for any earthly consideration whatever! Tormenting thought! had I attended to that one thing which I have neglected, I might have been great and happy, beyond expression, beyond conception. Not merely for the little span of ten thousand thousand ages, but FOR EVER. So that the moment would have come, when, if it had been asked concerning me, "How long has that glorious spirit been an inhabitant of heaven? how long has it been enjoying God and itself in that state of perfection?" —the answer would have been such, that a line reaching even to the remotest star, would not have been able to contain the number of ages, nor would millions of years have been sufficient to figure them down. This is eternity, but I have lost it, and am now on the verge of being. This lamp, which might have outlasted those of the firmament, will presently be extinguished, and I blotted out from amongst the works of God, and cut off from all the bounties of his hand. Would not this be a very miserable case, if this were all? And would it not be sufficient to prove this to be the better part, which, as our Lord observes, can never be taken away? But God forbid that we should be so unfaithful to him, and to the souls of men, as to rest in such a representation alone. I therefore add, once more,

(3.) The care of the soul is the one thing needful, because "without it you cannot avoid a state of eternal misery, which will be aggravated, rather than alleviated, by your present enjoyments."

Nothing can be more evident from the word of the God of truth. It there plainly appears to be a determined case, which leaves no room for a more favourable conjecture or hope. The wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God. They shall go away into everlasting punishment, into a state where they shall in vain seek death, and death shall flee from them. O Sirs, it is a certain, but an awful, truth, that your souls will be thinking and immortal beings, even in spite of themselves. They may indeed torment, but they cannot destroy, themselves. They can no more sus-

pend their power of thought and perception, than a mirror its property of reflecting rays that fall on its surface. Do you suspect the contrary? Make the trial immediately. Command your minds to cease from thinking but for one quarter of an hour, or for half that time, and exclude every idea and every reflection. Can you succeed in that attempt? Or rather, does not thought press in with a more sensible violence on that resistance; as an anxious desire to sleep, makes us so much the more wakeful. Thus will thought follow you beyond the grave; thus will it, as an unwelcome guest, force itself upon you, when it can serve only to perplex and distress the mind. It will for ever upbraid you, that, notwithstanding all the kind expostulations of God and man, notwithstanding all the keen remonstrances of conscience, and the pleadings of the blood of Christ, you have gone on in your folly, until heaven is lost, and damnation incurred; and all for what?—a shadow and a dream.

O think not, sinners, that the remembrance of your past pleasures, of your success in your other cares, whilst that of the one thing needful was forgotten, think not that this will ease your minds. It will rather torment them the more. Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things. Bitter remembrance! Well might the heathen poets represent the unhappy spirits in the shades below, as eagerly catching at the water of forgetfulness, yet unable to reach it. Your present comforts will only serve to give you a livelier sense of your misery, as having tasted such degrees of enjoyment; and to inflame the reckoning, as you have misimproved those talents lodged in your hands for better purposes. Surely, if these things were believed, and seriously considered, the sinner would have no more heart to rejoice in his prosperity, than a man would have to amuse himself with the curiosities of a fine garden, through which he was led to be broke upon the rack.

But I will enlarge no further on these things. Would to God that the unaccountable stupidity of men's minds, and their fatal attachment to the pleasures and cares of the present life, did not make it necessary to insist on them so frequently and so copiously!

IV. I proceed to the reflections which naturally arise from hence, and shall only mention two.

1. How much reason have we to lament the folly of mankind in neglecting the one thing needful.

If religion be indeed the truest wisdom, then surely we have the justest reason to say, with Solomon, that folly and madness is in men's hearts. Is it the one thing needful? Look on the conduct of the generality of mankind, and you would imagine they thought it the one thing needless; the vainest dream and the idlest amusement of the mind. God is admonishing them by ordinances, and providences, sometimes by such as are most awful, to lay it to heart; he speaks once, yea twice, yea a multitude of times, but man regards it not. They profess perhaps to believe all that I have been saying, but act as if the contrary were self-evident; they will risk these souls, and this eternity, for a thing of nought, for that for the sake of which they would not risk so much as a hand, or a finger, or a joint, no, nor perhaps a toy that adorns it. Surely this is the wonder of angels, and perhaps of devils too, unless the observation of so many ages may have rendered it familiar to both. And can we, my Christian brethren, behold such a scene with indifference? If some epidemical madness had seized our country, or the places where we live, so that as we went from one place to another, we should every where meet with lunatics, and see, among the rest, some perhaps of the finest genius and improvements, and in the most eminent stations in life, amusing themselves with straws and bubbles, or wounding themselves and others; surely were we ever so secure from the danger of infection or assault, the sight would cut us to the heart. Surely a good-natured man would hardly be able to go abroad, or even be desirous to live, if it must be amongst so many sad spectacles. Yet these poor creatures might, notwithstanding this, be the children of God, and the higher their phrenzy rose, the nearer might their complete happiness be. But alas, the greater part of mankind are seized with a worse kind of madness, in which they are ruining their souls: and can we behold it with indifference? The Lord awaken our compassion, our prayers, and our endeavours, in dependence on divine grace, that we may be instrumental in bringing them to their right mind, and making them wise indeed, that is, wise to salvation.

2. How necessary is it that we should seriously inquire how this one thing needful is regarded by us!

Let me entreat you to remember your own concern in it, and inquire—Have I thought seriously of it?—Have I seen the importance of it?—Has it lain with a due and an abiding weight on my mind?—Has it brought me to Christ, that I might lay the stress of these great eternal interests on him?—And am I acting in the main of my life as one that has these convictions?—Am I willing in fact to give up other things, my interests, my pleasures, my passions, to this?—Am I conversing with God and with man as one that believes these things, as one that has deliberately chosen the better part, and is determined to abide by that choice?

Observe the answer which conscience returns to these inquiries, and you will know your own part in that more particular application, with which I am to conclude my discourse.

1. Let me address those that are entirely unconcerned about the one thing needful.

Sirs, I have been stating the case at large, and now I appeal to your consciences. Are these things so, or are they not? God and your own hearts best know for what the care of your soul is neglected: but be it what it will, the difference between one grain of sand and another, is not great, when it comes to be weighed against a talent of gold. Whatever it is, you had need to examine it carefully. You had need to view that commodity on all sides, of which you do in effect say, For this will I sell my soul, for this will I give up heaven, and venture hell, be heaven and hell whatever they may. In the name of God, Sirs, is this the part of a man, of a rational creature? To go on with your eyes open towards a pit of eternal ruin, because there are a few gay flowers in the way! Or what if you shut your eyes? will that prevent your fall? It signifies little to say, I will not think of these things, I will not consider them. God has said, In the last days they shall consider it perfectly. The revels of a drunken malefactor will not prevent nor respite his execution. Pardon my plainness; if it were a fable, or a tale, I would endeavour to amuse you with words; but I cannot do it where your souls are at stake.

2. I would apply to those who are convinced of the importance of their souls, yet are inclined to defer that care of them a little longer, which in the general they see to be necessary.

I know, you that are young are under peculiar temptations to do this; though it is strange that the death of so many of your companions should not be an answer to some of the most specious and dangerous of those temptations. Methinks, if there were the least degree of uncertainty, the importance is too weighty to put matters to the venture. But here the uncertainty is great and apparent. You must surely know that there are critical seasons of life for managing the concerns of it, which are of such a nature, that, if once lost, they may never return. Here is a critical season. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. This language may not be spoken to-morrow. Talk not of a more convenient season; none can be more convenient; and that to which you would probably refer it, is least of all so,—a dying time. You would not choose then to have any important business in hand, and will you of choice refer the greatest business of all to that languishing, hurrying, amazing hour! If a friend were then to come to you with the balance of an intricate account, or a view of a title to an estate, you would shake your fainting head, and lift up your pale trembling hand, and say perhaps, with a feeble voice, "Alas! is this a time for these things!" And is it a time for so much greater things than these? I wish you knew, and would consider, into what a strait we that are ministers are sometimes brought, when we are called to the dying beds of those who have spent their lives in the neglect of the one thing needful. On the one hand we fear, lest if we palliate matters, and speak smooth things, we shall betray and ruin their souls; and on the other, that if we use a becoming plainness and seriousness in warning them of their danger, we shall quite overwhelm them, and hasten the dying moment which is advancing by such swift steps. O let me entreat you, for our sakes, and much more for your own, that you do not drive us to such sad extremities: but that, if you are convinced, as I hope some of you may now be, that the care of the soul is that needful thing we have represented, let the conviction work, let it drive you immediately to the throne of grace, that from thence you may derive that wisdom and strength which may direct you in all the intricacies which entangle you, and animate you in the midst of difficulty and discouragement.

3. I would in the last place address myself to those happy souls who have in good earnest attended to the one thing needful.

I hope when you see how commonly it is neglected, neglected indeed by many, whose natural capacities, improvements, and circumstances in life, appear to you superior to your own, you will humbly acknowledge, that it was distinguishing grace that brought you into this happy state, and formed you to this most necessary care. Bless the Lord therefore who hath *given* you that *counsel*, in virtue of which you can say that *He is your portion*.—Rejoice in the thought that the great concern is secured; as it is natural for us to do, when some important affair is despatched which has long lain before us, and which we have been inclined to put off from one day to another, but have at length strenuously and successfully attended.—Remember still to continue acting on those great principles which at first determined your choice; and seriously consider, that those who desire their *life* may at last be *given* them *for a prey*, must continue on their guard, in all stages of their journey through a wilderness where daily dangers are still surrounding them. Having secured the great concern, make yourselves easy as to others of smaller importance. You have chosen the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, other things therefore shall be added unto you; and if any which you desire should not be added, comfort yourselves with this thought, that you have the good part which can never be taken away. And, not to enlarge on these obvious hints, which must so often occur, be very solicitous that others may be brought to a care about the one thing needful. If it be needful for you, it is so for your children, your friends, your servants. Let them therefore see your concern in this respect for them, as well as for yourselves. Let parents, especially, attend to this

exhortation, whose care for their offspring often exceeds in other respects, and fails in this. Remember that your children may never live to enjoy the effects of your labour and concern, to get them estates and portions. The charges of their funerals may perhaps be all their share of what you are so anxiously careful to lay up for them. And oh! think what a sword would pierce through your very heart, if you should stand by the corpse of a beloved child with this reflection, "this poor creature has done with life before it learnt its great business in it, and is gone to eternity, which I have seldom been warning it to prepare for, and which perhaps it learnt of me to forget."

On the whole, may this grand care be awakened in those by whom it has been hitherto neglected, may it be revived in each of our minds. And that you may be encouraged to pursue it with greater cheerfulness, let me conclude with this comfortable thought, that in proportion to the necessity of the case, is the provision which divine grace has made for our assistance. If you are disposed to sit down at Christ's feet, he will teach you by his word and Spirit. If you commit this precious jewel, which is your eternal all, into his hand, he will preserve it unto *that day*, and will then produce it richly adorned, and gloriously improved to his own honour, and to your everlasting joy. Amen.

SERMON II.

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

DEDICATION.

To the Church and Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Rowell, to whom the substance of these [illegible] Sermons was preached, and at whose desire they are published.

My dear brethren and friends, beloved in our common Lord,

When I first preached these plain Sermons to my own congregation, which I here offer to your perusal, I was much surprised at the request which several of them made, that they might be printed: but I was yet more surprised, when after having delivered the substance of them in one discourse at Rowell some time after, you so unanimously and affectionately made that request your own. I apprehend, that though the many excellent treatises we have on this subject already, might excuse my backwardness to comply with the first motion of this kind, yet absolutely to have refused your repeated solicitation might have appeared disrespectful to my good friends, and perhaps have looked like some unwillingness to bear my testimony to this great and important doctrine, in an age in which the credit of many evangelical truths seems to be fallen very low.

I am really sorry I have delayed this little service so long; but it was chiefly owing to my desire of finishing my Sermons on Regeneration, which indeed cost me more labour than I at first apprehended. That seemed a business of such importance, that I know not how to interrupt it: but as they are now almost printed off, I send out these Discourses as a kind of supplement to them, and therefore they are printed in a form very fit to bind up with them. The delay is more excusable, as Salvation by Grace is not a subject which grows out of date in a few months. This glorious doctrine has been the joy of the church in all ages on earth; and it will be the song of all that have received it in truth throughout the ages of eternity, and be pursued in the heavenly regions with ever growing admiration and delight.

I cannot conclude this short address, without congratulating you on the abundant goodness of God to you as a church, in bringing among you that worthy and excellent person,* under whose pastoral care you are now so happily placed. I know, he is a faithful witness to the truths of the gospel, and rejoice in that rich abundance of gifts and graces, which render him so fit to state and improve them, in the most advantageous, as well as most agreeable and delightful, manner. I hope, and believe, that the grace he so humbly owns his dependence upon, will add happy success to his labours; and I heartily pray, that you and neighbouring churches may long be happy in him; and that God, who has by such various and gracious interpositions in your favour expressed his paternal care of you, may still delight

* The Reverend Mr. Jonathan Saunderson.

to dwell among you. May he multiply you with men like a flock, daily adding to his church among you such as shall be saved! May your souls continually rejoice in his salvation! And may you ever walk worthy of the Lord, and prove by the integrity and purity, the spirituality and usefulness, of your whole behaviour, that this grace of God which brings salvation has entered with power into your hearts; and that it is your care and delight, to improve it, as well as to hear of it! To contribute to this blessed end, by this or any other attempt of cordial love and faithful respect, will be an unspeakable pleasure to,

My dear friends, your very affectionate servant, in the bonds of our common Lord,

Northampton, Sept. 1, 1741. P. DODDRIDGE.

Ephesians ii. 8.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

You are often, my dear brethren and friends, hearing of the duties of a religious life: and it cannot but be a pleasure to every faithful minister of Christ to observe, how willing, nay, how glad, you are to hear of them; and, with respect to many of you, how ready you are to practise them. But I am now coming to you with a renewed admonition on another head, which is always to be taken in connexion with the former; and which, I persuade myself, will in that view be welcome to you all. I am to inculcate it upon you, that when you have done your utmost, how much soever that be, you should still say, that you are unprofitable servants: and endeavour to maintain a deep sense of it upon your hearts, that, as the apostle admonishes the believing Ephesians in the words of the text, By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

The apostle, in his preceding discourse, speaks of the happy change which the gospel had made in the state of these poor heathens. He freely acknowledges on this occasion, that the Jews were likewise in a very bad state, and if not entirely sunk into the same enormities, yet were by nature children of wrath, even as others. So that on the whole, both were (as it might be expressed by an easy and very proper figure) dead in trespasses and sins, indisposed for any religious sensations and actions, and far more odious to God, than a putrid carcass is to men. But he adds, that God by his grace had saved them; that his unmerited goodness had begun their salvation, and having thus far carried it on, would undoubtedly complete it: and that he might impress their minds the more deeply with it, he repeats it again, By grace ye are saved. So much was the apostle Paul concerned to inculcate a doctrine, which some are ready to look upon as unnecessary, and others perhaps as dangerous. But the apostle's authority is abundantly enough to outweigh all that can be laid in the opposite scale. And it will appear from what I have further to offer, that if it had not in this view so direct a sanction from his express testimony, the conclusion would follow by the justest deduction of argument from principles so fundamental to the gospel, that they cannot be denied without subverting its whole superstructure.

And here, if I would treat the subject in its full extent, I might consider what we mean by gospel-salvation. But I content myself at present with telling you in a few words, that it implies "a deliverance from that ruinous and calamitous condition, into which, by our apostasy from God, we are fallen;" and it also includes "our being restored to the divine favour, and all the happy effects of it, as extending, not only to time, but to eternity."

I might also consider at large the nature of that faith to which the promises of salvation are made. But that is a subject you have heard so frequently explained, that I shall only remind you of that general account of it, which has often been illustrated among you. "Saving faith," for of that we are now speaking, "is such a persuasion, that Christ is the great Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of men; and such a desire and expectation of the blessings he has procured under that character; as shall engage us cheerfully to commit our souls to him in his appointed method of salvation, with a disposition cordially to devote ourselves to his service in all the ways of holy and evangelical obedience." The several branches of this definition are to be taken in their connexion with each other; and then there would be no difficulty in showing, from the whole tenor of Scripture, that, as nothing short of this can be acceptable to God, so wherever such a principle really is, the soul in which it is found is entitled to all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and has all the security for eternal happiness which the promise and oath of God can give. I might also easily show you, that this is such a description of faith as effectually secures the interest of practical religion, and guards against every presumptuous hope, which may be formed

in a soul destitute of a principle of universal holiness.

But waving the further prosecution of these preliminaries to our subject, which we have occasion so often to dilate upon, I shall make it my present business,

I. To consider how we may be said to be saved through faith.

II. How it appears, that in consequence of this, we are saved by grace.

III. I shall examine the force of the apostle's additional argument, which is drawn from the consideration, that faith is the gift of God. And then,

IV. I shall collect some inferences from the whole. And may God write on our hearts, as with the point of a diamond, them and the premises on which they are founded!

I. We are to consider in what sense it may be said, that Christians are saved through faith.

Ye are, says the apostle, [σεσωσμενοι] the saved ones,—the persons who have already received the beginnings of salvation, and the certain pledge of its complete accomplishment—[δια της πιστεως] through, or by means of, faith.

Now, I apprehend, we shall take in the full sense of the apostle's assertion, and of all that is most necessary to believe and know on this subject; if we acknowledge and remember,—that faith is absolutely necessary in order to our salvation, so that we cannot possibly be saved without it;—and also, that every one who hath this faith, shall undoubtedly obtain salvation:—but yet, that after all, a Christian is not to ascribe his salvation to the merit of his faith, but entirely to that of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great author and finisher of it. These are three very obvious remarks: none is so weak but he may easily understand them; and yet I speak very seriously when I say, they seem to me to contain the sum of all that is most important in the many large volumes which have been written on the subject.

1. "Faith is so absolutely necessary to our salvation, that we cannot possibly be saved without it."

So our Lord tells us, in the most express and emphatical forms of speech: If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins; which most certainly implies the loss of salvation, and indeed much more. And elsewhere the incarnate wisdom and truth of God saith, He that believeth not, shall be damned. He shall not, as the Baptist says, see life: nay, as our Lord himself expresses it in the strongest terms, He that believeth not, is condemned already; not only on account of all those other sins, for which the wrath of God, to which he became immediately obnoxious, still abideth upon him; but for this additional reason of dreadful provocation, because he hath not believed in the venerable and majestic name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Without this faith, there is no knowledge that will save a man; though it should be the most various and the most exact knowledge, of the most divine and important subjects, which ever entered into a human mind. So far is it from this, that one need not scruple to say, a man might as reasonably expect to be saved by skill in the mathematics, or in music, as by skill in polemical divinity, though it were in its most essential branches, if after all it were no more than mere speculation.

And it is no less certain, that without this faith, morality will not save a man; be it ever so unexceptionable, be it ever so exemplary. This is indeed much better than the former; but if there be nothing more, it will be fatally ineffectual to the great purpose which we have now in view. I speak not now, as you may easily imagine, of such a continual and uniform obedience to the divine will, as perfectly answers the demands of God's original law; for no man ever has attained to this, or will ever in fact attain to it in this world: but I speak of what the world generally calls morality, a freedom from gross impiety and scandalous vice, yea, though attended with the practice of the humane and the social virtues. This is indeed amiable and honourable, so far as it goes; and will undoubtedly have its reward, in the pleasure of such conduct, in the esteem and love of mankind, and in the possession of many temporal advantages and blessings, which in the common course of providence are connected with it. But alas, it is after all a very partial and imperfect thing: and as a man may be temperate in himself, just, faithful, and benevolent to men, without having any appearance of religion towards God, or making any pretence to it; so he may have some sense of God upon his spirit, which one would think none but an atheist could entirely avoid, while for the neglect, or it may be the rejection, of the gospel, he stands exposed to its sentence of condemnation. If Christ be not regarded as the Rock on which we build our hopes, the foundation is sandy, and will be ruinous: and if we do not receive Christ by such a faith as I described above, we offer him a most insolent affront, by pretending to put our unsanctified and rebellious hearts under his patronage.

We see then, that without this faith we cannot possibly be saved. It is the counterpart of this important truth which we now add, when we observe,

2. That "every one who hath this faith, shall undoubtedly be saved."

You will here be sure to observe, that I say, "Every one who hath *this faith*," meaning the faith described above, which includes in it our devoting ourselves to Christ in the way of holy obe-

dience, as an essential part of it; and consequently, there can be no reason to say, as some have wildly represented the matter, "a believer shall be saved, let him live as he will;" which is either a most notorious and mischievous falsehood, or an express contradiction in terms. If the word believer be supposed to signify one who merely assents to the truth of the gospel in speculation, nothing can be more false; and the whole epistle of James, to omit a thousand particular passages of other scriptures, is a demonstration of the contrary: but if it be meant, as I suppose it generally is, of a true believer, it is an express contradiction; and is as absurd as it would be to say, a really good man shall be saved, though he should at the same time be a very bad one. For no one can, in the sense described above, which is the Scriptural sense, be a true believer, but one who wills to live in a holy manner; since the same operation of God upon the soul, which disposes it to believe, sanctifies the will, and though freely, yet effectually, leads it into a prevailing determination to make the service of God the business of life: or, in other words, it is plain from the whole tenor of Scripture, that a saving faith is also a sanctifying faith: but there cannot be a sanctifying faith in an unholy heart; neither can there be a holy heart, where there is a wicked life; for the tree is known by its fruit: and when we speak of the heart, we mean not merely the affections, but the will, the determinations of which are indeed the very actions of which we speak, so far as they are properly ours. There cannot therefore be a more insolent falsehood, than the pretence to holiness of heart, where that of the life is wanting, or to saving faith in the absence of both. There may indeed be an error in the understanding as to some precepts of Christ, or a false judgment as to some circumstances attending ourselves; and that may produce some error in practice. There may be instances in which the infirmity of human nature, and the surprise or force of a temptation, may betray a man into particular miscarriages, contrary to the general bent and tenor of his heart and life: but there cannot possibly be, in the conduct of any true believer, an habitual, allowed, and customary disobedience to any one commandment of our blessed Redeemer.

Thus you must first admit as a necessary preliminary; and, when it is admitted, you may very securely build upon it this great truth, that "whosoever hath such a faith as this, shall certainly be saved." Whatever his former guilt may have been, though ever so various, ever so long continued, ever so aggravated, though crimes had been committed, from which he could never have been justified by the law of Moses, but would have been doomed by it to an infamous death without mercy; yet, on exerting such an act of faith in Christ, the believer immediately stands a justified person before God previous to any good works of his own: yea, though he should die before he have an opportunity of performing any, in this case, (which, if ever it happen, is by the way the only case in which good works are not, according to the gospel covenant, necessary to an actual admission into heaven,) an omniscient God calls the things that are not as if they were, and accepts those fruits of holiness which he discerned in their root, or their bud, though he did not afford time for their coming to maturity. And if life be spared, the believer continuing such, continues in a state of favour and acceptance with God, though there may be remaining imperfections in him; and though he may see reason to complain, that he cannot do the things which he would, but that the law in his members struggles against the law of his mind, yet he shall finally be saved; whatever difficulties are to be broken through, and how long soever his trials may continue: and his salvation as a believer is as certain, from the whole current of the word of God, as the condemnation of the unbeliever; which we proved above. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; he hath it already in its beginnings and earnests, and he shall ere long rise to the complete possession of it. For Christ gives unto his sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. But it is of importance that I add,

3. That "after all, a believer is not to ascribe his salvation to the merit and excellency of this faith itself, but entirely to the merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the free grace of God, as manifested in it."

We know it is the constant doctrine of the New Testament, that God hath made us accepted in the Beloved; and that of him we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: so that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in him. And if we should pretend to say, that we are accepted of God for faith, as the meritorious cause of that acceptance, we must contradict the whole course of the apostle Paul's argument, especially in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, where he strongly contends that Abraham was not justified by works, because if he were he would have something to glory in before God. Now if he had been justified by faith as his own meritorious act, there would have been as much room for him to have gloried in that, as in any work, whether of ceremonial or moral obedience. And in the same epistle he declares again, where he is speaking of the salvation of God's chosen remnant, that if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more

work: the meaning of which plainly is, that no man can at once be justified by grace and by works: and on the same principles we may also say, no man can be justified by the merit of faith, and yet by grace. If therefore it evidently appear from the text, and our further reasonings upon it, that our justification and acceptance with God is to be ascribed to grace, all pretence of merit in the act of believing must of course be given up.

This will indeed further appear, if we consider what it is that faith does in order to our being justified. You very well know, it is represented in Scripture as receiving Christ. To as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. Now it must be flagrantly absurd to talk of resting upon an act, whereby we do indeed receive and rest upon another. And therefore however inaccurately some may have expressed themselves on this head, I cannot suppose that any wise and considerate Christian ever meant to assert the contrary to what I am now endeavouring to prove. We do indeed find the apostle speaking of faith, as imputed for righteousness; but it seems to me, that the most natural sense of that expression may be fixed, and the propriety of it may be admitted, upon the principles I have now been laying down.

All manner of imputation seems to be a metaphor taken from books of account between creditor and debtor.* To impute any act of sin, or of obedience, is therefore properly no other than to set it down to his account. The great God of heaven and earth is represented in Scripture, with humble condescension to our manner of acting and conceiving of things, as keeping a most exact book of records and accounts, in which those things are registered concerning every one of us which he will bring into that solemn review and survey, by which our characters and states shall finally be determined. And as the most exact and perfect obedience is a debt which we owe him, as our great Creator, Benefactor, and Governor; so, on the breach of his law, we owe him some proper satisfaction for it. In this view we are all charged as debtors, poor miserable insolvent debtors, in the book of God: innumerable sins are imputed, or set down to our account: and were things to go on in this course, we should ere long be arrested by the divine justice, and being found incapable of payment, should be cast into the prison of hell, to come out no more. But God, in pity to this our calamitous state, has found out a surety and a ransom for us, and has provided a satisfaction in the obedience and sufferings of his Son; which is what we mean by the righteousness of Christ, or his active and passive obedience. It is with a gracious regard to this, to express his high complacency in it, and (if I may so speak) his pleasing remembrance of it, that all who are finally justified and saved, meet with divine acceptance and favour: or, to pursue the metaphor opened above, the righteousness of Christ is in the book of God imputed, or set down, to their account, as that by which the debt is balanced, and they are entitled to such favours as righteous persons might expect from God. But then, it is an invariable rule in the divine proceedings, that this righteousness, or this atonement and satisfaction, of Christ, (for I think it matters but little by which of these names it shall be called,) be a means of delivering those, and only those, that believe. Pursuant therefore to the aforesaid metaphor, when any particular person believes, this is set down to his account, as a most important article, or as a memorandum (if I may so express it) in the book of God's remembrance, that such a one is now actually become a believer, and therefore is now entitled to justification and life by Christ. In this sense, his faith is imputed for righteousness. Yet it is not regarded by God, as the grand consideration which balances the account, or indeed as paying any of the former debt, which it is impossible it should; but only as that which, according to the gracious constitution of the gospel, gives a man a claim to that which Christ has paid, and which God has graciously allowed as a valuable consideration, in regard to which he may honourably pardon and accept all who shall apply to him in his appointed way, or in the way of humble believing, as faith was described above.

This appears to me a just and easy view of the gospel doctrine on this head; and it is so important distinctly to understand it, that I hope you will excuse my having represented it in so many words. And this is, on the whole, the sense in which we may be said to be saved through faith.—None can be saved without it, and every one who has it is entitled to salvation; but not in virtue of the merit and excellency of faith itself, but entirely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered; or, in other words, by the imputation of his perfect righteousness, the merit of which is graciously applied to this or that particular person upon his believing: so that upon this he is justified; and by the general tenor of the gospel, is to be looked on as a righteous person; or as one, who shall on the whole be treated as such, and shall ere long be publicly declared righteous before the assembled world, and be freed from all the remainders of that penalty which sin has brought upon us: and though, for wise and good reasons, he be for a while continued under some of them, the time of that continuance is so short, and his succeeding happiness so lasting, that the former being as it were swallowed up by the

* From mercantile affairs the metaphor is sometimes applied to unlawful, as crimes to be accounted to or to others sometimes called to lay; but when the matter is well understood in one view, it is easy to apply it to the other.

latter to the all-comprehending views of God, he is spoken of by him as if his justification and salvation were already complete: "Ye are saved through faith." But having stated this, the method I proposed leads me,

II. To show, that in consequence of our being thus saved through faith, we may properly be said to be saved by grace.

Now the connexion between these will appear very evident, if we consider,—that faith cannot make any atonement to the offended justice of God, so as to give us any legal claim even to the pardon of our sins upon the account of it:—much less can it confer any obligation upon God to bestow on us eternal blessedness:—nor would there indeed have been any room to mention faith in this whole affair, if God had not contrived such a method of salvation, and done that to effect it which none but himself could have done.

1. "Faith cannot make any atonement to the offended justice of God, so as to give us any legal claim even to the pardon of our sins upon the account of it;" so that if we are saved through faith, we must in this view acknowledge it to be by grace.

The law of so wise, so great, and so venerable a sovereign, as the blessed God is, must of course suppose some awful sanctions, some solemn denunciations of wrath and vengeance on those who presumptuously transgress it. And it is certainly the part of God, as a wise, holy, and gracious legislator, to maintain its honour when it has been violated, and not to treat an offending creature as innocent and righteous, without some provision made for the satisfaction of his injured justice. In the demand of which satisfaction, God does not express any thing of a sanguinary and revengeful disposition: far be so blasphemous a thought from us! but he displays a steady regard to that order, which as the great Sovereign it becomes him, for the benefit of his subjects, as well as for the glory of his own name and government, to preserve in the moral world, *i. e.* among his reasonable creatures. Some ample and honourable amends must therefore be made, in order to the discharge of a guilty and condemned criminal. And is faith such an amends? Take it in its utmost extent, as an assent to whatever he proposes, and a submission to whatever he demands, to the very utmost of our capacity, this in our present circumstances is but our duty, and would have been so had we never offended him; and the performance of it, with whatever readiness, exactness, and constancy, cannot possibly atone for the violation of it in times past; as the payment of what for the future becomes due to any creditor, cannot discharge a debt formerly contracted, and remaining unbalanced upon account. Therefore it is, that we read of Christ's being made a sin-offering for us, though he himself knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; *i. e.* that we might be accepted of God as righteous, being considered as by faith united to him, and interested in his righteousness and grace. In testimony of which, God expressly requires, that every sinner should sue out his pardon in Christ's name, and should present himself before him as one that has obtained redemption through Christ's blood, and is accepted in the Beloved, who of God is made unto us righteousness. A scheme utterly inconsistent with that of our being justified and saved by any merit or excellence in faith, considered as an act of atonement made by us, by which the guilt of our offences is cancelled, and our pardon bought by us. It is yet more apparent,

2. That "faith can confer no obligation upon God to bestow on us eternal blessedness;" in which view also our salvation through it must appear to be by grace.

That eternal blessedness is designed for every believing soul, is, through the divine goodness, as apparent as that faith itself is ever required in Scripture. But can we say of eternal life, that it is the wages of faith? I much question, whether it could have been claimed as wages due to us on account of our obedience, had that obedience been perfect in its kind and degree. Nor do I think it could with any confidence have been expected, unless God had been pleased by a gracious covenant to promise it: otherwise, all that the completest obedience could have claimed, would only have been favour continued, or at most favour increasing, during the time in which we continued to behave ourselves well. Much less then can we imagine, that when we had once broken the law of God, faith, though for the future attended with the most perfect efficacy, and productive of the most steady course of obedience in all after-instances, could give us any such claim. Least of all, then, can we have any room to pretend it, on account of a faith which operates in so imperfect a manner, and produces a holiness so sadly defective in many instances, as we must acknowledge our own to be. That we should be admitted into the glorious presence of God, and be fixed in a state of immutable security and felicity, where sin and sorrow shall no more invade us, but where God will appoint for us salvation itself for walls and bulwarks, is so glorious a triumph of the divine goodness; that the soul which knows itself, and attentively looks on this far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, is astonished and humbled in the views of it, and finds it no small stretch of faith to be able to believe, that God does indeed intend it for so sinful a creature: so far is the believer from arrogating any thing of this kind to himself, as if his own faith had any degree of merit or excellence proportionable to

it. But we must observe once more, to complete the argument,

3. That "there had been no room to mention faith at all in this affair, had not God graciously contrived such a method of salvation, and done that to effect it which none but himself could do."

Faith receives our Lord Jesus Christ; it is its great office and its great glory to do it. But how could it have received him, unless he had been given? and how could he have been given in this view, but by the appointment of the Father, in concurrence with his own free and most gracious consent? Faith apprehends and submits to the gospel plan of salvation by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God; yea, it not only submits to it, but rejoices and glories in it. But who could have exhibited, who could have contrived, who could have executed, such a plan, unless it had been formed and determined in the counsels of eternal love?—Admit faith to be ever so voluntary, and, so far as is possible to a creature, ever so independent, an act, can we any of us say, that there was so much merit and excellency in that act, or in any of its subsequent fruits, that God upon the foresight of it should say, "These creatures, guilty and condemned as they appear, will be so ready to receive the intimations of my will, that they will fully deserve that I should save them at any rate; they will deserve, even that my Son should become incarnate, and die as a sacrifice, to make way for their happiness." Can any of you, Sirs, imagine this to have been the case? Or can you hear it even supposed, without finding something shocking in the very representation of it? The blessed Paul, I am sure, had very different views, when he said, God hath predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. And the apostle John had other notions of it, when he said, full as his gracious heart was of the most lively sentiments of gratitude and zeal, Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

These arguments would prove, that our salvation through faith is by grace, even though it could not be added, that this faith is the gift of God. How much more convincing then must the conclusion be, when that consideration is added to the rest!

But as the illustration of this, which was the third general we mentioned, will require more time than can properly be allowed to the remainder of this Discourse, I will reserve it to another; and conclude for the present with exhorting you seriously to examine, whether you have this principle of faith in your hearts, without which your salvation is, in present circumstances, an impossible thing, and with which, it is inviolably secure.

It is a melancholy, but most obvious, truth, that all men have not faith. There are thousands and ten thousands under the gospel, with regard to whom its ministers have reason to complain, Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? On whom has his power been so exerted, as to conquer the natural incredulity and obstinacy of their hearts? Are you, Sirs, of that number, or of the number of those, who, as the Scripture expresses it, have believed through grace? It is the question on which your eternal state will turn at last, and therefore you would do well to examine it now. And I would beseech you to endeavour to trace it—in its production,—and in its effects; or, in other words, to inquire,—how it has been introduced into your minds,—and how it has wrought there.—You may surely discover it in the one or in the other, if it be your prevailing character; and I hope many of you will be able to discover it in both.

(1.) Can you trace faith "in its production and advance in your souls?"

Do you recollect any time in which you had no thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, and no workings of affection towards him? And has there been any alteration in your minds in this respect? All true faith in Christ is founded on a conviction of sin, and of the misery to which you are exposed by it. Have you indeed been brought to this conviction? Have you heard, and (if I may be allowed the expression) have you felt, yourselves condemned by the sentence of a righteous, a holy, yea, of a merciful, God? And have you by that apprehension been stirred up to cry for pardon and deliverance? You have heard of Christ under the character of a Saviour; but I put it to your consciences, have you seriously viewed him under that character? and, from a full persuasion of his correspondency, when considered in this view, to all the necessities of your case, and all the exigences of your souls, have you entered into any treaty with him? Recollect it seriously. Have you ever presented yourselves before God, with a humble and cordial regard to Christ? And do you know what it is, secretly and sincerely to repose your souls upon the merit of his obedience, and the efficacy of his blood, with humble acknowledgment of your own guilt, with entire resignation of your own righteousness, as utterly unworthy of being mentioned before God, and with a cordial and joyful resolution to devote yourselves to his service as long as you have any being, and through time and eternity to testify your gratitude by a constant series of obedience?

If you can trace such a process of thought and experience as this, you have great reason to conclude that you experimentally know what faith is; and that through faith you are in the way to salvation. Yet it is always to be remembered, that faith is to

be shown by its works. Give me leave, therefore, to further to inquire

(2.) Whether you can trace "the genuine effects of it in your heart and lives?"

You believe in Christ: but has that faith in him produced a continued and habitual intercourse with him? I speak not of an intercourse absolutely uninterrupted; for that the present state of human life will not admit. But has it produced frequently repeated and direct acts of application to him, and converse with him? One can hardly imagine, how it is possible for a true believer to allow these to be long and often intermitted; especially to such a degree, that days, and weeks, and months should pass, as if all the business between Christ and his soul were quite finished, and he and his Lord were parted by consent, till death, or some very urgent and extraordinary circumstance, renewed the interviews between them. I would ask further, Has this faith to which you pretend, produced a resemblance to Christ's example, and an obedience to his precepts, in the course of your lives? You know, that true faith is operative; and you know, in the general, the genius and design of Christianity. I would demand of your consciences, how far you comply with it? Is your temper and conduct in the main, such as you well know our Lord intended that the temper and conduct of his people should be? Is it devout and spiritual, just and charitable, sober and temperate, humble and cautious? Is religion your care? and do you maintain a habitual watchfulness over yourselves, that your behaviour may be agreeable and honourable to your profession?—Once more, are you ardently pursuing greater attainments in the Christian temper and life, so that you may be spoken of as hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

If you can answer such inquiries as these in the affirmative, you have a great deal of reason to hope that faith is yours, and salvation is yours. But if you cannot so answer them, a confident assurance that you shall be saved is so far from being faith, that it is presumption and folly; and, far from being any security to you, will only prove adding sin to sin. That confidence, by whatever name you may affect to call it, is indeed unbelief; unbelief of God's threatenings, while it vainly pretends to trust his promises: for he hath not more expressly said, that He who believeth on the Son, hath eternal life; than he has added, that He who is disobedient to the Son, shall not see life. While sin reigns in your life, and hereby appears to reign in your heart, did you pretend a revelation from heaven as to the truth of your faith, every wise man would conclude that pretended revelation was a delusion; and that how solemnly soever it might be ascribed to the Spirit of truth and holiness, it really proceeded from the father of lies.

Excuse the plainness, with which fidelity to God and to you obliges me to speak on this head; and be assured, that it proceeds from a real concern to secure the honour of that glorious doctrine of *salvation by grace*, which I have now been labouring to establish, and the demonstration and improvement of which I shall further pursue in the ensuing Discourse.

SERMON III.

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

EPHES. ii. 8.

For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

In the works of nature, many of those things which to a superficial eye may appear as defects, will, on a careful inquiry, be found to be marks of consummate wisdom and kind contrivance. And on the same principle, I confess, I have often thought there is reason to be thankful for the very inaccuracies of Scripture. The haste in which the apostle Paul was, by the multiplicity of his affairs, obliged to write, has given us an opportunity of viewing more of his heart in his epistles than we might perhaps have seen, if he had frequently reviewed and corrected them. Those parentheses, in particular, and those repetitions, which render the style less elegant, and the sense sometimes less conspicuous, do nevertheless show to greater advantage how deeply those thoughts were impressed upon his mind, which he introduces in such a manner. And of this, the words which I have now been reading are an instance. In the course of his preceding argument, a few verses before, while he is telling the Ephesians that God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved them, even when they were dead in sins, had quickened them together with Christ, he adds, by way of parentheses, By grace ye are saved. And when he goes on to say, they were raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, he further tells them, that this was with an intention That in the ages to come God might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his Kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. Nay, his heart was so full of the subject of grace, free and astonishing grace, that, if all this was not enough, by a most glorious and emphatic tautology, (if I may be allowed so to speak,) he inserts the words of my text. By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

I have already shown you from these words, in what sense we may be said to be saved through faith: and I have also proved, that in consequence of this it is evident we must be saved by grace; since faith being incapable of satisfying the demands of God's injured justice, can much less merit such a recompence as eternal life: nor can it indeed have any efficacy, or any place at all in this affair, otherwise than by God's free constitution and gracious appointment. I then concluded with observing, that this argument would have a convincing force, even though faith were ever so entirely an act of our own; or that we had no more support or assistance from God in forming and exerting it, than we have in any of the common actions of natural life. But I am now to show, that even this is not the case; but, that a new proof of our being saved by grace arises from considering,

III. The argument which the apostle suggests in the close of the text, that even this faith is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

I am sensible that some endeavour to invalidate and supersede all this part of the argument, by giving another turn to this last clause, referring it in general to our salvation by faith, as if it had been said, "Our being thus saved by grace through faith, (as I have just now said,) is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God." But I apprehend, that an impartial reader would not be willing to allow of this interpretation, which makes the latter clause a mere repetition of what was said before, and a repetition of it in less proper and expressive words. None could imagine, that our being saved through faith was of ourselves; or that we ever could ourselves constitute and appoint such a way of salvation, which was indeed fixed so long before we had a being. But faith being really our own act, it was highly pertinent to observe, that the excellency of this act is not to be arrogated to ourselves, but is to be ascribed to God. All that are acquainted with the genius of the original, must acknowledge this is a construction which it will very fairly admit. And we shall prove in the process of this argument, that other scriptures expressly declare the truth, which this interpretation makes to be the meaning of the words.

Faith may be called the gift of God,—as it is God that reveals the great objects of faith,—that brings the mind to attend to them,—that conquers our natural aversion to the gospel method of salvation, and so implants faith in the soul;—and also as it is he, that carries it on to more perfect degrees, and improves its vigour and activity.

1. Faith may be called the gift of God, "as it is God who reveals the great objects of faith."

Human reason is but weak and imperfect, and has indeed interwoven the traces of its own weakness, with many of the fairest monuments of its strength. Even in its most advanced state, among the most learned and polite nations of antiquity, it is deplorably evident, how far it was from discovering the several branches of natural religion in its purity, extent, and order. And to speak freely, it shone more brightly in almost every other view, than in that which is its noblest end; I mean, what relates to God, and immortality. It has indeed produced many admirable poems, and composed many moving orations: it has woven many exquisite threads of argument, with which the subtilest disputants have entangled each other, and have often entangled themselves: and much more useful it has been, in adorning the face of the earth, in subduing the sea, in managing the winds, and meting out the heavens. But this rich vein of knowledge, this mine of holy and divine treasure, lies too deep for human discovery.—If any ask, where shall this wisdom be found, and where is the place of this understanding? It must be granted, that it is a path, which the vulture's eye hath not seen: man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth of human science says, It is not in me: and the sea, with all the most improved countries that lie upon it, must say, It is not with me: for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. There were no principles on which to proceed, in the investigation of this important knowledge: none could ever have learned, that God had formed counsels of mercy and peace towards apostate creatures: none could ever, on natural principles, have discovered the very existence of the Son, and the Spirit: how much less then could they have known, or imagined, that the Son of God should have undertaken to redeem us with his own precious blood, and the Spirit be sent to manage affairs, as the great agent of the Redeemer's kingdom; in consequence of whose gracious acts and influences the soul should be savingly renewed and transformed, and then carried on with a growing pace in the way to heaven, till it was received to the separate state of holy and triumphant spirits at death, and to complete glory at the resurrection of the dead? All the men upon earth could never by their own natural sagacity have discovered any of these particulars; how much less then could the whole system have been discovered!—But God himself has graciously revealed them by his Spirit: and as he was pleased miraculously to interpose to give this revelation to the world; so he has interposed by remarkable providences to send to us such clear notices of it; and to send these notices so early too, as to throw the prejudice of education among us this way, rather than the contrary. And considering how powerful those prejudices are, and how

many have fallen into ruin by them, this will appear no small matter to a considerate person: especially when he surveys the state of the world in general, and considers how few nations and countries there are, in which this is the case; and in what various forms of most pernicious and destructive errors the generality of mankind are trained up from their tenderest infancy.—I would conclude this head with observing, that "whatever particular advantages we have enjoyed, they are all to be traced up to the distinguishing goodness of God to us." If wise and pious parents, if skilful, zealous, and faithful ministers, have been the instruments of working faith in our souls, this also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts; who taught their minds to conceive, and their lips to speak, and who opened our hearts to receive instruction. And this leads me to add,

2. That as God reveals the great objects of faith, so "it is he also, that inclines the mind to attend to them;" on which account faith may be further said to be the gift of God.

The great objects of faith are, and by their nature must be, to us invisible; while those of sense strike so strongly on the mind, that it is no wonder we are apt often to forget the other. And when a man is conscious to himself, that the first recollection and acquaintance with them must be painful, and must be attended with remorse and fear, how necessary soever that pain may be, it is too natural to draw back from it. And we may easily conceive that Satan, the great enemy of men's eternal happiness, will exert all his artifices, to prejudice them against it, and to divert them from it. Accordingly I make no doubt, but that many of you, and especially young persons, have experienced this. You have found, that when you first began to be sensible you were in a lost and miserable state; when you began first to hearken to the tidings of deliverance by Christ, and to inquire into the way of salvation exhibited in the gospel; many circumstances arose to take off your attention from them. You found Satan endeavouring to steal away the good seed out of your hearts, lest you should believe and be saved, and joining the efforts of various of his instruments, to allure or to terrify you from religion. To what then will you ascribe it, that you have been able to break through all these snares? To what will you ascribe it, that when you had perhaps laboured to stifle convictions in your own hearts, they have returned upon you with greater power than before? and though you have endeavoured all you could to shift them off, yet you have found them every where pursuing you; keeping your eyes from sleep during the watches of the night, or breaking in upon you in the morning with the returning light; or following you, perhaps, into those scenes of business, or of vain conversation, to which you have fled as a refuge from them? You must undoubtedly ascribe it to the God of the spirits of all flesh, that you have thus been taught to consider your ways; and that your spirits have been so deeply impressed with concerns, which multitudes whom the world reckons among the wisest of mankind, are entirely thoughtless about, and which perhaps you yourselves were once among the first to despise.

3. Faith may be further called the gift of God, as "it is he that conquers the natural aversion which there is in men's hearts to the gospel method of salvation, when it comes to be understood and apprehended."

That method is so wise, so rational, and so gracious, that one would imagine every reasonable creature should embrace it with delight. Yet the degenerate heart of man draws its strongest objections against it, from those things which are really its greatest glory.

It is the way of humility, and of holiness; and a haughty and licentious heart rises against it, in each of these views. To be stripped of all the pride of human nature, to stand guilty and helpless before God, and, in an entire renunciation of all self-dependence, to seek righteousness and strength in another, is, to spirits naturally so arrogant as ours, a hard saying scarcely to be borne: to give up our own wills to be checked and controlled in all things by the divine authority, to engage in an habitual course of self-denial, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, is hard indeed. No wonder, therefore, if we are taught in Scripture to acknowledge the agency and interposition of a divine hand, when this is wrought in us; when we not only feel some tendency of soul towards it, some transient and ineffectual purpose, but when a permanent principle of this kind is implanted in our hearts, so that our lives are governed by it. Hence the Scripture speaks of those, to whom it is given, not merely to hear of Christ, but to believe in him; and pathetically describes the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, as an energy of mighty power, like that which wrought in Christ when God raised him from the dead. When he lay a cold corpse in the grave, his blood drained out, and his side pierced to the very heart, think of that mighty energy which then reanimated your Lord; and you see an emblem of that, which raises us to a divine life, and enables us to act that life, in faith on a crucified and a risen Redeemer. Thus, as it is said in one place, that God gave to the Gentiles repentance unto life; it is also said in another, that he purified their hearts by faith; plainly implying, that there is in both an interposition of divine power. Now certainly if he implants this principle in our hearts, that salvation which he has connected with it must be entirely of grace: which will further appear, if we consider.

4. That "it is God who carries on this blessed work, and maintains this divine principle."

It is through much tribulation and danger, through much opposition and difficulty, that the Christian must enter into the kingdom of God. When he begins to set sail heaven-ward, the prince of the power of the air endeavours to raise those storms, which shall, if possible, oblige him to make shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience: nevertheless, he must endure to the end, or he cannot be saved. And how is he enabled thus to persevere? Surely it is through the continued communications of divine grace to him; or, as the apostle with admirable propriety expresses it, He obtains mercy of the Lord to be faithful. It is by this means that he obtains the victory: and while he overcomes the world, and conquers the remaining corruptions of his heart, he must still humbly own, that in the one and the other instance, he is more than a conqueror through him that loved him. In short, he will be ready to acknowledge, that having obtained help of God, he continues to this day: and will mark out, as it were, the several stages of his journey, by erecting at the end of each a stone of remembrance and thankfulness, and saying, Hitherto the Lord has helped me.

And now, my friends, you may see the evidence of this great truth, that by grace we are saved through faith, appearing in its complete light: and permit me once more to repeat the summary of the whole argument, that it may be more deeply, and more distinctly, impressed upon your minds.—How much soever faith may be supposed to be our own unassisted act, so far as the act of any creature is unassisted, it could make no atonement to the injured justice of God,—and much less confer any obligation upon him to bestow on us eternal life;—nor had there been any room to mention it at all in the whole affair, if God had not contrived such a method of salvation, and done that to effect it which none but himself could do:—much more will it appear to be of grace, when we add, that faith itself is the gift of God,—as he reveals the great objects of it;—as he brings the mind to attend to them;—as he conquers the natural aversion of the heart to the gospel method of salvation;—and carries on the work of faith in the soul, till it ends in complete salvation. It now remains,

IV. That I conclude with some obvious, but useful, inferences from the whole.

And here now, if it is by grace that we are saved through faith, then certainly we may infer from hence,—that we have no reason to glory,—but should be thankful for the grace by which we are saved;—that we must wholly be without excuse, if we neglect this method of salvation:—that we should labour, therefore, that our faith may be increased and strengthened:—that even the weakest have encouragement to seek and to hope for salvation in this way;—and finally, that we should take heed, that we do not bring a reproach upon this doctrine by an irregular and licentious behaviour.

1. If we are saved by grace through faith, then it is certain, that "we have no reason to glory."

If it were possible a person should perform the most complete and perfect obedience, and so were justified by works, it is but only in a limited sense he would have any thing of which to glory before God; since even he must acknowledge, that it is God who works in him, both to will and to do, and by his gracious influences renders him capable of both: however he, in such a case, may in some measure glory, that he has done his best, and that his behaviour has all that merit, or all that excellence, which the behaviour of a creature in his circumstances could possibly have. But when the ungodly are justified, when we who have been transgressors in ten thousand aggravated instances are saved by grace through faith, of what shall we glory? Shall any of us glory, that we are saved by another, when even our receiving that other is what God hath brought us to by the renewing and sanctifying influences of his grace upon our hearts? When we had corrupted and undone ourselves, and were under a sentence of condemnation and wrath, we have embraced the gospel, that is, we have accepted the riches of the divine liberality and goodness exhibited in it: but shall a beggar glory, in having stretched out his hand to receive an alms? especially if it were given him by a generous and skilful physician, who before he bestowed that alms, had cured him of a disease, by which that very hand, now stretched out to him, had been benumbed and disabled? Let us rather enter into that just and amiable reasoning of the apostle Paul, and say, as he does, Of him, *i. e.* of God, are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: let no flesh therefore glory in his presence; but he that glories, let him glory in the Lord. And this leads me to infer,

2. That we have a great deal of reason to "be thankful, and to adore the grace by which we are saved."

If it is God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that has shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, let us bless the Lord who has showed us this light, and with a cheerful gratitude let us bind the sacrifice, as it were, with cords unto the horns of the altar: let us bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the

world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. I would call upon you this day to do it; to join with me, and with each other, in it. Praise the Lord, all ye his saints; be thankful unto him, and bless his name! Praise him, who graciously purposed your salvation, and predestinated you to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself! Praise him, who rendered this purpose effectual, and wrought it out by a high hand and outstretched arm! Praise him, who gave his own Son to be a sacrifice for you, and to bring in everlasting righteousness! Praise him, who sent his Spirit, as the great agent in his Son's kingdom, to bring the hearts of sinners to a subjection to the gospel, and gently to captivate them to the obedience of faith! Praise him, who has revealed this glorious gospel to you, at so great a distance of time and place! Praise him, who has impressed your hearts with a disposition to regard it! Praise him, who has subdued your prejudices against it! Praise him, who, having implanted faith in your souls, continues even to this day to animate and support it!—Let all ranks and ages join in this cheerful song! Praise ye the Lord, ye that are rich in temporal possessions, if you have been enabled to renounce the world as your portion, and to triumph over it by this divine principle! Praise him, you that are poor in this world, if you are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him! Praise him, you that are cheerful and vigorous, and capable of rendering him that active service which may speak the gratitude of your hearts towards him! Praise him, you that are weak and languishing, since his strength is made perfect in your weakness, and your infirmities illustrate the force of that faith which he has wrought in you! Praise him, ye youths who, with this guide and companion of your way, are setting forth in the journey of life with courage, and lifting up your feet in his paths! Praise him, ye aged saints, who stand on the borders of eternity, and live in a daily expectation, that you shall receive the end of your faith in the salvation of your souls!—Begin that work now, in which you are all so soon to join! Break forth into one joyful anthem, and sing, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be all the praise of that salvation, which thou hast already begun in our souls, and which thy faithfulness has engaged to complete." Again,

3. If we are saved by grace through faith, then certainly "they who neglect such a method of salvation are highly inexcusable."

To be not only delivered from everlasting condemnation and ruin, but raised to the presence and enjoyment of God above, is so glorious an exchange, so important a prize, that it would be worth while to secure it at any imaginable rate, whatever was to be resigned, whatever to be endured, for it. But it is certain, that the more gracious the proposal and offer is, the baser and more criminal will the refusal be. Had some hard matter been proposed, should we not have done it? and how much rather, when the divine oracle only says, Wash and be clean? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.—To you, my brethren, even to all that hear me this day, is the word of this salvation sent, and brought: let me address you, therefore, in the language of the apostle, and say, Take heed that you receive not the grace of God in vain; and let me add, Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Dare not to trifle in a business of such consequence; lest if you should neglect it even till to-morrow, there should be no room to repeat that declaration then. That God should ever offer salvation at all, and especially in such a method, is astonishing condescension and love; and every instance in which that offer is renewed, is a renewed miracle of mercy. But the day of the divine patience has its limits; and if you trifle beyond those limits, and know not that the goodness and long-suffering of God lead to repentance, this injured mercy will plead against you, and it will appear you have treasured up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

4. If we are saved through faith, then surely "we should labour, that this blessed principle may be strengthened in our souls."

The greater evidence we have of the sincerity of our faith, the greater assurance may we justly have of our interest in the gospel salvation; and the stronger our faith is, the clearer will the evidence of its truth be. Let us therefore emulate the character of our father Abraham, and make it our care, like him, to be strong in faith, thereby giving glory to God.—To this purpose let me address you, my Christian brethren, to be diligent and serious in attending the ordinances of divine institution, and especially that of hearing the word; for as the apostle observes, Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And it is certain, the better we are acquainted with the word of God, the more shall we trace of its evidence; and it is probable, we shall also feel so much the more of its energy, awakening and confirming those internal acts of faith, which it is our duty with increasing vigour daily to renew: and I doubt not, but the experience of many that hear me, attests the reasonableness of this address.—Let me also exhort you, to seek after greater strength of faith by fervent application to God in prayer; as the disciples that came unto Jesus, and said, Lord, increase our faith. Plead, that your faith, in its original, and in its progress, is the work of God; and earnestly entreat, that his work may be perfected.—And to

add efficacy to all, labour to the utmost to bring forth the genuine fruits of true faith, in all the branches of a holy temper, and an exemplary life. Thus show to all that are about you, your faith by your works; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, worthy of him that has called you to his kingdom and glory. For in proportion to the degree with which these fruits appear, it will be evident, there is life at the root; and you will find, that as the vigour of our limbs, so also that of our virtues and graces, will grow by use and exercise. And in this view let me observe,

5. That if we are saved by grace through faith, then "there is encouragement even for the weakest soul, to seek after this gospel salvation, and to hope it shall obtain it."

Give me leave here to address myself to those, whose hearts are impressed with their eternal concerns, but then feel their own manifold weakness, and perhaps may be discouraged (as young persons very frequently are) with observing the difficulty of religion. My brethren, if your hopes of justification were by the works of the law, whether the ceremonial or the moral law, these discouragements were just: since were all the sins of your former life forgiven upon your return to God, yet through the infirmities of human nature, and the temptations of life, you would no doubt quickly fall into some new transgression; and this one, even the least, would be sufficient to ruin you, and to bring you into condemnation again. But the righteousness of faith speaks an easier and more gracious language, when it says, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. You know of whom it was said, A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench: why should you not then enter into a treaty with so mild, so gracious, so compassionate a Saviour? Nay, I will add, why should you not be saved by him? Are you willing to accept his grace? Methinks, I hear one and another reply, "What do I desire so much, as to accept it? Feeble and guilty as I am, I would at least bow as low as any of thy servants, in a thankful acknowledgment of the riches and freedom of thy grace; and I would ascribe my salvation to it in as entire a renunciation of all self-dependence, as any of them all should do." And when I ask, (as it is necessary I should ask,) are you also willing to bow to his yoke? I persuade myself, there are those of you, whose conscience answers, "Lord, I would take it upon me, with a most thankful consent: I desire nothing so much, as to serve thee; but I suspect this treacherous and inconstant heart, that is so ready to forsake thee." My brethren, this desire of serving him, if you know what you say when you express it, is the effect of his grace; and it is a comfortable token, that he will give more grace. Set yourselves therefore, with a cheerful courage, to oppose those difficulties that lie in the way, and to work out your own salvation with hope and joy, as well as with fear and trembling; for it is God that even now is working in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure; and you have abundant reason to hope, he will not forsake the work of his own hands.

6. If the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith be so divine and important as we have heard, then "let us take heed that we do not bring a reproach upon it, by an irregular and licentious behaviour."

Let the holy apostle, who is the great asserter of this doctrine, be heard as the guardian of its honour, when he says, Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! You plainly see, that this doctrine, when Scripturally explained as above, gives no rational foundation, no, nor even any plausible excuse, for such an inference, however the corruption of men's hearts may take occasion from it. And it would be far more reasonable, and much less detrimental to mankind, to endeavour to root up all the vines in the world, and destroy all the animals intended for food, because wine and flesh are sometimes the occasions and instruments of luxurious riot; than to deny this important doctrine, because it may be perverted to purposes unfriendly to practical religion. But see you to it, my friends, that you, if you are persuaded this is the doctrine of God, behave in such a manner as to show, that you perceive it to be, what indeed it is, a doctrine according to godliness. Woe to that man, by whom, in this instance, the offence comes! It had been better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea, than that he should occasion such dishonour to God, and bring such a reproach upon his truths and his ways. And give me leave to say, there is hardly any consideration in the world, that should cut deeper into the heart of the truly good man, of one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and has believed through grace, than the reflection of having made such unworthy and ungrateful returns to God, for that singular mercy which he has obtained from him, in the provision which the gospel has made for his salvation in so gracious and so endearing a way.

Let me therefore conclude, with charging you in the most solemn manner, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the honour of that gospel you so strenuously profess, that you exercise a holy watchfulness over yourselves in this respect. Consider, my brethren, how many eyes are upon you for evil. It is true indeed, that charity, that boasted name, that divine principle, would teach men another lesson: it would teach them to mourn, rather than to triumph, over the faults of them that call themselves Christians. But there is very little

of that to be found, and on the contrary, a great deal of that carnal, sensual, and diabolical zeal, which rejoices in iniquity, and takes the greatest pleasure in the irregularities of those whose failings ought most to be lamented, that is, of those who are most signalized by a Christian profession. Remember therefore, and consider, my friends, that it would be far better for you to die, than to lay a stumbling-block in the way of the souls of men; and to give them any just cause for representing the gospel as a doctrine of licentiousness, or speaking of Christ as the minister of sin.

You solemnly renounce all dependence upon your own righteousness before God; and in professing to do it, and to expect salvation by his grace alone, you do well. But give me leave to say, that if in the mean time you yourselves are found sinners, allowing yourselves habitually in any thing contrary to the divine will, the renunciation of such a righteousness as is consistent with that, will be a very unworthy kind of sacrifice before God, and do very little credit to your profession before men. And by these declarations, when compared with so bad a conduct, you will run a great risk of bringing your religious notions themselves into disgrace, and will probably build again that which you seem most solicitous to destroy. Let it therefore evidently appear, that the grace of God which appears unto all men, has effectually taught you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Let the whole world about you see, that the divine goodness to you, in which you rejoice and glory, has had its efficacy, to purify and humanize your hearts, to fill them with humanity and universal love, and to inspire them with a most friendly, benevolent, generous care for the happiness of all around you, as well as with a generous concern to make your own calling and election sure. Nothing will so powerfully plead for the gospel, as such a care to adorn it, and to seek that *salvation* which is entirely *of grace*, through sanctification of the Spirit, as well as the belief of the truth.

SERMON IV.

CHRIST'S INVITATION TO THIRSTY SOULS.

DEDICATION.

To the Reverend Mr. James Hervey.

Reverend and dear Sir,

It may perhaps surprise you, that amidst the familiarities of our intimate friendship I should, without any previous notice, address you thus publicly from the press. I am not without some apprehension that your modesty may be a little distressed on the occasion; but I am persuaded, you will on the whole forgive the desire I had, that all, to whom this little piece may come, should know, what most who are personally acquainted with us both already know, that I most highly esteem you, and most affectionately love you; and that no diversity in our professions and forms could prevent our entering into the strictest bonds of friendship, or make me unwilling most openly to profess it, and to perpetuate the memory of it, while this shall remain.

I am sorry to say, the temper that generally prevails is of such a nature, as to prohibit intimacies of this kind, and too frequently to occasion aversions, where there is no other cause of them than a variety of religious sentiments and practices. But it is our happiness, that we apprehend that temper to be as unreasonable as it is unlovely. And surely all thinking men would see it in the same view, if they would but seriously compare the importance of those things wherein we agree, with that of those in which we differ; especially if they would further reflect, that the very same principles under different views promote, in conscientious men, those different practices, which, forgetting those principles, fundamental as they are to all true religion, the professors of it are so apt to contend about.

You, my pious and honoured friend, being (I doubt not) in your own mind persuaded, that diocesan episcopacy is of divine original, and that the church hath authority to decree rites and ceremonies, and to determine controversies in matters of faith, have solemnly declared that belief: and in consequence of it, have obliged yourself to render canonical obedience to those, whom you thereby acknowledge as governing you by an authority delegated from Christ; that thus you may be subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, and thereby approve your submission to him. I have declined that subjection, not from any disrespect to the persons of the established ecclesiastical governors, many of whom I hold in the highest esteem, and number among the most distinguished ornaments of our common Christianity,) and least of all from any unwillingness to yield subjection, where I apprehend Christ to have appointed it: for so far as I know my own heart, it would be my greatest joy, to bow with all humility to any authority delegated from him. But I will freely tell you and the world, my nonconformity is founded on this, That I assuredly believe the contrary to what the constitution of the Church of England requires me to declare, on the above-mentioned heads, and on some others, to be the truth: and I esteem it much more eligible, to remain under an incapacity of sharing its honours and revenues, than to open my way to a possibility of obtaining them by what would *in me*, while I have such apprehensions, be undoubtedly an act of prevarication, hypocrisy, and falsehood; reverencing herein the authority of God, and remembering the account I must shortly give up in his presence.

Thus, Sir, on the whole, we both choose what we apprehended God requires: we both adhere to that discipline, which we believe to have been primitive; or where you give it up in some instances, it is with an upright desire, I doubt not, of conforming to what you judge to be the leading and most important articles: but we both desire, that the communion of the church may be pure, and the form of its discipline and worship truly apostolical; and would exert the power, of which we each of us think ourselves regularly possessed, to make and keep it so; though we do not estimate our respective powers alike. We pray in different words and manners; we preach in different habits, we receive the sacred supper in different postures: but we both preach repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, regeneration and sanctification by his Spirit, and subjection to his laws, and particularly to that distinguishing law of mutual love. We both address the same God, in the name of the same Mediator, and the great blessings we ask, are in the main the same. We both commemorate the death of Christ as our propitiatory sacrifice, resting our own souls, and directing our people to rest theirs, on the atonement he hath made, and the complete righteousness which he hath wrought. Thus joining in love to him as our common Saviour, and living the life which we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, we are both waiting for his salvation; expecting that ere long our spirits will be joined, in the general assembly and church of those who die in the Lord; (that assembly where perfect knowledge and love cement in everlasting bands the souls that once differed, as widely as they could differ who were one in Christ;) where we hope, through divine grace, to share ages of delight, till our bodies shall be in the same moment borne from the dust, to inherit in our complete persons the everlasting kingdom of our heavenly Father. And in the mean time, why should it be thought strange, that amidst so many endearing bonds of union, our thoughts are hardly at leisure to recollect the little circumstances in which we differ? Surely the part we are acting under these different denominations, is far more pleasing to God, more comfortable to ourselves, and more edifying to the world, than if you, dear Sir, were to set at naught your brother for his nonconformity, or I to judge mine for his conformity: and we were to infect, not to say, poison the streams of God's sanctuary, where we respectively preside, with the bitterness of contention, censure, and reproach.

I assuredly believe, my worthy brother, that in what I have now been writing with so unusual a freedom, and in what I thought I might in this connexion write with some peculiar advantage, I have uttered your sentiments as well as my own. And surely, were they more generally to prevail, the face of our religious interests in Great Britain would wear a more pleasing and more hopeful aspect. Were our hearts thus filled with a desire of approaching to each other, and disposed on one hand and the other to sacrifice, as far as with a safe conscience we could, the circumstances that divide us, where we are divided, love might perhaps find means of union, at present unthought of by most. Or in the mean time, our worshipping in different places under different forms, might be no more pernicious to the peace and prosperity of the church, than our worshipping in different places, according to the same ritual, which the greatest imaginable uniformity cannot possibly prevent, till we all come to the general assembly, and join the innumerable multitude that surround the throne of the Lamb, in that celestial temple, to which, with all the people of God below, we daily aspire.

To this blessed end I trust, through divine grace, our prayers, our discourses, our writings, and our examples will still be tending; and blessed be God, that there are so many excellent persons in both communions, whose hands and hearts are joining with ours in the prosecution of it. May their numbers, their zeal, and their charity, be daily growing! And may God establish your health, dear Sir, which is now in so tender a state, that you may long be capable of bearing your important part in so noble a work; that the parish in which you labour, or some other that may afford you a yet larger sphere of usefulness, may be happy to distant years in your edifying sermons, and in those private instructions which you are, with so exemplary, and, O that I could not say, with so uncommon, a zeal, adding to those which you address to them from the pulpit! Be assured, Sir, that no man living can more sincerely rejoice in the acceptance of your labours, and particularly in that great and general admiration in which your pious and excellent Contemplations are so justly held, by persons of almost every rank and genius, education and profession; so that the warmest friendship can hardly dictate a higher wish relating to them, than that they may be as useful as they are delightful to all your readers.

As for the Sermon, with which I here present you, it was preached near twenty years ago, and has long lain by me transcribed among several others, which I have prepared for the press, that if surviving

friends should desire it, they may be offered to the world after my death. It is now published at the importunate request of a worthy member of the established church, to whom in the intimacy of our friendship it had been communicated, and who has himself been very deeply impressed with the representation of the important truths which are handled in it. My obligations to him, and my regard for his judgment, would not permit me to dispute such a point with him: and I was the more ready to comply with his desire, as something of a peculiar blessing seemed to attend the Discourse, when delivered from the pulpit; and that to such a degree, as I do not know to have been equalled by any other sermon I ever preached. This encourages me to hope that, plain as it is, and destitute of almost every charm that might recommend it to a modern taste, the perusal of it may be useful towards promoting the great end of the Christian ministry; which undoubtedly is, to bring men to a proper application to that compassionate Saviour whose overflowing goodness is here celebrated, and by that means to lead them to every grace and virtue, as the genuine fruit of faith, and of that love which will naturally be connected with it. I will not call this the grand secret of reforming the world; for blessed be God, it is not a secret, but it is the mighty instrument, which divine mercy has put into the hands of the ministers of Jesus, to accomplish ends which all the wisdom of ancient and modern philosophers has attempted in vain: and God is to this day bearing testimony to the word of his grace. Yes, dear Sir, I will never be ashamed to confess it, that I have the joy to see, in your assemblies and in ours, that where these doctrines are faithfully and effectually preached, they rise, like the warm beams of the sun on the face of the earth, benumbed by the rigour of winter; and call forth into verdure, beauty, and fragrancy, a thousand excellent productions, the very seeds of which would otherwise have perished. Renew, my worthy friend, the ardour of your prayers, that the God of the spirits of all flesh may every where excite a multitude of enlightened and animated witnesses, to these vital truths of his everlasting gospel; and that his blessing may attend every effort for the advancement of this sacred cause: and particularly, that it may, notwithstanding all its imperfections, attend this humble attempt, from the hand of,

Reverend and dear Sir, your affectionate brother
in the work of the Christian ministry,
and ever faithful friend and servant,

Northampton, Sept. 18, 1748 P. DODDRIDGE.

JOHN vii. 37.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

ALL the words of our blessed Redeemer deserve our very serious regard; for, his enemies themselves being judges, never man spake as he did. But there is something in the words now before us, which may justly challenge a peculiar attention; as they were not spoken in ordinary converse, or to a little circle of domestic friends, but delivered in the temple, with a loud voice, on a solemn day, and in the midst of a very numerous assembly. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, or made proclamation, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

It is plain from the second verse, that the feast here spoken of is the feast of tabernacles; which was instituted in commemoration of God's giving the law to Israel, and conducting them through the wilderness, where they dwelt in tents. The feast lasted eight days; most of the former of them were spent in tabernacles or arbours made up of branches of the most shady trees, and adorned with the finest flowers and fruits which that delightful country afforded in the month of September. It is not improbable, but on all these days the pious worshippers would sometimes quit these pleasant retreats, to attend the services of the temple: but it was the express command of God that the whole eighth day should be spent there, that being a holy convocation, on which, besides other institutions then to be attended, the whole law was to be read over in the audience of all the people, from the original copy which was laid up in the holy of holies. This was the last day, that great day of the feast, which the evangelist mentions in the words before us.

The Jewish writers assure us, that towards the latter end of their commonwealth, they had a peculiar ceremony on this day, to which our Lord may probably here refer. After they had surrounded the altar seven times, with palm branches in their hands, and hosannas of praise, some of the Levites used to pour out, in the court of the temple, a considerable quantity of water, drawn from the fountain of Siloam; the people in the mean time singing those words of Isaiah, With joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation. It is very probable they did this as a token of their expectation and desire of the Messiah's appearance, who was to sprinkle many nations, to pour water on him that was thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.

It was probably during the time of this ceremony, or immediately after it, that our Lord stood up, perhaps on some eminence, (as the priest who made his libation did,) and cried or proclaimed with a loud and distinct voice, these gracious and important words, If any man thirst, let him come unto me,

and drink, *q. d.* "You all believe the promises of the Messiah, and you have invented this rite as a token that you expect his coming, and long for the effusion of the Spirit, which is then to be bestowed. Behold in me the person whom you profess so eagerly to expect. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath in effect said in many places,* (or he who has that faith in me which the Scripture requires,) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, *i. e.* he shall receive the communications of the Spirit in such abundant degrees, as shall not only be refreshing to himself, but shall render him capable of administering, in the freest and most plentiful manner, to the comfort and edification of others. So richly shall he be furnished with its gifts and graces, that spiritual instructions and consolations shall flow from him † like water from a fountain, which branches itself out into mighty rivers." Thus the evangelist himself teaches us to expound these words, when he says, verse 39, This he spake of the Spirit which they who believed on him should receive.

Our Lord speaks of the Spirit here: but we must remember that it is not in an abstracted view, as separate from, but as in conjunction with, the other blessings of his gospel, and as preparatory to a state of eternal happiness. And therefore these words, in which the blessed Jesus expresseth his ability and readiness to bestow the Spirit, do evidently imply that he is both able and willing to impart all the blessings of this gospel, to all those who do sincerely desire them; and this without any exception. A glorious truth! The epitome of the gospel, and the hope and life of our souls! Which, in a humble dependence on divine influences, I shall now endeavour to illustrate and confirm. I will,

I. Show you that the springs of the most valuable blessings are in Christ.

II. Prove that he is not as a fountain sealed, but diffuses these streams with a divine freedom, and in the richest abundance, for the relief of every thirsty soul.

III. I shall add some practical reflections.

I. I am to show you, that the springs of the most valuable blessings are in Christ; so that he is abundantly able to refresh the thirsty soul.

My brethren, I may say in the name of my great Master, as was said to Israel of old, Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Extend your desires to the utmost boundaries that are consistent with reason and piety, and from him you may receive the most copious supply; for he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

I will not enlarge on the general proof of this fundamental truth, which so often occurs. I will not speak particularly of the fulness of Godhead which dwells in him bodily; nor of that communicated fulness which is treasured up in him as Man and Mediator, by the pleasure of the Father, of which we have all received even grace for grace, *i. e.* an abundance of grace. I aim, in my present Discourse, not so much at enlightening the understanding, in the evidence of a doctrine so universally allowed amongst all professing Christians; as at affecting your heart and my own, with a sense of what, even while we acknowledge, we are all so prone to forget.

Let me entreat you then to reflect, on this occasion, what are those blessings which a rational soul would most eagerly desire, most ardently thirst after. You will immediately reply, if you know God and yourselves, "We are guilty creatures, and we need a pardon; so need it, as to be for ever undone without it. We are naturally indigent and dependent, and we need an interest in the constant paternal care of the great Author of our being. We are polluted, weak, and disconsolate, and we need the energy of the divine Spirit, to purify, to strengthen, and to revive us. We are immortal creatures, on the borders of the grave, through which we are shortly to enter on the eternal world; and therefore we need, and cannot but earnestly desire, an interest in that future and unchangeable happiness." My friends, if this be your judgment, it is according to truth: may these desires be continually growing in your souls! for, be the thirst ever so impatient, the streams which flow from this living fountain are abundantly sufficient to relieve it.

1. Do you thirst for the pardon of sin? From the Lord Jesus Christ you may receive a supply.

Inconsiderable as this may seem to the careless sinner, whose eyes are sleeping the sleep of death, to the enlightened soul it cannot but appear of infinite importance. When once convictions take hold of the heart; when the sacred law of the eternal God is thrown open in all its extent and all its purity, and conscience charges us with our violations of it, when that awful hand appears to write Tekel against us, Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting, no wonder if trembling and astonishment seize us: no wonder if even our joints are loosed, and our knees smite one against another, when angry Omnipotence appears, as it were, rising against us in all its terrors, and hell seems to open its mouth to devour us. Well may other cares and passions be lost in this, as the rustling of a leaf in the report of thunder. Accordingly, the awakened sinner is represented as inquiring, not after a blessing out of the corn-floor and the wine-press, not saying, What shall I eat,

* For I do not apprehend, with Mr Whiston, that our Lord refers to some passage that is lost.

† Out of his belly, *i. e.* from within him—Heart, mind, conscience. Comp. Job xx. 35. Their belly, *i. e.* mind, prepareth deceit. Job xx. 20. He shall not feel quietness in his belly, *i. e.* his conscience. Prov. xx. 27. The candle of the Lord searcheth the inward parts of the belly, *i. e.* mind. Ibid ver. 30. Stripes cleanse the inward parts of the belly, *i. e.* Afflictions may be the means of purifying the soul.

and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed? but as possessed by other thoughts, which now appear of infinitely greater moment. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? He is represented as willing, if possible, to purchase a pardon, not only at the expense of the most costly offerings, with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, were they at his disposal, but with a sacrifice abundantly more precious than these; Shall I give, says he, my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? David speaks of himself as thirsting for pardon, when he says, under a sense of guilt, Whilst I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. It was like an envenomed arrow shot into his soul, the poison of which diffused itself through all his veins, and even drank up the vital spirits.

Now if any of you have felt, or do now feel, this raging thirst, if you experimentally know that restlessness of mind which is the inseparable attendant of such a circumstance, it must be matter of joy to hear that the blessed Jesus can allay these eager desires, can sweetly compose the soul in the midst of these painful agonies, by that blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel. We are expressly told, that in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins; that God hath exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; and that by him we may be justified, not only from the slighter irregularities of life, but from the greatest enormities of it, even from all those things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; for which that dispensation appointed no expiatory sacrifices, but condemned the offender to die without mercy.

2. Do you thirst for the favour of God? Our Lord Jesus Christ is able to introduce you to it.

It is most evident, that this is in its own nature infinitely desirable; and when the eyes of a man's understanding are enlightened, it will undoubtedly appear so. "And is there," will he immediately cry out, "is there indeed a Being of infinite perfection and glory, the overflowing eternal fountain of happiness? And will he communicate of himself to mortal and to sinful creatures? Will he not only sheathe the flaming sword of his vengeance, but extend the golden sceptre of his grace? Will he not only sign the pardon of such ungrateful rebels, but even adopt them into the number of his children? How does my soul long to look upwards, and call him my Father! Happy creatures, whom he admits into such a relation! to whom he reveals himself under so endearing a character! Happy creatures indeed, that can go out and come in, that can lie down and rise up, under the impression of this glorious transporting thought, God is ever surrounding us with his favourable presence, is ever with us as a father and a friend! O that this happiness were mine! How rich should I be in such a portion, though I were stripped of my earthly all, and sent out hungry and hardly bestead, to seek my bread in desolate places! Let unthinking wretches say, Who will show us any temporal good; but while I have a voice to express, and a soul to form, a desire, this shall be its language, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me!"

This, my friends, is the tendency of the soul to its proper centre; and as it is of all others the most natural, so in a sanctified heart it is of all others the most forcible and lively. Therefore this kind of desires is represented in Scripture, by the most eager and impatient thirst, even that of a hunted deer after refreshing streams: As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God! And elsewhere, My soul thirsteth for God; my flesh longeth for thee, as in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: "The thirsty pilgrim cannot long more for cooling streams, when parched up in a sandy desert, than I for thee." Nay, the ardour of his desire is represented as extorting a passionate cry, My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Do you, my friends, feel any such holy breathings? Can you adopt these pathetic words of David, as expressive of the inward sentiments of your soul? Blessed be God, they are not hopeless desires? The Lord Jesus Christ is the sacred channel, through which the waters of life flow, from the everlasting, inexhaustible fountain! It was the very business which he came into the world about, to establish a friendship between God and his apostate creatures. Therefore we are expressly told, that God hath made us accepted in the Beloved: and our Lord assures us, that he can introduce us to so great an intimacy with him, that it may properly be said, that he even dwells in our souls; If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

3. Do you thirst for the communications of the Spirit? The Lord Jesus Christ can abundantly relieve you.

Are you sensible of those pollutions, which have overspread your souls, and have sullied the original beauties of them? Are you mourning over a law in your members, which wars against that of your minds? Are you complaining of the weakness of your degenerate natures, that when to will is present with you, how to perform that which is good

you find not? Are gloomy apprehensions arising in your minds in consequence of such disorders? Do you tremble under the fears of divine displeasure, already suspecting the safety of your state, or fearing lest you should lose what you have attained? It is evident you need the influences of the Spirit, whose office it is to purify, to invigorate, and to cheer the soul. Now it is from the Lord Jesus Christ that this Spirit is to be communicated, and therefore it is called the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and it is said, that of his fulness we have all received, even grace for grace, as I before observed. And for this very reason, because the Spirit was purchased by his blood, is treasured up in his hand, and dispensed by him; all the blessed operations produced by his agency are ascribed to Christ, by whom it is declared that the soul is sanctified, strengthened, and comforted. Christ of God is made unto us sanctification. I, says the apostle, can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. Our consolations abound through Christ. It was the more proper and necessary to insist on this, as the text doth so immediately relate to the supplies of the Spirit.

4. Do you thirst for the joys and glories of the heavenly world? The Lord Jesus Christ is able to relieve you.

One would think, it were absolutely impossible to believe them, and not ardently to desire a share in them. One would think, that when we have been taking the most transient survey of the land of promise, as delineated in the word of God, we should immediately cry out, as Moses in the views of an earthly Canaan, I pray thee let me go over, and see that pleasant land, which is beyond Jordan, even that goodly mountain and Lebanon. "It is delightful to view it from hence; but, O when shall I enter upon it! When shall I taste those pleasures of which I now hear, and drink of those refreshing streams which shine so beautiful in the distant prospect!" We, says the apostle, who are in this tabernacle, do groan being burthened, not that we may be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. And if we are thus thirsting for expected glory, to whom should we go but to that Redeemer, who has the words of eternal life. He is the Lord of both worlds, and heaven as well as earth is subject to his command. All power is given unto him, both in heaven and upon earth. Let him but give forth the sovereign word, and the golden gates, the everlasting doors, shall be lifted up to admit us, and a throne of glory erected, radiant and exalted, as he shall ordain. He therefore speaks of it as his peculiar office, and certain care, to prepare seats and abodes of felicity for his people in the invisible world, and at length to translate them thither. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am there you may be also."

I hope this may be sufficient to prove, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able to satisfy the most important desires of the soul, and to allay its most eager thirst,—for the pardon of sin,—the favour of God,—the communications of the Spirit,—and the happiness of the future state. "It is true," will the humble soul say, "I firmly believe the springs of the most valuable blessings are in him; but have I any encouragement to hope that he will open them for the relief of so mean and so unworthy a creature as I?" This is the business of my second general, viz.

II. To prove, that the Lord Jesus is willing to communicate of these living streams with a divine freedom, for the refreshment of every humble soul who sincerely thirsts after them.

Blessed be God, there is a cloud of witnesses to attest a truth in which our hopes for time and for eternity are so nearly concerned. I appeal to the invitations, to the Spirit, to the tears, to the blood of the great Redeemer, and to the experience of every pious soul in heaven and on earth.

1. Let the invitations of Christ witness, that he is ready to relieve thirsty souls.

The gospel times are described in the prophetic writings, as times of extraordinary plenty, in which the most nourishing and delightful provision should be offered to all, in the most generous and liberal manner. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And if we look into the history of the evangelists, we shall see the prophecy accomplished in its fullest extent. For we shall there find our blessed Redeemer publishing the free and unlimited offers of his grace, to all that were willing to accept it. You cannot be strangers to the passages I refer to:—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise, or on no account whatsoever, cast out: and in the text it is proclaimed, before the most numerous assembly, on a most public occasion, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. Can any invitation be more general, more intelligible, more affecting, than these? Hardly should we have imagined it possible, unless we had in some respects seen yet more pathetic declarations than even those I have now recited. Yes, my friends, our Lord Jesus Christ knew the weakness of our minds, and seems to have been aware of a foolish scruple which might possibly arise in them. We might, perhaps, have been ready to say, "the blessed Jesus was indeed in a surprising degree tender and compassionate, whilst he

dwelt on earth, and was himself surrounded with all the innocent infirmities of our nature: but can we be sure that he retains the same overflowing tenderness now he is returned to the regions of glory, and surrounded with all the dignity and pleasures of so exalted a station, and all the employments which attend so high an administration?" To obviate even this suspicion, ungrounded as it is, he has been pleased, since his ascension and exaltation, to send us repeated messages of love; and he speaks from the throne of his glory in as condescending and endearing language as he ever appears to have used in his humblest abasement. And to awaken our attention, and to confirm our faith, he introduces the declaration with a very solemn preface, of which the beloved disciple takes care to give us a particular account. He said unto me, Write, *q. d.* Let it be recorded for the instruction and consolation of the remotest ages; for these words which I am now about to utter, are true and faithful, and therefore may be entirely depended upon, as the foundation of the most cheerful confidence. And what are these important words? And he said, It is done: the great work is now accomplished, the redemption is complete: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, whose nature and promises are for ever the same; and in consequence of all this, I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. To the same purpose are those remarkable words in the next chapter, so near the close of the canon of Scripture, I, Jesus, have sent mine angel, or messenger, to testify these things unto the churches, as things in which all the churches are most intimately concerned; and to give the greater weight to them, let it be remembered, I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And observe, whither so pompous an introduction tends, and where it centres: The Spirit and the bride say, Come: and let him that heareth say, Come; for whoever he be, he may join in proclaiming the invitation: Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. My brethren, had our Lord allowed us, as it were, to choose for ourselves, and to dictate to him in what words he should express himself to us, to silence every doubt, and to banish every fear, I cannot imagine that we could have found any more expressive form of speech than this, Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely. And can we suspect, that the Lord of truth and of glory would speak a language foreign to his heart? that he would mock and delude unhappy mortals with insincere proposals and airy hopes! That be far from him, and the thought be far from us! Hath he spoken, and shall he not do it? Hath he promised, and shall he not make it good? But further,

2. Let the Spirit of Christ witness his readiness to relieve thirsty souls.

I know there is a great deal of difference betwixt the common operations of the Spirit on the minds of those who continue obstinate and impenitent, and those special influences by which he sweetly, but powerfully, subdues the hearts of those who are chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Yet I am persuaded, that none to whom the gospel comes are utterly neglected by that sacred agent. It is observable to this purpose, that Stephen charges it upon the Jews, that they and their fathers had always resisted the Holy Ghost. Now, this charge of resisting him plainly supposed, that he had still been striving with them; for, if there had been no attempt on the one hand, there could have been no resistance on the other. If, then, the Spirit of God wrought in some degree on all the Jews, throughout every age and period of their state, it seems highly reasonable to believe, that he works on those who enjoy the gospel now; since this dispensation, with special reference to the extraordinary effusions of the Holy Ghost, is called by the apostle, The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

For the further confirmation of this, I question not but I might appeal to the experience of every one that hears me this day. Surely none of you that are come to years of discretion, have always been unaffected with divine things. Some impressions have been made, some convictions awakened, some purposes formed: and in all these instances God is drawing you, and the Spirit says, Come. Now, as the Spirit operates under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, these calls of the Spirit are to be considered as evidences of that readiness in Christ to bestow the blessings of the gospel, which I am now endeavouring to prove.

3. Let the tears of Christ witness his readiness to relieve those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

If we have not some very inveterate suspicion of a person's insincerity and artifice, we readily believe, that his heart is touched when we see the tears flow from his eyes. Behold then the tears of a Redeemer over perishing souls, and judge by them of the compassions of his heart! You know that celebrated instance, when he beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. Our Lord was then in a triumphant procession, attended by acclamations of the people, who were shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David: and as for Jerusalem, which he beheld from the mount of Olives, it was a city polluted with enormous crimes, and the abode of his most implacable enemies, who were then actually conspiring his murder, which he knew they would in a few days effect. Justly might he have triumphed in that approaching ruin, which he knew a righteous God

would bring upon them, for that as well as their other provocations. But behold his compassion! Instead of insulting, he weeps over them, and says, If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, which even yet is continued, the things that belong to thy peace!—but now they are hid from thine eyes. The natural broken language of genuine and overflowing sorrow! Surely nothing can be more melting, than such tears, falling from such eyes, and in such circumstances. And if our Lord could not give up the impenitent sinners of Jerusalem without weeping over them, surely he will not despise the humble and penitent soul, who is, perhaps with tears, seeking his favour, and flying to his grace as his only refuge.

4. Let the blood of Christ witness, that he is ready to impart the blessings of his gospel.

The tears of our blessed Redeemer must needs be convincing and affecting, if the mind be not sunk into an almost incredible stupidity; but his blood is still more so. View him, my brethren, not only in the previous scenes of his abasement, his descent from heaven, and his abode on earth; but view him on mount Calvary, extended on the cross, torn with thorns, wounded with nails, pierced with a spear; and then say, whether there be not a voice in each of these sacred wounds, which loudly proclaims the tenderness of his heart, and demonstrates beyond all possibility of dispute or suspicion, his readiness to relieve the distressed soul, that cries to him for the blessings of the gospel. He died to purchase them, not for himself, but for us; and can it be thought he will be unwilling to bestow them? We may well conclude that he loved us, since he shed his blood to wash us from our sins; for greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but he hath commended his love towards us, hath set it off by this illustrious and surprising circumstance, that while we were strangers and enemies, he hath died for us.

5. Let the experience of every pious soul, whether on earth or in heaven, witness the readiness of Christ to communicate the blessings of his gospel for the relief of those who thirst for them.

Could we lift up our eyes to the regions of glory, and count all the happy spirits which are arrived there from these abodes of darkness and sorrow, we should find in each of them an everlasting witness, and monument, of the great truth I am now labouring to assert. Should we behold them in their robes of majesty, with their golden crowns, and their victorious palms, and inquire, as the apostle did, Who are these that are clothed in white robes, and from whence do they come? The answer would be the same: These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They have found him both a powerful and a compassionate Saviour, and therefore they are fixed in a state of undecaying felicity. And some of them could confess even the blackest crimes, committed before they were brought to an acquaintance with him; but they were no bars in the way of that grace, which is extended and magnified, even to the chief of sinners.

The experience of the saints in heaven witnesseth this; and the experience of the saints on earth doth as it were echo back their testimony. Would you have living and visible witnesses? Blessed be God, they are not wanting: I hope, I may add, they are not far distant; and with regard to many of you that hear me this day, I hope and trust, that you have the witness within you. I doubt not, but several in this assembly may say, As we have heard, so have we seen and felt: many a one, that may lay his hand on his breast, and cry out in the words of the Psalmist, This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his trouble, from that which was incomparably more than all the rest. "Oppressed with a burthen of grief and of fear, I threw myself at the feet of a Redeemer, and he gently raised me; he kindly embraced me; he smiled upon my soul, and said, by the voice of his blessed Spirit, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." What can we oppose to such a cloud of witnesses? Let us cheerfully admit the evidence. Let us joyfully trust the power and the grace of him, who this day renews his compassionate invitation, and says, and crieth, as in the text, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

III. I conclude with a more particular application.

And here I would address myself,—to those who do not yet thirst after gospel-blessings,—to those who are now thirsting after them,—and to those who have already received some refreshment.

1. Let me apply myself to those who do not yet thirst after the blessings of the gospel.

And are there none of that character among you? Are there none in this assembly, who hear me with negligence and coldness, and know in their own conscience that the bent of their desires and pursuits is directed quite another way? My friends, I have a message from God to you; and I would entreat you, that you would suffer your consciences to answer these two questions, plain indeed, but of infinite importance,—Are not the blessings which Christ offers, worth thirsting for?—And is not the time approaching, when, if you persist in your present neglect, you will thirst for them in vain?

Are your souls sunk into so degenerate a taste, and are you so divested of the common reason of men, as not to see, that the blessings proposed are highly excellent, and well worthy the most ardent desire, and the most vigorous pursuit, of every

guilty yet immortal creature! Is it not truly desirable, that our guilt should be cancelled, that the displeasure of God should be averted, and his favour secured! and that our souls should be purified, strengthened, and supported by divine consolations, now, until they are conducted to a state of everlasting happiness? Is it not desirable, that a creature made for a perpetual duration, should have some more stable and permanent happiness than this mortal life?

You know in your own consciences, that these things are truly desirable: and would to God you would seriously compare them with those vain cares, and those sordid pleasures, for the sake of which you neglect and despise them. How utterly contemptible would those cares and pleasures appear! How unworthy even of a mention or a thought when brought into such a comparison!

But let me further inquire, is not the time approaching, when you will thirst for these blessings in vain? You are now insensible of your need of them, and lose yourselves in a variety of amusing dreams, in which you fancy you are possessed of some considerable happiness. But, wretched creatures, in a few years at most death will awaken you; and then you will know the value of those blessings which you now despise; then you will feel an insatiable thirst after them. Your case will then appear exactly like that described by the prophet, As when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and is not satisfied; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite. The appetites of your souls after those valuable refreshments will then be excited; but, alas! they will be excited only to torment you. It is a most melancholy case which is represented in the parable, of a poor creature, who, after he had passed his life in the midst of the most overflowing plenty, was at length plunged into a state of indigence and misery, from which he beheld Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried, saying, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. It seemed a very modest petition; he could hardly have asked a smaller favour than a drop of water, and there seemed something peculiarly mortifying, in receiving it from the finger of Lazarus; and yet you know, by the sequel of the story, that even this was denied him. This is the representation, which our Redeemer himself hath given us, of the condition of sinners in the eternal world: and will it not be a dreadful condition to you, especially when aggravated by those rivers of living water which once surrounded you, and by this gracious proclamation, so often repeated, and so often despised: If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

2. I would address myself to those who are now thirsting for the blessings of the gospel.

I hope, through grace, there are some such amongst you; some, whose thirst is excited by what hath now been spoken, and are borrowing the words of David, in a sublimer sense than that in which they were originally intended; O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! O that I might taste of those delightful streams which flow from the Rock of ages! To you, my friends, I would briefly say,—Consider the thirst you feel as a token for good,—and be importunate in your addresses to him who is so able and willing to grant a supply.

You may consider the thirst which you feel as a token for good. The generality of mankind despise these blessings: and why do you desire them? Surely you may consider these desires as of a heavenly original. It is the voice of Christ that is now speaking; it is the Spirit of Christ that is now pleading with your heart; so that I may say to you, as was said to the blind man in the gospel who was so earnestly begging a cure, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee. What can therefore remain, but that you should immediately apply yourselves to him. Go directly, and plead the case with him. Prostrate thyself, O humble penitent; prostrate thyself before his throne, and say, "Blessed Jesus, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I thirst after the blessings of thy gospel. Thou seest that I most ardently long for the pardon of sin, the favour of God, the influences of thy Spirit, and the glories of thine heavenly kingdom. I am fully persuaded, that with regard to all these thou art able to do for me abundantly above all I can ask or think. And wilt thou not relieve me? Wilt thou not give me to drink? Wherefore, then, are thine invitations published in the gospel? Wherefore didst thou proclaim those gracious words, which have been this day so frequently repeated in thine house? Why does thy Spirit even now work upon my heart, and raise there this fervency of desire? Wherefore didst thou weep? Wherefore didst thou bleed? Wherefore didst thou die, if thou hadst no compassion for perishing sinners? But thou hast compassion; thou hast already extended it to thousands on earth and millions in heaven. Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief! I throw myself at thy feet; nor can I fear I shall perish there, unless infinite power be weakened, and infinite love be exhausted." If but one soul return from the assembly with these sentiments, and these resolutions, all the labours of this day, and many former days, will be abundantly repaid; for that soul will surely be relieved, and God in Christ be glorified and exalted. And now,

3. I would conclude, with addressing myself to those who have already tasted these refreshments. With regard to such I would offer the following exhortations.

Be thankful for the refreshments you have already received. Bless God, that such merciful provision is made in the gospel, for the relief and comfort of necessitous creatures; and above all, be thankful, that you have been engaged to seek and to prize it, while so many are, as it were, dying for thirst, in the midst of these overflowing streams. It is said of Hagar, that when she was almost perishing in the wilderness, the Lord opened her eyes, and she saw a fountain of water. So it is in your case: the Lord hath opened your eyes, and therefore you have seen this fountain.

Be solicitous, that others may taste those refreshments which have been imparted to you. It is said of Hagar, in the passage cited above, that when God had discovered this supply, she not only drank herself, but gave to her child, and he also drank. So should you, my friends, be charitably concerned for the happiness of others as well as for your own. You that are parents should be concerned, that your children may drink; and you that are masters, that your servants may drink; and all, that your friends and neighbours may be refreshed. For, blessed be God, there is no danger of sinking this river by repeated plentiful draughts: still would it flow on, still would it overflow its borders, though not only we, but all the inhabitants of the earth, should not merely taste it, but live upon it. Which leads me to add,

Continue your application to Christ for further supplies. We are told, that the miraculous stream which flowed from the rock attended the Israelites in their various removes. They still drank of the Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Such are the waters that flow from the Rock of Ages; they do not only refresh the soul on its first conversion, but they afford it daily comfort and support. Be constant therefore in your applications to Christ, and diligent in the use of all appointed means for deriving influences from him.

To conclude all, long after the heavenly world, where you shall receive a more abundant supply. The waters which followed Israel through the wilderness, failed when they came into an inhabited land: but this river of life will never forsake the believer; it will flow with him sweetly through the dark valley of the shadow of death, till it spreads itself into wider and deeper streams, in the lovely regions of the heavenly Canaan. Thus are we told, that in the New Jerusalem the river of the water of life proceedeth from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And thus our Lord assures the woman of Samaria, Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but it shall be in him as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. What then remains, but that we each of us cry out, as she did, Lord, give us of this living water, that we may thirst no more, nor come, as now, to these ordinances to draw! Amen.

A HYMN

I.

THE Lord of life exalted stands,
Aloud he cries, and spreads his hands:
He calls ten thousand sinners round,
And sends a voice from every wound.

II.

"Attend, all ye that thirst, draw near,
And satiate all your wishes here!
Behold the living fountain flows
In streams as various as your woes!

III.

"An ample pardon here I give,
And bid the sentenced rebel live;
Show him my Father's smiling face,
And lodge him in his dear embrace.

IV.

"I purge from sin's detested stain,
And make the crimson white again;
Lead to celestial joys refined,
And lasting as the deathless mind.

V.

"Must I anew my pity prove?
Witness the words of melting love,
The gushing tear, the labouring breath,
And all these scars of bleeding death."

VI.

Blessed Saviour, I can doubt no more;
I hear, and wonder, and adore:
Panting I seek that fountain-head,
Whence waters so divine proceed.

VII.

Clear spring of life! flow on, and roll
With growing swell from pole to pole,
'Till flowers and fruits of paradise
Round all thy winding current rise!

VIII.

Still near thy stream may I be found
Long as I tread this earthly ground!
Cheer with thy wave death's gloomy shade,
Then through the fields of Canaan spread!

SERMON V.

THE GUILT AND DOOM OF CAPERNAUM

PREFACE.

Relative to the awful event of the second shock of an Earthquake, in London, March 8, 1749-50. The Sermon was preached at Salters Hall, August 20, 1749.

THIS plain sermon which I now offer to the public, was preached to a very large and attentive auditory, the last Lord's day that I spent in London, from such hints as my many engagements in town would permit me to prepare; and it was delivered, with those genuine marks of deep impression on my own mind, which often do more to command regard to a preacher, than any accuracies of composition. It was judged so suitable to the state of things in that city, by some who had long enjoyed opportunities of knowing it much better than myself, and for whose judgment I had a great regard, that I was immediately desired with some importunity to send it to the press: but I thought I had then sufficient reasons for putting a negative upon that request; especially arising from my desire of despatching, with all convenient speed, the remaining volumes of the Family Expositor; a work which, having finished in short hand, I am now transcribing for the press, and which I never intermit for one day. But what has so lately passed in London, has renewed such a solicitous concern in my mind for its inhabitants, amongst whom I have so large a number of valuable friends, that it has suggested to me the thought, and after a little deliberation the resolution, of doing that unasked, which before I had resolutely declined.

Considering the lethargic state of so many souls, I have long thought it the prudence of Christian ministers, to improve those public alarms, which remarkable providences may excite in the minds of considerable numbers, by renewing those plain and earnest remonstrances, which in calmer hours men are so ready to neglect. I doubt not, but whilst I was yesterday representing these things to my own congregation, that many of my brethren in the city (and I look on all the ministers of Christ as my brethren) were wisely availing themselves of the consternation into which so many were thrown on Thursday morning; and that very suitable things were said, of which some will soon be made public. Yet I cannot but hope, that the perusal of what so many hundreds heard, before an *earthquake* was thought of by them or by me, and when there was nothing uncommon to awaken an attention, may have its peculiar weight. I hope it will renew the impressions which were formerly made on the hearers, and communicate (as such truths are now so evidently suitable) the like impressions to many more. I know not, what I have myself been more awfully affected with any sermon I have published or preached: I may say, in a literal sense, that I have transcribed it with tears and trembling, and that horror hath taken hold upon me in the review of what is here represented. I am not aware of having made any material alteration in the substance of the Discourse, especially in its most interesting parts, though I cannot pretend to answer for it, that every sentence is just as it was delivered. But I hope that I shall be excused, if in the remainder of this Preface, I add a kind of supplement to the Sermon, and address myself to the inhabitants of London, (for whom I am under so many obligations to be tenderly concerned,) in such a manner as I might have done, had this Discourse been delivered among them immediately after that *shock*, by which I assuredly know that many were thrown into such great and just consternation.

You have now, Sirs, very lately had repeated and surprising demonstrations of the Almighty power of that infinite and adorable Being, whom, in the midst of your various harms and amusements, you are so ready to forget. His hand hath once and again within these five weeks lifted up your mighty city from its basis, and shook its million of inhabitants, in all their dwellings. The palaces of the great, yea, even of the greatest, have not been exempted; that the princes of the land might be wise, and its judges and lawgivers might receive instruction. And is not the voice of this earthquake like that of the angel in the Apocalypse, flying in the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting gospel, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, and worship him that made heaven and earth? Who would not indeed fear him, who looketh on the earth and it trembleth, and in whose hand are its deep places?

I suppose what you have so lately felt to be the result of natural causes, but remember, they were causes disposed by Him, who, from the day in which he founded our island, and laid the foundations of the earth, knew every circumstance of their operation, with infinitely more certainty, than the most skilful engineer the disposition and success of a mine, which he hath prepared and directed, and which

he fires in the appointed moment. And do not your hearts meditate terror? Especially when you consider how much London hath done, and even you yourselves have done, to provoke the eyes of his holiness, and awaken the vengeance of his almighty arm! The second shock was it seems more dreadful than the first; and may not the third be yet more dreadful than the second? So that this last may seem as a merciful signal to prepare—for what may with the most terrible propriety be called an untimely grave indeed; a grave that shall receive the living with the dead. Have you never read of streets, and towns, and cities, overthrown in a few moments, and of many thousands of inhabitants, great and small, who have gone down alive into the pit? And can you be secure, because these horrible devastations have hitherto happened chiefly in more southern climates, that they shall be confined entirely to them? Can any of you be secure, even while you are reading these lines, that the ground may not tremble and reel under you; that the houses already twice shaken within these few weeks, may not now fall and crush you beneath their ruins? And will any of you go on to forget God, and to make light of that eternal salvation which has so awful a counterpart in eternal destruction? Oh, think of what you have lately felt! And think, whether in that amazing moment you could have done any thing material to prepare for another world, if eternity had depended upon that momentary preparation! A shriek of wild consternation, a cry as you were sinking, "the Lord have mercy upon us!" would probably have been of very little significancy to those that have so long despised mercy, and would not have thought of asking it but in the last extremity; and yet nothing more could have been expected in the circumstance we have been supposing.

Let me then beseech those that have neglected religion, to think more attentively of it; and those that trifle in it, more seriously to lay it to heart. Let me beseech the families that call not upon God's name, to think how righteously judgment might be commissioned to enter the houses, where prayer cannot (after all the importunity so often used) be admitted as a guest. While yet you seem as it were to feel your whole city moving, let me take so uncommon an opportunity of reminding you all, how important it is to secure a kingdom that cannot be moved, to secure everlasting habitations to receive you there, since your dwellings here, how strong and magnificent soever, are thus evidently precarious. I am well aware, that terrors alone are not sufficient to introduce the Lord Jesus Christ, and the efficacy of his gospel, into your hearts; but like the awful ministry of John the Baptist, they may prepare his way. An external reformation they may more probably produce; and whatever some may have incautiously asserted to the contrary, I cannot but think that is one considerable step towards the other. If therefore this alarming convulsion of the earth, which has made your houses totter, may so far shake your hearts, as to procure a remedy to the most crying evils, I shall hope, not only that the further judgments of God on so sinful a nation may be diverted, but that many who have been disobedient to the wisdom of the just may be found, in the noblest and most important sense, a people prepared unto the Lord. We may cheerfully hope it, —if the great will exert themselves to remedy the visible contempt of public and domestic worship, the undisguised violation of the sabbath both at home and abroad, and that licentiousness of behaviour so common among their servants, which generally renders those profligate creatures the shame of their masters' houses, the nuisance of the neighbourhood around them, and the scourge and ruin of the families they afterwards form; —if magistrates maintain the decorum of their own characters, and vigorously exert themselves to chastise, and, so far as the strenuous execution of the law may effect it, to eradicate, those audacious enormities, which seem to glory in a superiority to it, enormities so affronting to God and to our rulers, so infamous to our country, and so pernicious to public order and private safety, —if ministers, laying aside those subtle trifles, which so soon evaporate into air, and sometimes generate very noxious vapours, will deal plainly and earnestly with their hearers, as with persons who are daily upon the borders of eternity, and will carry that ardent concern for their salvation, which should always breathe from their pulpits, into the families they visit; —if the rising generation be diligently instructed in the genuine principles of religion, guarded against the effeminacy, luxury, and vanity of the age, and inured from tender years to habits of frugality, sobriety, and patience; —in a word, if that eager resort to places of public entertainment, in which so many heads of families are shamefully consuming their time, squandering away their substance, (if it be indeed theirs,) and daily increasing their disinclination to business, and servitude to pleasure, be forborne by themselves, be forbidden to their dependents.

Would men be persuaded to live like rational creatures, we should be encouraged in our hope of their becoming sincere Christians; would they practise the rules of prudence and virtue, christian-like religion would fall off like withered leaves, tumultuous as its favour would be heard with attention, and our winter would soon be changed into a delightful spring. It is for this purpose that the voice of the Lord crieth to the city, by these repeated earthquakes, which have so powerfully affected it, and the sound of which has been so terrible: for this doth it cry to the country, in the pestilence and distemper that continues to rage among our cattle; in consequence of which so many pastures are desolate, so many industrious families of the poor ruined, and the rich themselves greatly distressed, while their estates are thrown untenanted upon their hands, and consequently Landholders in some of the breeding counties, know not where to get beasts for them money to stock them. For these purposes indeed doth the voice of the Lord in each of these dispensations cry to us all; for neither is the city unconcerned in the interests of the country, nor the country in those of the city: the man of wisdom will hear it, the man of true piety and benevolence will be willing in his proper sphere to echo it back.

The connexions in which Providence has placed me, and I would mention it with all humble thankfulness) the unexpected blessing with which God has been pleased to crown some of my weakest labours, have led me to think it my duty to concur with my brethren in this attempt, and to hasten what both I and I could do in it as much as possible. It may be, that this commotion of the waters may bring some souls under the net of the gospel: it seems at least a time for the fishers of men to be active, and if in a day

of such general insensibility, peradventure one soul may be caught by this labour of a night, (as it is very little more,) I shall not esteem it a small matter; for no everlasting interest is small. My work at least is with the Lord, to whom I trust my motives are approved; and my mind could not have been easy, had so remarkable a crisis been entirely neglected by me. I commit it with all humility to the blessing of God, and the prayers of my Christian friends, especially of those resident in the city, for whose benefit it was peculiarly intended.

Northampton, March 12, 1749-50. P. DODDRIDGE.

MATTHEW xi. 23, 24.

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Do any of you, Sirs, ask who it is that speaks in this awful, in this majestic language? who it is, that menaces a city of Israel with judgments more tremendous than those of Sodom? You may on a little reflection answer yourselves, It is a prophet mighty in word and in deed, the greatest, beyond all comparison the greatest, of all the prophets, even the Son of God, whose peculiar prerogative it was to take the book of the divine decrees, and to open its seals. It was he, to whom authority was given to pronounce and to execute judgment; from whom Sodom and Capernaum were to receive their final doom, and from whom we also are to expect ours. Let us hear him, as their judge, and as our own: and O that this tremendous message may awaken us, to implore his favour; may awaken as many of us as are in danger of the wrath to come, to flee to him that we may be delivered from it, before the word be gone forth in righteousness, before the sentence be sealed!

You can none of you imagine the subject I am now proposing to your meditations, unsuitable to the age in which we live, unsuitable to the circumstances of our native country in general, or of the place in which I now stand: but you may perhaps be more fully aware of the suitableness of it, before I come to the close of my Discourse.

If a very attentive inquiry has not deceived me, these words were spoken by our Lord towards the close of the second year of his ministry, that is, between the second and third of the passovers which occurred during the course of it; a little before he set out on that circuit, for which he sent out the twelve to prepare his way. A very considerable part of his time before this period had been spent in Galilee, and especially in those parts of it which were near the Sea of Tiberias. On this occasion Chorazin and Bethsaida had been frequently blessed with his presence; but Capernaum had been distinguished from all the rest by this inestimable privilege, as you will afterwards hear. It is no wonder therefore, that he thought proper to upbraid all these cities for their continued unbelief and impenitency; and that Capernaum, which had been so distinguished by the favours he had conferred upon it, should be threatened with distinguished calamity and ruin. He began to upbraid the cities in which most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes: but I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. This was saying much; but as the privileges of Capernaum had been still greater, its doom is yet more awful: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day: but I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." In which words it may be proper for us to consider,

I. The privileges Capernaum had enjoyed, and the distinctions which had been made in its favour.

II. Its ungrateful abuse of these distinguished favours of providence and of grace.

III. The dreadful doom which it righteously incurred by that abuse. And after the survey of these particulars, we shall

Conclude with a few hints of plain and serious application.

And you, men of Britain, and inhabitants of London, judge I pray you this day between Christ and Capernaum; and say, whether there was any unjust severity in the sentence he passed upon it. Hear attentively, and judge impartially; but take heed, lest while you judge others you condemn yourselves. Let us consider,

I. The privileges Capernaum had enjoyed, and the distinctions which had been made in its favour.

And here I would observe, it had been distin-

guished by temporal advantages,—but much more, by spiritual privileges and opportunities.

1. It had been distinguished by the temporal advantages of a rich and flourishing city.

Such we are told it was; and in this sense it was exalted unto heaven; a phrase, by which the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is described.

The land of Israel in general was a rich and pleasant land, which the all-surveying eye of God had spied out, as he himself expresses it, for his favourite people: and this elegant city lay upon the confines of Zebulun, and of Naphtali; concerning the former of which tribes it was foretold, that it should suck of the abundance of the sea, and of treasures hid in the sand; and concerning the latter, that it should be satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord; possessing by this situation the west and the south, though it lay towards the north-east part of the land: a prophecy remarkably verified by those advantages, which Jordan and the Sea of Galilee gave it, for maintaining a commerce with those parts. It lay also in the near neighbourhood of Asher, of whom it was predicted, that his bread should be fat, that he should yield royal dainties, and dip his feet in oil.

And what is particularly worthy of our present notice, Capernaum was situated in the land of Gennesareth, one of the most delicious spots of ground in the whole Jewish territories. Josephus has given us a very particular description of it, which shows how properly that tract of land had the name of Gennesareth, which may well signify the garden of a prince; (according to the import of *Gen Sar*, from whence it seems to be derived;) for he tells us,* "that it was plentifully watered by a most delicious spring, that went by the name of Capernaum, and every thing flourished about it: the air seemed, not only to nourish, but to preserve, the fruits produced there; so that there were figs and grapes for ten months in the year, and other kinds of fruits all the year round; and by a very peculiar felicity, nuts, palms, and figs, and olives, though they required generally a very different situation, all abounded there in great plenty."

To this we may add, that it had also some particular advantages for commerce, being situated (according to the most accurate geographers) near that mouth of Jordan, by which it emptied itself into the sea of Galilee; the city of Capernaum lying on its western shore, as Chorazin its opposite neighbour did on its eastern. In consequence of this, it would lie directly in the way of those who came from Damascus and Cæsarea Philippi to Jerusalem, and the southern parts of the country; or of those that went from thence, to those very celebrated cities, and others in their much frequented neighbourhood.

* Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. iii. cap. 10. § 8.

It is therefore no wonder, if with all these advantages it became a very flourishing place; no wonder, if its buildings were magnificent, its inhabitants rich, its gardens delicious, and its manners polite; no wonder, if they that dwelt in Capernaum thought, the lines were fallen to them in pleasant places. They had special reason to do so, if we consider,

2. How much more eminently it was distinguished by spiritual privileges.

It had, we find, its synagogues for public worship; but, what was its peculiar glory, it had Jesus to preach in them, and to confirm his doctrine by wonderful works. There is hardly a place in the whole land, except it be Jerusalem, of which we read so much in the account which the evangelists have given us of our Saviour's life. He went down to Capernaum, with his mother and brethren and disciples, and continued there awhile, in the very opening of his ministry, after he had turned the water into wine at the neighbouring town of Cana in Galilee. It is not improbable, he took it in his way from Judea to Nazareth, when he was returning from his first passover; and we are expressly told, that leaving Nazareth, when so base and ungrateful an attempt was made upon his life there, he came and dwelt in Capernaum. And though he left that place quickly after, (when importuned to stay,) that he might pursue his business in other parts of Galilee; yet when that circuit was done, he returned thither again, continuing there, as it seems, till his second passover. We find him in that neighbourhood again, presently after that passover; and such was his love to it, that notwithstanding the impenitence he here laments, he afterwards visited it again and again.

During these repeated sojournings amongst them, we may assure ourselves, that he gave them the most excellent instructions, preaching repentance, as the kingdom of heaven was approaching. We know, that he spake as never man spake; and here no doubt, as every where else, his words were as awful as they were gracious and endearing. We likewise know, that his instructions were every where illustrated by the commanding force of a most amiable, and in him a most perfect, example. And to all this, to the discourses he delivered, and the consummate pattern which he gave of universal goodness, was added the weight of many most astonishing miracles; with reference to which it seems, that no other place was equally distinguished.

The wonderful works which Christ had done at Capernaum, are spoken of by himself, as known to all the inhabitants of Nazareth; who were therefore ready to say, Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thine own country: and many more were done after that. At Capernaum he healed the nobleman's son, while he was

himself at a distance in Cana: at Capernaum he cast out a devil in the public synagogue on a sabbath-day: at Capernaum he cured Peter's wife's mother of a fever: at Capernaum they brought to him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils; yea, all that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them: at Capernaum it was, that the power of the Lord was present to heal great numbers, before the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who were come thither out of every town of Galilee and Judea to a place which was become so illustrious: and it was here, and in the midst of this assembly, that he cured the paralytic, who was let down by cords into the place, to which they could get no other access but from the top of the house. It was here also, at Capernaum, that he cured the centurion's servant, before he came under the roof where he was; and in another visit, some time after these words in the text were spoken, it was here that he cured the woman by the touch of his garment, and raised the daughter of Jairus to life.

This is a brief and imperfect view of the advantages Capernaum enjoyed: how justly therefore with respect to these might it be said, it was exalted unto heaven! How reasonably might it have been expected then, that Capernaum, thus divinely taught, thus miraculously relieved, should have been remarkable for its diligent attention to the doctrines of our Lord, and its ready obedience to his gospel! But alas, we cannot forget the connexion in which these advantages have been surveyed; and it must be the business of our next general, to consider,

II. The abuse of these privileges; for wretchedly abused they were.

It is expressly said here, that they repented not: which implies,—that many sins were to be found among them;—and that they would not be reformed under all the endeavours which the Son of God himself thought proper to use for that purpose.

1. It is certain, that many sins were to be found among them.

They could not otherwise have stood in such need of repentance, as to have been obnoxious to so dreadful a sentence for their impenitence. Guilty they undoubtedly were of many evils, but we cannot certainly pronounce as to the particulars: probably they were such as are commonly to be found in opulent and elegant cities, where the materials of luxury abound, and temptations to it are multiplied.

We may reasonably suppose, that irreligion led on the train here, as it does wherever iniquity abounds. Perhaps the worship of God might be neglected, and that neglect lay at the door of every other evil and enormity. The synagogues might be unfrequented, especially by the rich and the great, unless when curiosity drew them thither, on the same principles as those on which it might have drawn them to a theatre: and though the terrors of the law, that hung over their heads, might prevent that breach of the sabbath, which it pronounced a capital offence, yet it is highly probable, that it might be a day of idleness and diversion, and in no other view might be called a delight; so that being perverted from its original purpose, it turned into an occasion of mischief, rather than of benefit, and left them more sensual and vicious than it found them.

Perhaps amidst their many merchants the balances of deceit might be in their hands; the arts of dishonest gain might be practised, till every sense of their infamy was lost, amidst the numbers by which they were countenanced; till their palaces were cemented by the tears of oppressed widows and orphans, "the stone crying out of the wall, and the beam from the timber answering it."

More certainly still may we reckon upon it, that the fatal arts of luxury reigned in Capernaum: ostentatious ornaments of dress and furniture, exquisite food, rich wines, and not improbably, concerts of music and other theatrical entertainments, (which we know Herod introduced into some of their cities,) drawing the world after them, and employing the great when their minds should have been occupied about the affairs of the public; perhaps too intoxicating those in common life, and leading them to forget the cares, and interrupt the labours, upon which their own subsistence and that of their families depended, and so bringing upon their families a ruin that would not have so much as the consolation of being pitied; at once exhausting the substance and corrupting the taste of the rising generation. Wretched offspring of cruelly-indulgent parents! who instead of being trained up in the fear of the Lord, in the methods of a wise, virtuous, and pious education, might have their minds broken by effeminacy, and a thousand artificial wants created, when perhaps there might hardly be enough left from the ravages of luxury to supply the necessities of nature. They would no doubt grow up exorbitant, petulant, and audacious; ignorant of every art but that of corrupting and injuring others, of every science but that of deriding the little remainder of religion and virtue, that might be found in the midst of so general a wreck. Alas, what an inheritance laid up for them! But whatever the offences of Capernaum were, it is to be remembered,

2. That they would not reform under all the efforts which Christ used with them for that purpose.

The Son of God himself was among them; a wise reprover, but it was on disobedient ears. Neither his remonstrances, nor his example, nor his mira-

cles, would make any lasting impression upon them. Perhaps there were those, who would not condescend to give him the hearing; they thought themselves wise and polite in looking with contempt upon the man of Nazareth, and would not give themselves the trouble of inquiring into what seemed to them so incredible a tale, as that of his miracles; or if the evidence forced itself upon their minds, had laid down certain favourite maxims to themselves, and resolved to reject every thing inconsistent with them, whatever wretched shifts they might make to do it: nay, it seems manifest, that here that blasphemous suggestion was advanced, that he cast out devils by the prince of the devils. There might be others more decent, who yet heard in vain: if they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, those words were to them but as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; they heard them, but they would not do them: or if any impressions were made, they quickly wore them off again, and were enchanted back into the same circle of pleasure or business. So that on the whole, they rejected the gospel which was so well calculated to reform them, and grew more hopeless under it than ever. If he had not come and spoken unto them, they would in comparison have had no sin; but now they had no cloak for their sin: and the interpretation that he himself, with all his unequalled candour, was obliged to pass upon their conduct, with whatever indignation they might reject the charge, was this, "that they had both seen, and hated, both him and his Father." What could be expected then from such aggravated and incorrigible wickedness, but,

III. The doom pronounced upon them; that dreadful doom, which we are next to consider, that having been exalted unto heaven, they should be brought down to hell; and it should be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for them.

You will easily observe a strong and beautiful opposition in the former clause of the sentence; and both that and the latter may express—their temporal ruin, but much more certainly—their future condemnation.

1. It may perhaps express their temporal ruin.

We know, that this is sometimes signified by this expression, being brought down to hell. The destruction of Babylon is foretold by Isaiah by this very phrase, to show how the oppressor should cease, and the golden city cease: Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: yet thou shalt be brought down to hell; that is, thou shalt be utterly destroyed, and buried in thy own ruins. And such, we know, was the doom of Capernaum. Many of the vices which we have naturally enough supposed to have abounded in it, would in their own consequences have led it on to certain, though to slower, ruin; but God, as is frequently his method, interposed to execute this fair yet abandoned criminal, before she died of her own debaucheries.

I do not remember that we read any thing particular concerning the circumstances of the ruin of Capernaum: but as all the country about the Galilean sea was overrun by the Roman army in the war that quickly happened, it undoubtedly shared the fate of its neighbours, of whose terrible destruction Josephus gives a most affecting description in the third and fourth books of the Jewish War. It was then plundered of its wealth, and in all probability its streets and palaces were filled with the dead bodies of its slaughtered inhabitants; as the historian says expressly, "that the lake on which the city stood, after a terrible sea-fight there, was covered with the floating corpses of the slain, which almost poisoned all the country round by the insufferable stench they omitted, while they remained unburied." The country being thus subdued and trodden down by the Gentiles, who became its absolute lords, Capernaum must have soon lost all its glory; so soon, indeed, that many of the young people, who had been present while Christ preached in their synagogues, and wrought miracles among them, must in a course of nature have lived to share the desolation. Thus the sword of the enemy entered into those hearts, which had been impenetrable to that two-edged sword that went out of the mouth of the Son of God. And so entire was the ruin of the place, that, as we learn from Jerom, in his time, which was less than four hundred years after Christ, "all that remained of the magnificence and glory of Capernaum, was six or seven poor fishermen's cottages;" and modern travellers can hardly find a trace of it: so literally is it grown, like the much more celebrated city of Tyre, like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets upon. Such is the ancient Tyre; such, after all the privileges it enjoyed, Capernaum now is; and such the proudest city upon earth shall be, if God but mark it out for the like ruin. But more than this, these awful words of our blessed Redeemer did certainly express,

2. Their future and final condemnation.

It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, in the great day of final retribution, than for thee. You see, the day of judgment is introduced, that great and terrible day of the Lord. And it is very necessary that the memory of it should be kept up in the world, that men, knowing the terror of the Lord, may, if possible, be awakened and persuaded. Our blessed Redeemer himself, who was anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, considered it also as a part of his commission to declare the day of

vengeance of our God: and nothing is so awful as the language in which he describes it. But we are here to observe, it is implied, that Sodom and Gomorrah should have a part in it, but that their part should be less dreadful than that of the people of Capernaum.

It is implied, "that Sodom and Gomorrah should have a part in the day of judgment." You well know, that God executed his vengeance upon them in the most tremendous manner, for those detestable crimes, which have rendered the name of Sodom so infamous to these very distant ages: and the history of their ruin is so circumstantially described, that it is evident God intended it should never be forgot. Let me call you all, let me call especially the impenitent sinners that hear me this day, to pause for a few moments on the case of these wretched men. When the rising sun in all its beauty and glory was on a sudden obscured to them, fatally and for ever obscured, by that storm of wrath; when the awful moment came, in which God had determined to rain upon them snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; snares, indeed, that took them, wherever they might attempt to fly: endeavour to conceive, as you can, though you can but imperfectly conceive, what must be the consternation of these wretches, that felt the earth reeling under them, and saw at the same time the heavens thundering upon them, and pouring a vast shower of burning brimstone instead of rain, firing their habitations, and torturing with far more than the agonies of common flame, the bodies they had so delicately pampered, so infamously abused. For a few minutes they remained, either stupid and dumb with amazement, or shrieking out in torment and despair, and blaspheming the God of heaven because of their pain; (the most lively image of hell that earth ever saw, or shall see;) till down they sunk into the opening ground; the city and its inhabitants vanished in a moment, and nothing remained of their country, which just before was like the garden of the Lord, but a smoking sulphureous lake: for so it is expressly said, that Abraham beheld, and lo, its smoke went up as the smoke of a furnace. Thus they became a sign and a proverb, for when God would describe the most entire destruction that can be conceived, it is by this emblem, as the Lord overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Their memorial is now perished, except it be that memorial which is preserved of them in the book of God, where they are marked out in so dreadful a manner; and yet, all their punishment is not over. Our Lord tells us, that in the day of judgment they shall be remembered and visited, and we may assure ourselves, that their doom then shall be more terrible, than that which they suffered from the sulphureous rain, the earthquake, and the pit, into which many of them no doubt went down alive. Whatever their anguish and their terror then was, it shall in the great day be far exceeded: for we can never imagine that God would bring them into final judgment, to punish them less in that tremendous solemnity, than they had formerly been punished; and we may be confident that to depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, to be cast into that lake which burns for ever with fire and brimstone, must be infinitely more terrible than the momentary pain, under the anguish of which they would soon have expired, and from which suffocation would probably much sooner deliver them.

But is this the sentence of Sodom and Gomorrah only! and shall this dreadful climate be inhabited only by them? Nay, but it is the doom of Capernaum too; and what is most terrible of all, it is expressly said, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for Capernaum. And thus,

It is implied, "that their part shall be less dreadful in the day of judgment, than that of the people of Capernaum." And it is reasonable that it should be so. Sodom and Gomorrah were righteously condemned: they abused the light of nature, which strongly witnessed against wickedness monstrous like theirs: they rejected the preaching of Lot, by whom they might have learnt the knowledge of the true God, and the way to serve him with acceptance: but though they violated the dictates of reason, though they abused the bounties of Providence, though they despised the preaching of Lot; yet they heard not the gospel of the Son of God. A much greater than Lot was in the midst of thee, O Capernaum! Justly therefore are thy children, who would not receive his doctrine, who would not obey his charge, who would not regard his miracles, doomed to a severer vengeance, to a more intolerable condemnation; so as to look with envy upon the milder tortures inflicted upon those egregious sinners against their own souls.

But this is not said of them only: it touches us nearly, and O that, as we are so often reminding you of it, you may all seriously consider it! What our Lord asserts concerning Capernaum, he elsewhere says concerning all, who will not receive, embrace, and obey the gospel; for these are his words to the first messengers of it, Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city; and by a parity of reason, for every city, for every town, for every village, for every soul, by whom the gospel shall be rejected, after having been plainly and faithfully laid before them. Oh! hear it again! It shall be more tolerable for

Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them.

And now, methinks, I am ready to interrupt my Discourse, and could rather, were I sure you would attend me in it, sit down, and cover my face, and weep. For if these are indeed the words of the Son of God, they are big with a terrible tempest, and it hangs over what we call the Christian world, it hangs over this island, which is in many respects the glory of it. And have we no forebodings, where the heaviest part of it might justly fall? Is there no city that rises to our thoughts, far superior to Capernaum in its wealth and magnificence, and in some respects more than equal to it in its guilt? O London! London! dear city of my birth and education, seat of so many of my friends, seat of our princes and senators,—centre of our commerce,—heart of our island; which must feel and languish, must tremble, and (I had almost said) die, with thee!—How art thou lifted up to heaven! How high do thy glories rise, and how bright do they shine! How great is thy magnificence! How extensive thy commerce! How numerous, how free, how happy, thy inhabitants! How happy, above all, in their religious opportunities! in the uncorrupted gospel, so long, so faithfully, preached in thy synagogues! displayed in so many peculiar glories, which were but beginning to dawn when Jesus himself dwelt in Capernaum, and preached repentance there! But while we survey these heights of elevation, must we not tremble, lest thou shouldst fall so much the lower, lest thou shouldst plunge so much the deeper in ruin?

My situation, Sirs, is not such, as to render me most capable of judging concerning the moral character of this our celebrated metropolis. But who can hear what seem the most credible reports of it, yea, I will add, who can walk its streets but for a few days with any other observation, and not take an alarm, and be ready to meditate terror? Whose spirit must not (like that of Paul at Athens) be stirred, when he sees the city so abandoned to profaneness, luxury, and vanity? Is it indeed false, all that we hear? Is it indeed accidental, all that we see? Is London wronged, when it is said,—that great licentiousness reigns among most of its inhabitants, and great indolence and indifference to religion even among those that are not licentious?—that assemblies for divine worship are much neglected, or frequented with little appearance of seriousness or solemnity; while assemblies for pleasure are thronged, and attended with such an eagerness, that all the heart and soul seems to be given to them rather than to God?—that most of its families are prayerless, wanting time it seems, or rather wanting heart, for these social devotions; while many hours of every day can be given to recreations and amusements at home, if by any accident it is impracticable to seek them abroad!—that the sabbath, instead of being religiously observed, is given to jaunts of pleasure into neighbouring villages, or a stool on beds of sloth, or at tables of excess?—that not only persons in the highest ranks of life, but that the trading part of its citizens, affect such an excessive gaiety, and grandeur, and delicacy, the very reverse of that frugality of our ancestors, who raised the city to what it is?—that men in almost every rank are ambitious of appearing to be something more, than those who stand in the next rank above them could conveniently allow themselves to appear; and in consequence of this, are grasping at business they cannot manage, entering into engagements for what they cannot answer, and so, after a vain and contemptible blaze, drawing bankruptcy upon themselves, and exposing to the danger of it, honest, industrious persons, who are won by that suspicious face of plenty which they put on, to repose a confidence in them, on that very account so much the less reasonable and safe?—that the poorer sort of the people are so grossly ignorant, as to know hardly any thing of religion, but the sacred names, which they continually profane; so wretchedly depraved, as to consume their time and strength in reaching at those low and pernicious luxuries which they may hope to attain; and so abandoned, as to sink unchastised into the most brutal sensualities and impurities; while those who would exert any remarkable zeal to remedy these evils, by introducing a deep and warm sense of religion into the minds of others, are suspected and censured as whimsical and enthusiastical, if not designing, men?—in a word, that the religion of our divine Master is by multitudes of the great and the vulgar openly renounced and blasphemed; and by others but coldly defended, as if it were grown a matter of mere indifference, which men might, without any great danger of mischief, reject at their pleasure: yea, as if it were a matter of great doubt and uncertainty, whether men's souls were immortal, or whether they were extinguished with so empty and insignificant a life? Men and brethren, are these things indeed so? I take not upon me to answer absolutely, that they are; but I will venture to say, that if they are indeed thus, London, as rich, and grand, and glorious as it is, has reason to tremble, and to tremble so much the more for its abused riches, grandeur, and glory.

There is indeed, as has often and justly been observed, one token for good amongst these symptoms of danger; I mean, a variety of charitable foundations and institutions amongst you, so far as I know, unequalled through the whole world; as well as a freedom from persecution and oppression, those detestable evils, which wherever they are to be found, cry so loud for vengeance, and for which

it is expressly said, that Babylon, Nineveh, and Jerusalem, were destroyed. There are also, blessed be God, not a few inhabitants of this city, who reverence God; who believe, and obey, and adorn his gospel; who dare, in the midst of so many contrary examples, to stand up for the honour of Christianity with resolution and zeal; and who are solicitous to infuse a deep sense of its excellency and importance, into the minds of their rising offspring, and of others whom Providence has placed under their care and influence: these, of whatever denomination, and with whatever modesty and silence their designs are conducted, are the salt of the earth, that hinder the corruption from becoming universal; they are the guardians of the city in which they dwell, and stand in that breach, at which judgment would otherwise pour in like a torrent. Let such be established, encouraged, and quickened, by representations like those I have now been making. The eyes of the Lord are upon them, especially at a crisis like this; and his ears will be open to their cry. Let them be exhorted, to exert themselves with a growing zeal for a general reformation, so far as their influence may extend. Let them by their examples go on to plead this important cause; and let every art and labour of pious education be attended to, that the minds of youth may be rescued from the growing contagion, and stored with those seeds of virtue and piety, which may make the next generation much happier than the present: and to these labours of love let such join their fervent prayers, which have already, I doubt not, been in some cases efficacious, and which, in proportion as they grow more frequent and importunate, may be yet more so. All that love Zion, will say Amen to them; and may the Lord our God say so too!

To the rest, who swim with the stream, who follow the multitude, and who argue themselves into security, either from Epicurean principles, or from not having yet felt those scourges of God, under which so many other cities and nations have fallen; —to those who disregard providence, as well as neglect and despise the gospel;—I shall only at present address that awful oracle of God by Zephaniah, which ought to have its weight wherever circumstances resemble what are there supposed: It shall come to pass, saith the Lord, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil: therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. So it may really be, peaceful as the present appearances are. God can raise up enemies, where we least expect them; nor does he need the weapons of war to chastise, or its engines to overthrow, a guilty city. But however its impenitent inhabitants may escape such temporal judgments, concerning the probability of which we can but very uncertainly denounce; I will take up the parable, and say, in the sublimest sense the following words can admit, and in such a light as the awful denunciation of my text throws upon them, The great day of the Lord is near, it is nearer and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; which shall be ushered in by the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; when the heavens as well as the earth shall be shaken, and pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the day, in which the mighty man, the boldest and the haughtiest sinner, shall cry bitterly: that day of wrath, that day of trouble and distress, that day of wasteness and desolation, that day of darkness and gloominess, that day of clouds and thick darkness, which no description even of a prophet's pen can paint in colours sufficiently terrible; that day of the trumpet and alarm, that shall bring distress upon men, because they have sinned against the Lord. They may trust in their strength, they may boast in their riches: but the fenced cities and the high towers shall be brought down; neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, when the whole land, when the whole earth, shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy. This alarm I leave with you; and O that it may operate to produce that great effect, in which all our ministry, if we understand our own true interest and yours, ought to centre, even that of leading you to him, whose great prerogative and office, whose glory and joy, it is, to deliver from the wrath to come! Amen.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

SERMON VI.

SUBMISSION TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE, IN THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.

PREFACE.

THE Discourse which I now offer to the public was drawn up on a very sorrowful occasion; the death of a most desirable child, who was formed in such a correspondence to my own relish and temper, as to be able to give me a degree of delight, and consequently of distress, which I did not before think it possible I could have received from a little creature who had not quite completed her fifth year.

Since the Sermon was preached, it has pleased God to make the like breaches in the families of several of my friends; and with regard to some of them, the affliction hath been attended with circumstances of yet sorer aggravation. Though several of them are removed to a considerable distance from me, and from each other, I have borne their afflictions upon my heart with cordial sympathy, and it is with a particular desire of serving them, that I have undertaken the sad task of reviewing and transcribing these papers; which may almost be called the minutes of my own sighs and tears, over the poor remains of my eldest and (of this kind) dearest hope, when they were not as yet buried out of my sight.

They are, indeed, full of affection, and to be sure some may think they are too full of it; but let them consider the subject, and the circumstances, and surely they will pardon it. I apprehend, I could not have treated such a subject coldly, had I written upon it many years ago, when I was unstaught in the school of affliction, and knew nothing of such a calamity as this, but by speculation or report: how much less could I do it, when God had touched me in so tender a part, and (to allude to a celebrated ancient story) called me out to appear on a public stage, as with an urn in my hand, which contained the ashes of my own child!

In such a sad situation parents, at least, will forgive the tears of a parent, and those meltings of soul which overflow in the following pages. I have not attempted to run through the common-place of immoderate grief, but have only selected a few obvious thoughts which I found peculiarly suitable to myself; and, I bless God, I can truly say, they gave me a solid and substantial relief, under a shock of sorrow which would otherwise have broken my spirits.

On my own experience, therefore, I would recommend them to others in the like condition. And let me entreat my friends and my fellow sufferers to remember, that it is not a low degree of submission to the divine will, which is called for in the ensuing Discourse. It is comparatively an easy thing to behave with external decency, to refrain from bold censures and outrageous complaints, or to speak in the outward language of resignation. But it is not so easy to get rid of every repining thought, and to forbear taking it, in some degree at least, unkindly, that the God whom we love and serve, in whose friendship we have long trusted and rejoiced, should act what, to sense, seems so unfriendly a part: that he should take away a child; and if a child, that child, and it that child, at that age, and it at that age, with this or that particular circumstance; which seems the very contrivance of Providence, to add double anguish to the wound: and all this, when he could so easily have recalled it; when we know him to have done it for so many others: when we have so earnestly desired it; when we sought it with such importunity, and yet, as we imagine, with so much submission too: that, notwithstanding all this, he should tear it away with an inexorable hand, and leave us, it may be for a while, under the load, without any extraordinary comforts and supports, to balance so grievous a trial. In these circumstances, not only to justify, but to glorify, God in all,—cheerfully to subscribe to his will, cordially to approve it as merciful and gracious,—so as to be able to say, as the pious and excellent archbishop of Cambray did, when his royal pupil, and the hopes of a nation, were taken away,* "If there needed no more than to move a straw to bring him to life again, I would not do it, since the divine pleasure is otherwise"—This, this is a difficult lesson indeed: a triumph of Christian faith and love, which I fear many of us are yet to learn.

* The Duke of Burgundy. See Cameray's Life, page 329.

But let us follow after it, and watch against the first rising of a contrary temper, as most injurious to God, and prejudicial to ourselves. To preserve us against it, let us review the considerations now to be proposed, as what we are to digest into our hearts, and work into our thoughts and our passions. And I would hope, that if we do in good earnest make the attempt, we shall find this Discourse a cooling and sweetening medicine, which may allay that inward heat and sharpness, with which, in a case like ours, the heart is often inflamed and corroded. I commend it, such as it is, to the blessing of the great Physician, and could wish the reader to make up its many deficiencies, by Mr. Flavel's Token for Mourners, and Dr. Grosvenor's Mourner: to which if it suit his relish, he may please to add Sir William Temple's Essay on the Excess of Grief: three tracts which, in their very different strains and styles, I cannot but look upon as in the number of the best which our language, or, perhaps, any other, has produced upon this subject.

As for this little piece of mine, I question not but, like the generality of single sermons, it will soon be worn out and forgotten. But in the mean time I would humbly hope, that some tender parent, whom Providence has joined with me in sad similitude of grief, may find some consolation from it, while sitting by the coffin of a beloved child, or mourning over its grave. And I particularly hope it, with regard to those dear and valuable friends, whose sorrows on the like occasion have lately been added to my own. I desire that though they be not expressly named, they would please to consider this Sermon as most affectionately and respectfully dedicated to them; and would, in return, give me a share in their prayers, that all the vicissitudes of life may concur to quicken me in the duties of it, and to ripen me for that blessed world, where I hope many of those dear delights, which are now withering around us, will spring up in fairer and more durable forms. Amen.

Northampton, January 31, 1736-7.

POSTSCRIPT.

I could easily show, with how much propriety I have called the dear deceased an amiable and hopeful child, by a great many little stories, which parents would perhaps read with pleasure, and children might hear with some improvement: yet as I cannot be sure that no others may happen to read the Discourse, I dare not trust my pen and my heart on so delicate a subject. One circumstance I will however venture to mention, which may indeed be considered as a specimen of many others. As she was a great darling with most of our friends that knew her, she often received invitations to different places at the same time: and when I once asked her, on such an occasion, what made every body love her so well; she answered me, (with that simplicity and spirit which, alas! charmed me too much,) "Indeed, papa, I cannot think, unless it be because I love every body." A sentiment obvious to the understanding of a child, yet not unworthy the reflection of the wisest man.*

2 Kings iv. 25, 26.

And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her; and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

When the apostle would encourage our hope and trust in the tenderness of Christ as the great High Priest, and convince us that he is capable of being touched with a sympathetic sense of our infirmities, he argues at large from this consideration, that Jesus was in all points tempted like us; so that as he himself has suffered, being tempted, he knows how more compassionately to succour those that are under the like trials. Now this must surely intimate, that it is not in human nature, even in its most perfect state, so tenderly to commiserate any sorrows, as those which our own hearts have felt; as we cannot form a perfect idea of any bitter kind of draught, by the most exact description, till we have ourselves tasted it. It is probably for this reason, amongst others, that God frequently exercises such, as have the honour to be inferior shepherds in the flock of Christ, with a long train of various afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them who are in the like trouble, with those consolations with which we have ourselves been comforted of God. And, if we have the temper which becomes our office, will greatly reconcile us to our trials, to consider, that from our weeping eyes, and our bleeding hearts, a balm may be extracted to heal the sorrows of others, and a cordial to revive their fainting spirits. May we never be left to sink under our burthen, in such a manner, that there should be room, after all we have boasted of the strength of religious supports, to apply to us the words of Eliphaz to Job, Thou hast strength-

* Tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamentis, sine herbis, sine ullius veneficæ carmine; si vis amare, ama. — Seneca.

cued the weak hands, and upheld him that was ready to fall; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it touches thee, and thou art troubled! May we never behave, as if the consolations of God were small; lest it should be as when a standard-bearer fainteth, and whole companies of soldiers are thrown into confusion and distress!

My friends, you are witnesses for me, that I have not stood by, as an unconcerned spectator amidst the desolations of your respective families, when God's awful hand hath been lopping off those tender branches from them, which were once common hope and delight. I have often put my soul in the stead of yours, and endeavoured to give such a turn to my public as well as my private discourses, as might be a means of composing and cheering our minds, and forming you to a submissive temper, that you might be subject to the Father of Spirits, and live. In this view I have, at different times, largely insisted on the example of Aaron, who held his peace, when his two eldest sons were struck dead in a moment by fire from the Lord, which destroyed them in the very act of their sin; and I have also represented that of Job, who, when the death of ten children by one blow was added to the spoil of his great possessions, could say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. The instance which is before us, is not indeed so memorable as these; but to present circumstances it is, in many respects, more suitable: and it may the rather deserve our notice, as it shows us the wisdom, composure, and piety of one of the weaker and tenderer sex, on an occasion of such aggravated distress, that had Aaron or Job behaved just as she did, we must have acknowledged, that they had not sunk beneath the dignity of their character, nor appeared unworthy of our applause and our imitation.

Indeed there may be some reason to imagine, that it was with design to humble those who are in distinguished stations of life, and who have peculiar advantages and obligations to excel in religion, that God has shown us in Scripture, as well as in common life, some bright examples of piety, where they could hardly have been expected in so great a degree; and hath, as it were, perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. Thus when Zacharias, an aged priest, doubted the veracity of the angel which appeared to assure him of the birth of his child, which was to be produced in an ordinary way; Mary, an obscure young virgin, could believe a far more unexampled event, and said, with humble faith and thankful consent, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. Jonah the prophet, though favoured with such immediate revelations, and so lately delivered, in a miraculous way, from the very belly of hell, was thrown into a most indecent transport of passion, on the withering of a gourd; so that he presumed to tell the Almighty to his face, that he did well to be angry even unto death: whereas this pious woman preserves the calmness and serenity of her temper, when she had lost a child, a son, an only child, who had been given beyond all natural hope, and therefore to be sure was so much the dearer, and the expectation from him so much the higher. Yet these expectations were dashed almost in a moment; and this, when he was grown up to an age when children are peculiarly entertaining; for he was old enough to be with his father in the field, where no doubt he was diverting him with his fond prattle; yet he was not too big to be laid on his mother's knees, when he came home complaining of his head; so that he was probably about five or six years old. This amiable child was well in the morning, and dead by noon; a pale corpse in his mother's arms! and he now lay dead in the house; and yet she had the faith and the goodness to say, "It is well."

This good woman had found the prophet Elisha grateful for all the favours he had received at her house; where she had from time to time accommodated him in his journeys, and thought it an honour rather than an encumbrance. She had experienced the power of his prayers, in answer to which the child had been given; and it is extremely probable, that she also recollected the miracle which Elijah had wrought a few years before, though till that time the like had not been known in Israel, or on earth; I mean, in raising from the dead the child of that widow of Sarepta, who had nourished him during the famine. She might therefore think it a possible case, that the miracle might be renewed; at least, she knew not how to comfort herself better, than by going to so good a friend, and asking his counsels and his prayers, to enable her to bear her affliction, if it must not be removed.

Accordingly she hasted to him; and he, on the other side, discovered the temper of a real friend, in the message with which he sent Gehazi his servant to meet her, while she was yet afar off. The moment she appeared, the concerns of her whole family seem to have come into his kind heart at once, and he particularly asks, Is it well with thee? is it well with thine husband? is it well with the child? A beautiful example of that affectionate care for the persons and families of their friends, which Christian ministers (who, like the prophets of old, are called men of God) should habitually bear about in their hearts; which should be awakened by every sight of them, and expressed on every proper occasion.

Her answer was very remarkable: she said, It is well. Perhaps she meant this, to divert the more particular inquiry of the servant; as she had before made the same answer to her husband, when he

had examined into the reason of her intended journey, as probably not knowing of the sad breach which had been made: she said, It is well; which was a civil way of intimating her desire that he would not ask any more particular questions. But I cannot see any reason to restrain the words to this meaning alone: we have ground to believe, from the piety she expressed in her first regards to Elisha, and the opportunities which she had of improving in religion by the frequent converse of that holy man, that when she used this language, she intended thereby to express her resignation to the divine will in what had lately passed; and this might be the meaning of her heart, (though one ignorant of the particulars of her case might not fully understand it from such ambiguous words,) "It is well, on the whole. Though my family be afflicted, we are afflicted in faithfulness; though my dear babe be dead, yet my heavenly Father is just, and he is good in all. He knows how to bring glory to himself, and advantage to us, from this stroke. Whether this application do or do not succeed, whether the child be or be not restored, it is still well; well with him, and well with us; for we are in such wise and such gracious hands, that I would not allow one murmuring word, or one repining thought." So that, on the whole, the sentiment of this good Shunammite was much the same with that of Hezekiah, when he answered to that dreadful threatening which imported the destruction of his children, Good is the word of the Lord which he hath spoken; or that of Job, when he heard that all his sons and his daughters were crushed under the ruins of their elder brother's house, and yet (in the fore-cited words) said, Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Now this is the temper to which, by divine assistance, we should all labour to bring our own hearts, when God puts this bitter cup into our hands, and takes away with a stroke those dear little ones, which were the desire of our eyes, and the joy of our hearts. Let us not content ourselves, in such circumstances, with keeping the door of our lips, that we break not out into any indecencies of complaint; let us not attempt to harden ourselves against our sorrows by a stern insensibility, or that sullen resolution which sometimes says, "It is grief, and I must bear it;" but let us labour (for a great labour it will indeed be) to compose and quiet our souls, calmly to acquiesce in this painful dispensation, nay, cordially to approve it, as in present circumstances every way fit.

It will be the main business of this Discourse, to prove how reasonable such a temper is, or to show how much cause Christian parents have to borrow the language of the text, when their infant offspring is taken away, and to say, with the pious Shunammite, in the noblest sense that her words will bear, —It is well.

And here I would more particularly show, it is well in the general, because God does it;—it is surely well for the pious parents in particular, because it is the work of their covenant God:—they may see many respects in which it is evidently so, by observing what useful lessons it has a tendency to teach them:—and they have reason to hope, it is well with those dear creatures whom God hath removed in their early days.

These are surely convincing reasons to the understanding; yet who can say, that they shall be reasons to the heart? Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause in the most effectual manner! May thy powerful and gracious voice appease the swelling billows of the passions, and produce a great and delightful calm in our souls, in which we may yet enjoy thee and ourselves, though a part of our treasure be for the present swallowed up!

I. There is surely reason, in such a case, to say it is well,—because God doth it.

This passed for an unanswerable reason with David, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it; and with good old Eli, under a severer trial than ours, It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight. And shall we object against the force of it? Was it a reason to David, and to Eli, and is it not equally so to us? or have we any new right to reply against God, which those eminent saints had not?

His kingdom ruleth over all; and there is not so much as a sparrow that falls to the ground without our Father's notice, but the very hairs of our head are all numbered by him. Can we then imagine that our dear children fall into their graves without his notice or interposition? Did that watchful eye that keepeth Israel, now, for the first time, slumber and sleep, and an enemy lay hold on that fatal moment to bear away these precious spoils, and bury our joys and our hopes in the dust? Did some malignant hand stop up the avenues of life, and break its springs, so as to baffle all the tenderness of the parent, and all the skill of the physician? Whence does such a thought come, and whither would it lead? Diseases and accidents are but second causes, which owe all their operations to the continued energy of the great original cause. Therefore God says, I will bereave them of children. I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke. He changeth their countenance, and sendeth them away. Thou, Lord, turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men. And what shall we say? Are not the administrations of his providence wise and good? Can we teach him knowledge? Can we tax him with injustice? Shall the most high God learn of us how to govern the world, and be instructed by our wisdom when to remove his creatures from one state of being to another? Or do we imagine that his administration,

in the general right and good, varies when he comes to touch our bone and our flesh? Is that the secret language of our soul, "that it is well others should drink of the cup, but not we; that any families but ours should be broken, and any hearts but ours should be wounded?" Who might not claim the like exemption? And what would become of the divine government in general? or where would be his obedient homage from his creatures, if each should begin to complain, as soon as it comes to his own turn to suffer? Much fitter is it for us to conclude, that our own afflictions may be as reasonable as those of others; that amidst all the clouds and darkness of his present dispensation, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; and, in a word, that it is well, because God hath done it. It suits the general scheme of the divine providence, and, to an obedient submissive creature, that might be enough; but it is far from being all. For,

II. Pious parents, under such a dispensation, may conclude it is well for them in particular,—because he who hath done it is their covenant God.

This is the great promise, to which all the saints under the Old and New Testament are heirs,—I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and if we are interested in it, the happy consequence is, that we being his, all our concerns are his also; all are humbly resigned to him,—and graciously administered by him,—and incomparably better blessings bestowed and secured, than any which the most afflictive providence can remove.

If we have any share in this everlasting covenant, all that we are or have, must, of course, have been solemnly surrendered to God. And this is a thought peculiarly applicable to the case immediately in view. "Did I not," may the Christian in such a sad circumstance generally say, "did I not, in a very solemn manner, bring this my child to God in baptism, and in that ordinance recognise his right to it? Did I not, with all humble subjection to the Father of spirits, and Father of mercies, lay it down at his feet, perhaps with an express, at least to be sure with a tacit, consent, that it should be disposed of by him, as his infinite wisdom and goodness should direct, whether for life or for death? And am I now to complain of him, because he has removed not only a creature of his own, but one of the children of his family? Or shall I pretend, after all, to set up a claim in opposition to his? A heathen parent, even from the light of nature, might have learned silent submission; how much more then a Christian parent, who hath presented his child to God in this initiatory ordinance; and perhaps also many a time, both before and since, hath presented himself at the table of the Lord! Have I not there taken that cup of blessings, with a declared resolution of accepting every other cup, how bitter soever it might be, which my heavenly Father should see fit to put into my hand? When I have perhaps felt some painful forebodings of what I am now suffering, I have, in my own thoughts, particularly singled out that dear object of my cares and my hopes, to lay it down anew at my Father's feet, and say, Lord, thou gavest it to me, and I resign it to thee; continue or remove it, as thou pleasest. And did I then mean to trifle with God? Did I mean in effect to say, Lord, I will give it up, if thou wilt not take it?"

Reflect further, I beseech you, on your secret retirements, and think, as surely some of you may, "How often have I there been on my knees before God on account of this child; and what was then my language? Did I say, Lord, I absolutely insist on its recovery; I cannot, on any terms or any considerations whatsoever, bear to think of losing it?" Surely we were none of us so indecently transported with the fondest passion, as to be so rash with our mouths as to utter such things before the great God. Such presumption had deserved a much heavier punishment than we are now bearing, and, if not retracted, may perhaps still have it. Did not one or another of us rather say, "Lord, I would humbly entreat, with all due submission to thy superior wisdom and sovereign pleasure, that my child may live; but if it must be otherwise, not my will, but thine, be done.—I and mine are in thy hand, do with me, and with them, as seemeth good in thy sight." And do we now blame ourselves for this? Would we unsay it again, and, if possible, take ourselves and our children out of his hands, whom we have so often owned as all-wise and all-gracious, and have chosen as our great guardian and theirs?

Let it further be considered, it is done by that God who has accepted of this surrender, so as to undertake the administration of our affairs: "He is become my covenant God in Christ," may the Christian say; "and, in consequence of that covenant, he hath engaged to manage the concerns and interests of his people so, that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. And do I not love him? Answer, O my heart, dost thou not love thy God much better than all the blessings which earth can boast, or which the grave hath swallowed up? Wouldst thou resign thine interest in him to recover these precious spoils, to receive this dear child from the dust, a thousand times fairer and sweeter than before? Rather let death devour every remaining comfort, and leave me alone with him; with whom when I indeed am, I miss not the creatures, but rather rejoice in their absence, as I am then more entire with him whom my soul loveth. And if I do indeed love him, this promise is mine, and all things, and therefore this sad event in particular, shall work together for my good. Shall I not then say, It is well? What if it ex-

ceeded all the stretch of my thoughts to conceive how it could in any instance be so? What are my narrow conceptions, that they should pretend to circumscribe infinite wisdom, faithfulness, and mercy? Let me rather, with Abraham, give glory to God, and in hope believe against hope."

Once more, let us consider how many invaluable blessings are given us by this covenant, and then judge whether we have not the utmost reason to acquiesce in such an event of providence. "If I am in covenant with God," may the believer say, "then he hath pardoned my sins, and renewed my heart, and hath made his blessed Spirit, dwelling in me, the sacred bond of an everlasting union between him and my soul. He is leading me through the wilderness, and will, ere long, lead me out of it to the heavenly Canaan. And how far am I already arrived in my journey thither, now that I am come to the age of losing a child! And when God hath done all this for me, is he rashly to be suspected of unkindness? He that spared not his own Son; he that gave me with him his Spirit and his kingdom, why doth he deny, or why doth he remove, any other favour? Did he think the life of this child too great a good to grant, when he thought not Christ and glory too precious? Away with that thought, O my unbelieving heart, and with every thought which would derogate from such rich amazing grace, or would bring any thing in comparison with it. Art thou under these obligations to him, and will thou yet complain? With what grace, with what decency, canst thou dispute this, or any other matter, with thy God? What right have I yet to cry any more to the King?" Would any of my brethren venture to say, "What though I be a child of God, and an heir of glory, it matters not, for my gourd is withered; that pleasant plant, which was opening so fair and so delightful, under the shadow of which I expected long to have sat, and even the Rock of ages cannot shelter me so well? I can behold that beloved face no more, and therefore I will not look upward to behold the face of God, I will not look forward to Christ and to heaven?" Would this, my friends, be the language of a real Christian? Nay, are there not many abandoned sinners who would tremble at such expressions? Yet is it not in effect the language of our tumultuous passions, when, like Rachael, we are mourning for our children, and will not be comforted, because they are not? Is it not our language while we cannot, like the pious Shunammite in the text, bring our afflicted hearts to say, It is well.

III. Pious parents, in such a circumstance, have further reason to say, It is well, as they may observe an apparent tendency in such a dispensation to teach them a variety of the most instructive and useful lessons, in a very convincing and effectual manner.

It is a just observation of Solomon, that the rod and reproof give wisdom, and it is peculiarly applicable to such a chastisement of our heavenly Father. It should therefore be our great care to hear the rod and him that hath appointed it, and so far as it hath a tendency to teach us our duty, and to improve the divine life in our souls, we have the highest reason to say, that it is indeed well.

Every affliction hath in its degree this kind of tendency, and it is the very reason for which we are thus chastened, that we may profit by our sorrows, and be made partakers of God's holiness. But this dispensation is particularly adapted, in a very affecting manner,—to teach us the vanity of the world,—to warn us of the approach of our own death,—to quicken us in the duties incumbent upon us, especially to our surviving children,—and to produce a more entire resignation to the divine will, which is indeed the surest foundation of quiet, and source of happiness.

I shall insist a little more particularly on each of these, and I desire that it may be remembered, that the sight and knowledge of such mournful providences as are now before us should, in some degree, be improved to these purposes, even by those parents whose families are most prosperous and joyful: may they learn wisdom and piety from what we suffer, and their improvements shall be acknowledged as an additional reason for us to say, It is well.

1. When God takes away our children from us, it is a very affecting lesson of the vanity of the world.

There is hardly a child born into it, on whom the parents do not look with some pleasing expectation that it shall comfort them concerning their labour. This makes the toil of education easy and delightful: and truly it is very early that we begin to find a sweetness in it, which abundantly repays all the fatigue. Five, or four, or three, or two years, make discoveries which afford immediate pleasure, and which suggest future hopes. Their words, their actions, their very looks, touch us, (if they be amiable and promising children,) in a tender, but very powerful, manner; their little arms twine about our hearts; and there is something more penetrating in their first broken accents of endearment, than in all the pomp and ornament of words. Every infant year increases the pleasure, and nourishes the hope. And where is the parent so wise and so cautious, and so constantly intent on his journey to heaven, as not to measure back a few steps to earth again, on such a plausible and decent occasion, as that of introducing the young stranger into the amusements, nay perhaps, where circumstances will admit it, into the elegances, of life, as well as its more serious and important business? What

fond calculations do we form of what it will be from what it is! How do we in thought open every blossom of sprightliness, or humanity, or piety, to its full spread, and ripen it to a sudden maturity! But, oh! who shall teach those that have never felt it, how it tears the very soul, when God roots up the tender plant with an inexorable hand, and withers the bud in which the colours were beginning to glow! Where is now our delight? where is our hope? Is it in the coffin? Is it in the grave? Alas! all the loveliness of person, of genius, and of temper, serves but to point and to poison the arrow, which is drawn out of our own quiver to wound us. Vain, delusive, transitory joys! "And such, O my soul," will the Christian say, "such are thine earthly comforts in every child, in every relative, in every possession of life; such are the objects of thy hopes and thy fears, thy schemes and thy labours, where earth alone is concerned. Let me then, once for all, direct mine eyes to another and a better state. From these broken cisterns, the fragments of which may hurt me indeed, but can no longer refresh me, let me look to the fountain of living waters. From these setting stars, or rather these bright but vanishing meteors, which make my darkness so much the more sensible, let me turn to the Father of lights. O Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee, my sure abode, my everlasting confidence! My gourds wither, my children die; but the Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. I see, in one instance more, the sad effects of having over-loved the creature; let me endeavour for the future, by the divine assistance, to fix my affections there where they cannot exceed; but where all the ardour of them will be as much my security and my happiness, as it is now my snare and my distress."

2. The removal of our children by such awful strokes may warn us of the approach of our own death.

Hereby God doth very sensibly show us, and those around us, that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory and loveliness of it like the flower of the field. And when our own habitations are made the houses of mourning, and ourselves the leaders of that sad procession, it may surely be expected that we should lay it to heart, so as to be quickened and improved by the view. "Have my children died in the morning of their days, and can I promise myself that I shall see the evening of mine? Now perhaps may I say, in a more literal sense than ever, the graves are ready for me. One of my family, and some of us may add, the first-born of it, is gone, as it were, to take possession of the sepulchre in all our names; and ere long I shall lie down with my child in the same bed; yea, perhaps, many of the feet that followed it shall attend me thither. Our dust shortly shall be blended together; and who can tell but this providence is chiefly be intended as a warning blow to me, that these concluding days of my life might be more regular, more spiritual, and more useful, than the former?"

3. The providence before us may be further improved, to quicken us in the duties of life, and especially in the education of surviving children.

It is, on the principles I hinted above, an engagement, that whatever our hand findeth to do, we should do it with all our might, since it so plainly shows us that we are going to the grave, where there is no device, nor knowledge, nor working: but permit me especially to observe, how peculiarly the sentiments we feel on these sad occasions, may be improved for the advantage of our dear offspring who yet remain, and quicken us to a proper care in their religious education.

We all see that it is a very reasonable duty, and every Christian parent resolves that he will ere long apply himself to it; but I am afraid, great advantages are lost by a delay, which we think we can easily excuse. Our hands are full of a variety of affairs, and our children are yet very young: we are therefore ready to imagine it is a good husbandry of time to defer our attempts for their instruction to a more convenient season, when they may be able to learn more in an hour, than the labour of days could now teach them; besides that we are apprehensive of danger in overloading their tender spirits, especially when they are perhaps under indisposition, and need to be diverted, rather then gravely advised and instructed.

But I beseech you, my friends, let us view the matter with that impartiality which the eloquence of death hath a tendency to produce. "That lovely creature that God hath now taken away, though its days were few, though its faculties were weak, yet might it not have known a great deal more of religion than it did, and felt a great deal more of it too, had I faithfully and prudently done my part? How did it learn language so soon, and in such a compass and readiness? Not by multiplied rules, nor laboured instruction, but by conversation. And might it not have learned much more of divine things by conversation too, if they had been allowed a due share in our thoughts and our discourses, according to the charge given to the Israelites, to talk of them going out and coming in, lying down and rising up? How soon did it learn trifles, and retain them, and, after its little way, observe and reason upon them, perhaps with a vivacity that sometimes surprised me! And had I been as diligent as I ought, who can tell what progress it might have made in divine knowledge? Who can tell but, as a reward to these pious cares, God might have put a word into its dying lips which I might all

my life have recollected with pleasure, and out of its feeble mouth might have perfected praise."

My friends, let us humble ourselves deeply before God under a sense of our past neglects, and let us learn our future duty. We may perhaps be ready fondly to say, "O that it were possible my child could be restored to me again, though it were but for a few weeks or days! how diligently would I attempt to supply my former deficiencies!" Unprofitable wish! Yet may not the thought be improved for the good of surviving children. How shall we express our affection to them? Not surely by indulging all the demands of appetite and fancy, in many early instances so hazardous, and so fatal; not by a solicitude to treasure up wealth for them, whose only portion may perhaps be a little cotton and shroud. No; our truest kindness to them will be to endeavour, by divine grace, to form them to an early inquiry after God, and Christ, and heaven, and a love for real goodness in all the forms of it which may come within their observation and notice. Let us apply ourselves immediately to this task, as those that remember there is a double uncertainty in their lives, and in ours. In a word, let us be that with regard to every child that yet remains, which we proposed and engaged to be to that which is taken away, when we pleaded with God for the continuance of its life, at least for a little while, that it might be further assisted in the preparations for death and eternity. If such resolutions be formed and pursued, the death of one may be the means of spiritual life to many; and we shall surely have reason to say it is well, if it teach us so useful a lesson.

4. The providence before us may have a special tendency to improve our resignation to the divine will; and if it does so, it will indeed be well.

There is surely no imaginable situation of mind so sweet and so reasonable, as that which we feel when we humbly refer ourselves in all things to the divine disposal, in an entire suspension of our own will, seeing and owning the hand of God, and bowing before it with a filial acquiescence. This is chiefly to be learned from suffering; and perhaps there is no suffering which is fitter to teach it, than this. In many other afflictions there is such a mixture of human interposition, that we are ready to imagine, we may be allowed to complain and to chide a little. Indignation mingles itself with our grief, and when it does so, it warms the mind, though with a feverish kind of heat, and, in an unnatural flow of spirits, leads the heart into forgetfulness of God. But here it is so apparently his hand, that we must refer it to him, and it will appear bold impiety to quarrel at what is done. In other instances we can at least flatter ourselves with hope, that the calamity may be diverted, or the enjoyment recovered; but here, alas! there is no hope. "Tears will not," as * Sir William Temple finely expresses it, "water the lovely plant so as to cause it to grow again; sighs will not give it new breath, nor can we furnish it with life and spirits by the waste of our own." The sentence is finally gone forth, and the last fatal stroke irrecoverably given. Opposition is vain: a forced submission gives but little rest to the mind: a cordial acquiescence in the divine will is the only thing in the whole world that can ease the labouring heart, and restore true serenity. Remaining corruption will work on such an occasion, and a painful struggle will convince the Christian how imperfect his present attainments are: and this will probably lead him to an attentive review of the great reasons for submission; it will lead him to urge them on his own soul, and to plead them with God in prayer; till at length the storm is laid, and tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience a hope which maketh not ashamed, while the love of God is so shed abroad in the heart, as to humble it for every preceding opposition; and to bring it even to a real approbation of all that so wise and good a friend hath done; resigning every other interest and enjoyment to his disposal, and sitting down with the sweet resolution of the prophet, Though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation. And when we are brought to this, the whole horizon clears, and the sun breaks forth in its strength.

Now I appeal to every sincere Christian in this assembly, whether there will not be reason indeed to say It is well, if by this painful affliction we more sensibly learn the vanity of the creature; if we are awakened to serious thoughts of our own latter end; if by it we are quickened in the duties of life, and formed to a more entire resignation of soul, and acquiescence in the divine will. I will only add once more, and it is a thought of delightful importance,

IV. That pious parents have reason to hope, it is well with those dear creatures who are taken away in their early days.

I see not that the word of God hath any where passed a damnatory sentence on any infants: and if it has not, I am sure we have no authority to do it, especially, considering with how much compassion the Divine Being speaks of them in the instance of the Ninevites, and on some other occasions. Perhaps, as some pious divines have conjectured, they may constitute a very considerable part of the number of the elect; and, as in Adam they all died, they may in Christ all be made alive. At least, methinks, from the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed, the blessings of which are come upon the believing Gentiles, there is reason to hope well concerning the infant off-

* Temple's Essays, Vol. I. p. 178.

spring of God's people, early devoted and often recommended to him, that their souls will be bound in the bundle of life, and be loved for their parents' sakes.

It is, indeed, impossible for us to say how soon children may be capable of contracting personal guilt. They are quickly able to distinguish, in some degree, between right and wrong; and it is too plain, that they as quickly, in many instances, forget the distinction. The corruptions of nature begin early to work, and show the need of sanctifying grace; yet, without a miracle, it cannot be expected that much of the Christian scheme should be understood by these little creatures, in the first dawning of reason, though a few evangelical phrases may be taught, and sometimes, by a happy kind of accident, may be rightly applied. The tender heart of a parent may, perhaps, take a hint from hence to terrify itself, and exasperate all its other sorrows, by that sad thought, "What if my dear child be perished for ever!—gone from our embraces, and all the little pleasures we could give it, to everlasting darkness and pain!" Horrible imagination! and Satan may, perhaps, take the advantage of these gloomy moments, to aggravate every little infirmity into a crime, and to throw us into an agony, which no other view of the affliction can possibly give, to a soul penetrated with a sense of eternity. Nor do I know a thought, in the whole compass of nature, that hath a more powerful tendency to produce suspicious notions of God, and a secret alienation of heart from him.

Now for this very reason, methinks, we should guard against so harsh a conclusion, lest we at once injure the Divine Being, and torture ourselves. And, surely, we may easily fall on some reflections which may encourage our hopes, where little children are concerned; and it is only of that case that I am now speaking. Let us think of the blessed God, as the great parent of universal nature, whose tender mercies are over all his works; who declares that judgment is his strange work; who is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, gracious, and full of compassion, who delighteth in mercy, who waiteth to be gracious; and endureth, with much long-suffering, even the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. He intimately knows our frame, and our circumstances; he sees the weakness of the unformed mind; how forcibly the volatile spirits are struck with a thousand new amusing objects around it, and borne away as a feather before the wind; and, on the other hand, how when distempers seize it, the feeble powers are overborne in a moment, and rendered incapable of any degree of application and attention. And, Lord, wilt thou open thine eyes on such a one, to bring it into strict judgment with thee? Amidst all the instances of thy patience and thy bounty to the most abandoned of mankind, are these little helpless creatures the objects of thy speedy vengeance and final severity?

Let us further consider, as it is a very considerable thought in these circumstances, the compassionate regard which the blessed Jesus expressed to little children. He was much displeased with those who forbade their being brought to him; and said, Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God; and taking them up in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. In another instance we are told, that he took a little child, (who appears to have been old enough to come at his call,) and set him in the midst of his disciples, and said, Except ye become as little children, you shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven. May we not then hope that many little children are admitted into it? And may not that hope be greatly confirmed from whatever, of an amiable and regular disposition, we have observed in those that are taken away? If we have seen* a tenderness of conscience, in any thing which they apprehend would displease the great and good God; a love to truth; a readiness to attend on divine worship, from some imperfect notion of its general design, though the particulars of it could not be understood; an open, candid, benevolent heart; a tender sense of obligation, and a desire, according to their little power, to repay it; may we not hope that these were some of the first fruits of the Spirit, which he would, in due time, have ripened into Christian graces, and are now, on a sudden, perfected by that great almighty Agent who worketh all, and in all?

Sure I am, that this blessed Spirit hath no inconsiderable work to perform on the most established Christians, to finish them in a complete meetness for the heavenly world; would to God there were no greater blemishes to be observed in their character, than the little vanities of children! With infinite ease then can he perfect what is lacking in their unfinished minds, and pour out upon them, in a moment, that light and grace, which shall qualify them for a state to compassion of which ours on earth is but childhood or infancy.

Now what a noble source of consolation we have! Then may the affectionate parent say, It is well, not only with me, but with the child too: incomparably better than if my [illegible] had been importunate prayers for its recovery had been answered. It is indeed well, if that beloved creature be fallen asleep in Christ; if that dear lamb be folded in the arms of the compassionate Shepherd, and gathered into his gracious bosom. Self-love might have led me to wish its longer continuance here, but if I truly loved my friend with a solid, rational affection, I should much rather re-

* I [illegible]

joice, to think it is gone to a heavenly Father, and to the world of perfected spirits above. Had it been spared to me, how slowly could I have taught it! and in the full ripeness of its age, what had it been, when compared with what it now is! How is it shot up on a sudden, from the converse and the toys of children, to be a companion with saints and angels, in the employment and the blessedness of heaven! Shall I then complain of it as a rigorous severity to my family, that God hath taken it to the family above? And what if he hath chosen to bestow the distinguished favour on *that one* of my little flock, who was formed to take the tenderest hold of my heart? Was there unkindness in that? What if he saw that the very sprightliness and softness which made it to me so exquisitely delightful, might, in time, have betrayed it into ruin, and took this method of sheltering it from trials which had otherwise been too hard for it, and so fixing a seal on its character and happiness? What if that strong attachment of my heart to it, had been a snare to the child and to me? or what if it had been otherwise? Do I need additional reasons to justify the divine conduct, in an instance which my child is celebrating in the songs of heaven? If it is a new and untasted affliction to have such a tender branch lopped off, it is also a new honour to be the parent of a glorified saint." And, as good Mr. Howe expressed it on another occasion, "If God be pleased, and his glorified creature be pleased, who are we that we should be displeased!"*

"Could I wish, that this young inhabitant of heaven should be degraded to earth again? or would it thank me for that wish? Would it say, that it was the part of a wise parent, to call it down from a sphere of such exalted services and pleasures, to our low life here upon earth? Let me rather be thankful for the pleasing hope, that though God loves my child too well to permit it to return to me, he will ere long bring me to it. And then that endeared paternal affection, which would have been a cord to tie me to earth, and have added new pangs to my removal from it, will be as a golden chain to draw me upwards, and add one further charm and joy even to paradise itself." And O, how great a joy! to view the change, and to compare that dear idea, so fondly laid up, so often reviewed, with the now glorious original, in the improvements of the upper world! To borrow the words of the sacred writer, in a very different sense; "I said, I was desolate and bereaved of children, and who hath brought up these? I was left alone, and these, where have they been? Was this my desolation" this my sorrow" to part with thee for a few days, that I might receive thee for ever, and find thee what thou art?" It is for no

* Howe's Life, page 49 (the end).

language, but that of heaven, to describe the sacred joy which such a meeting must occasion.

In the mean time, Christians, let us keep up the lively expectation of it, and let what has befallen us draw our thoughts upwards. Perhaps they will sometimes, before we are aware, sink to the grave, and dwell in the tombs that contain the poor remains of what was once so dear to us. But let them take flight from thence to more noble, more delightful, scenes. And I will add, let the hope we have of the happiness of our children render God still dearer to our souls. We feel a very tender sense of the kindness which our friends expressed towards them, and think, indeed very justly, that their affectionate care for them lays a lasting obligation upon us. What love then, and what service, do we owe to thee, O gracious Father, who hast, we hope, received them there into thine house above, and art now entertaining them there with unknown delight, though our former methods of commerce with them be cut off! "Lord," should each of us say in such a case, "I would take what thou art doing to my child as done to myself, and as a specimen and earnest of what shall shortly be done." It is therefore *well*.

It only remains, that I conclude with a few hints of further improvement.

1. Let pious parents, who have lost hopeful children in maturer age, join with others in saying, It is well.

My friends, the reasons which I have been urging at large, are common to you with us; and permit me to add, that as your case has its peculiar distress, it has, I think, in a yet greater degree, its peculiar consolations too.

I know you will say, that it is inexpressibly grievous and painful, to part with children who were grown up into most amiable friends, who were your companions in the ways of God, and concerning whom you had a most agreeable prospect, that they would have been the ornaments and supports of religion in the rising age, and extensive blessings to the world, long after you had quitted it. These reasonings have, undoubtedly, their weight; and they have so, when considered in a very different view. Must you not acknowledge it is well, that you enjoyed so many years of comfort in them? that you reaped so much solid satisfaction from them? and saw those evidences of a work of grace upon their hearts, which give you such abundant reason to conclude that they are now received into that inheritance of glory, for which they were so apparently made meet? Some of them, perhaps, had already quitted their fathers' house; as for others, had God spared their lives, they might have been transplanted into families of their own; and if, instead of being removed to another house, or town, or country, they are taken by God into another world, is that a mat-

ter of so great complaint; when that world is so much better, and you are yourselves so near it? I put it to your hearts, Christians, would you rather have chosen to have buried them in their infancy, or never to have known the joys and the hopes of a parent, now you know the vicissitude of sorrow, and of disappointment? But perhaps you will say, that you chiefly grieve for that loss which the world has sustained by the removal of those, from whom it might reasonably have expected so much future service. This is, indeed, a generous and a Christian sentiment, and there is something noble in those tears which flow on such a consideration. But do not so remember your relation to earth, as to forget that which you bear to heaven: and do not so wrong the divine wisdom and goodness, as to suppose, that when he takes away from hence promising instruments of service, he there lays them by as useless. Much more reasonable is it to conclude, that their sphere of action, as well as happiness, is enlarged, and that the church above hath gained incomparably more, than that below can be supposed to have lost by their death.

On the whole, therefore, far from complaining of the divine conduct in this respect, it will become you, my friends, rather to be very thankful that these dear children were spared so long, to accompany and entertain you in so many stages of your short journey through life, to answer so many of your hopes, and to establish so many more beyond all fear of disappointment. Reflect on all that God did in and upon them, on all he was beginning to do by them, and on what you have great reason to believe he is now doing for them; and adore his name, that he has left you these dear memorials, by which your case is so happily distinguished from ours, whose hopes in our children withered in the very bud; or from theirs, who saw those who were once so dear to them, perishing, as they have cause to fear, in the paths of the destroyer.

But while I speak thus, methinks I am alarmed, lest I should awaken the far more grievous sorrows of some mournful parent, whom it will not be so easy to comfort. My brethren and friends, what shall I say to you, who are lamenting over your Absaloms, and almost wishing you had died for them? Shall I urge *you* to say it is well? Perhaps you may think it a great attainment, if, as Aaron, when his sons died before the Lord, you can hold your peace under the awful stroke. My soul is trembled for you; my words are almost swallowed up. I cannot unsay what I have elsewhere said at large on that melancholy subject.* Yet let me remind you of this, that you do not certainly know what almighty grace might do for these lamented creatures, even in the latest moments, and have therefore no warrant confidently to pronounce that they are assuredly perished. And if you cannot but tremble in the too probable fear of it, labour to turn your eyes from so dark a prospect to those better hopes which God is setting before you. For surely you still have abundant reason to rejoice in that grace, which gives your own lives to you as a prey, and has brought you so near to that blessed world, where, hard as it is now to conceive it, you will have laid aside every affection of nature, which interferes with the interests of God, and prevents your most cheerful acquiescence in every particular of his wise and gracious determinations.

2. From what we have heard, let us learn not to think of the loss of our children with a slavish dread.

It is to a parent indeed such a cutting stroke, that I wonder not if nature shrink back at the very mention of it: and, perhaps, it would make those to whom God hath denied children more easy, if they knew what some of the happiest parents feel in an uncertain apprehension of the loss of theirs: an apprehension which strikes with peculiar force on the mind, when experience hath taught us the anguish of such an affliction in former instances. But let us not anticipate evils: perhaps all our children, who are hitherto spared, may follow us to the grave: or, if otherwise, we sorrow not as those who have no hope. We may have reason still to say, It is well; and through divine grace, we may also have hearts to say it. Whatever we lose, if we be the children of God, we shall never lose our heavenly Father. He will still be our support, and our joy. And therefore let us turn all our anxiety about uncertain, future events, into a holy solicitude to please him, and to promote religious impressions in the hearts of our dear offspring; that if God should see fit to take them away, we may have a claim to the full consolations which I have been representing in the preceding discourse.

3. Let us not sink in hopeless sorrow, or break out into clamorous complaints, if God has brought this heavy affliction upon us.

A stupid indifference would be absurd and unnatural. God and man might look upon us as acting a most unworthy part, should we be like the ostrich in the wilderness, which hardeneth herself against her young ones, as if they were not hers; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. Let us sorrow like men, and like parents; but let us not, in the mean time, forget that we are Christians. Let us remember how common the calamity is; how few parents are exempt from it, some of the most pious and excellent have lost amiable children, with circumstances perhaps of peculiar aggravation. It is a trial which God hath chosen for the exercise of some who have been eminently dear to him, as we

* In the sixth of my Sermons to Young Persons, entitled, The Reflections of a pious Parent on the Death of a well-behaved Child.

may learn from a variety of instances both ancient and modern. Let us recollect our many offences against our heavenly Father, those sins which such a dispensation may properly bring to our remembrance; and let that silence us, and teach us to own, that it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, and that we are punished less than our iniquities deserve. Let us look round on our surviving comforts; let us look forward to our future, our eternal, hopes; and we shall surely see, that there is still room for praise, still a call for it. Let us review the particulars mentioned above, and then let conscience determine whether it doth not become us, in this particular instance, to say it steadily, and cheerfully too, *Even this is well.* And may the God of all grace and comfort apply these considerations to our mind, that we may not only own them, but feel them as a reviving cordial, when our heart is overwhelmed within us! In the mean time, let me beseech you whose tabernacles are in peace, and whose children are yet about you, that you would not be severe in censuring our tears, till you have experimentally known our sorrows, and yourselves tasted the wormwood and the gall, which we, with all our comforts, must have in a long and bitter remembrance.

4. Let those of us who are under the rod, be very solicitous to improve it aright, that in the end it may indeed be well.

Hear, my brethren, my friends and fellow-sufferers, hear and suffer the word of exhortation. Let us be much concerned, that we may not bear all the smart of such an affliction, and, through our own folly, lose all that benefit which might, otherwise, be a rich equivalent. In proportion to the grievousness of the stroke, should be our care to attend to the design of it. Let us, now God is calling us to mourning and lamentation, be searching and trying our ways, that we may turn again unto the Lord. Let us review the conduct of our lives, and the state and tenor of our affections, that we may observe what hath been deficient, and what irregular; that proper remedies may be applied, and those important lessons more thoroughly learnt, which I was mentioning under the former branch of my Discourse. Let us pray, that through our tears we may read our duty, and that by the heat of the furnace we may be so melted, that our dross may be purged away, and the divine image instamped on our souls in brighter and fairer characters. To sum up all in one word, let us endeavour to set our hearts more on that God, who is infinitely better to us than ten children, who hath given us a name better than that of sons and daughters, and can abundantly supply the place of all earthly enjoyments with the rich communications of his grace: nay, perhaps, we may add, who hath removed some darling of our hearts, lest to our infinite detriment it should fill his place there, and, by alienating us from his love and service, have a fatal influence on our present peace and our future happiness.

Eternal glory, my friends, is so great a thing, and the complete love and enjoyment of God so unutterably desirable, that it is well worth our while to bear the sharpest sorrows, by which we may be more perfectly formed for it. We may even congratulate the death of our children, if it bring us nearer to our heavenly Father; and teach us, (instead of filling this vacancy in our heart with some new vanity, which may shortly renew our sorrows,) to consecrate the whole of it to him who alone deserves, and can alone answer, the most intense affection. Let us try what of this kind may be done. We are now going to the table of the Lord;* to that very table where our vows have often been sealed, where our comforts have often been resigned, where our Isaacs have been conditionally sacrificed, and where we commemorate the real sacrifice which God hath made, even of his only-begotten Son, for us. May our other sorrows be suspended, while we mourn for him whom we have pierced as for an only Son, and are in bitterness as for a first-born. From his blood consolations spring up, which will flourish even on the graves of our dear children; and the sweetness of that cup which he there gives us, will temper the most distasteful ingredients of the other. Our houses are not so with God, as they once were, as we once expected they would have been, but he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, and these are the tokens of it. Blessed be his name, we hold not the mercies of that covenant by so precarious a tenure as the life of any creature: it is well ordered in all things and sure: may it be all our salvation, and all our desire; and then it is but a little while, and all our complaints will cease. God will wipe away these tears from our eyes; our peaceful and happy spirits shall, ere long, meet with those of our children which he hath taken to himself. Our bodies shall sleep, and, ere long, shall also awake, and arise with theirs. Death, that inexorable destroyer, shall be swallowed up in victory, while we and ours surround the throne with everlasting hallelujahs, and own, with another evidence than we can now perceive, with another spirit than we can now express, that all was indeed well. Amen.

* N. B. This sermon was preached October 3, 1756, it being sacrament-day. The child died October 1.

SERMON VII.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARACTER AND TRANSLATION OF ENOCH.*

GENESIS v. 24.

And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.

THE apostle gives it in charge to the believing Hebrews, that they should remember those who had presided over them, and had spoken to them the word of the gospel, well knowing it would be one sweet and powerful engagement, to follow their faith, especially when they considered the end of their conversation.

I persuade myself, that it will be a very easy matter for you, my friends, to remember that dear and faithful servant of Christ, who, for so many years,† had the pastoral care of you, guiding you, at once, in the integrity of his heart, and in the skilfulness of his hands. You who have grown up, and, as to some I may add, have grown old too, under his ministry, will surely find the recollection, notwithstanding all the sorrow that must now attend it, both too edifying and too delightful to be neglected. You must, no doubt, find some memorials of him, in various places and circumstances of life; but none more numerous, and none more pleasing, than your Bibles will afford you. How many awakening exhortations, how many comprehensive precepts, how many precious promises, have you, from sabbath to sabbath, heard him unfold! How many instructive and amiable examples have you not only heard, but seen him illustrate! It was the care and joy of his life, to form himself on those great models; and beholding them in the glass of Scripture, he was changed into the same image. In those originals therefore you will often trace him, and in which of them is not the resemblance beautifully conspicuous! Yet perhaps in few of the miniatures which are there drawn, is it more remarkably so, than in the account given of Enoch. He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. As soon as you heard me read the words, you with pleasure saw how well they expressed, both the distinguished piety of your late minister's character, and the ease and suddenness of his removal from us.

It is impossible for me to express the tender sympathy, with which I undertake this melancholy office, which my honoured father was pleased to assign me. But I will attempt to break through the difficulty, and to suppress the fulness of my heart, so far as it would obstruct what I have to say, in humble hope, that, through the divine blessing, that which was the great end of his life and labours among you, may in some measure be promoted by this Discourse, occasioned by his death. And, I am persuaded, nothing will so nobly support your hearts under this sad separation, or so effectually secure and promote the pleasure of your future meeting with him, as a diligent care to be followers of him, as he was a follower of Enoch, and all the saints, in that holy course of walking with God, which is now to be the subject of our meditation. And that you may be both directed and animated in it, we will,

First, Explain the view given us of Enoch's life and character. He walked with God.

Secondly, Consider the happy close of this pious course. He was not, for God took him.

When I have handled these heads as fully as the time will admit, I shall,

Thirdly, Conclude with some practical reflections, and an address peculiarly suited to that awful providence which hath brought me among you this day.

And permit me to remind you, that your serious attention to what shall now be spoken, is one part of the respect which you owe to the memory of that worthy and excellent man, in whose place I stand.

First, Let us attentively survey the account which is here given us of the life and character of Enoch.

It is said, that he walked with God; a phrase which the same sacred historian useth concerning one of Enoch's descendants, *i. e.* Noah: He was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God. And when it is said of other good men, that they walked before the Lord, it seems to be an expression much of the same import, and implies, that in the main series of their lives they maintained a firm persuasion of the being and per-

* Preached at Welford, in Northamptonshire, March 9, 1737-8, on occasion of the much lamented death of the late Rev. Mr. John Norris.

† N. B. Mr. Norris died Feb. 8, 1737-8, in the 68d year of his age, having been near 38 years minister at Welford.

fections of God, and of the other important principles of religion; and that in consequence of this they were careful to behave as in the divine presence; and on the other hand, that they were honoured with some gracious and comfortable tokens of the divine acceptance and favour; in a word, that there was a mutual friendship established and exercised between God and them. Blessed character, and happy state! May we be formed to it, and improved in it, while we more particularly review it in this instance of Enoch.

1. When it is said that Enoch walked with God, it evidently implies, that he had a firm persuasion of the divine being and perfections, and the other important principles of true religion.

Of this the apostle expressly assures us, and argues it from the account here given of him. He had before his translation this testimony, that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Enoch had undoubtedly this faith, by which he believed, that the worlds were made by God, and that he is the great supporter of all. He certainly traced him in his works of creation and providence, and considered him both as the greatest and the best of beings. He was firmly persuaded of his immutable existence, his almighty power, and unsearchable wisdom; and he also considered him as the wise, the righteous, and gracious governor of his rational creatures; the father, the guide, and the portion, of his people. Without these reverential and these fiducial regards, what foundation or what encouragement could there have been for his walking with God?

On these principles Enoch would easily infer the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments; considering how little the present administrations of Providence bear the face of a final retribution. We are also assured by St. Jude, that he, by divine revelation, prophesied of the judgment-day, and may from that hint probably conjecture, that other important articles of religion might in such an extraordinary way be discovered to him. We may especially conclude, that being thus divinely instructed in the certainty and pomp of Christ's second coming, he was not left entirely ignorant of the purposes of his first appearance. And no doubt Adam, who was for the last three hundred years of his life contemporary with Enoch, would not fail to acquaint him with that first important promise relating to the seed of the woman, as the noblest support to the hopes of a guilty creature.

It is indeed impossible for us to determine, how far his views of the Messiah reached; but it is highly congruous to the rest of his character, to conclude, that he traced every intimation of this glorious Deliverer with pleasure, and joyfully accepted him, so far as he was made known, as the great medium of his reconciliation to God, and converse with him.

2. In consequence of this persuasion of the great truths of religion, Enoch made it his care to behave as in the divine presence.

He walked with God, *i. e.* he habitually conducted himself as one that was with God. And, as it is said of Moses, he endured and acted as seeing him who is invisible. It may be worth our while, more particularly to consider, how this would influence his secret, his domestic, and his public conduct.

We may assure ourselves that it had a great influence upon him in secret, not only to restrain him from secret sins, but to excite him to the discharge of those secret duties which a present Deity so reasonably requires, and which they that have a suitable sense of his presence cannot omit. This certainly led him to spend many an hour in devout retirement, meditation, and prayer: and we may reasonably conclude, that the good man was never less alone than when he was alone. He probably never made nearer approaches to heaven before his translation thither, than when he had got rid of other cares, other amusements, and other company; that he might be all at leisure for his God.

It is also very evident, that this sense of the divine presence must have influenced Enoch in his domestic life. Short as the Mosaic history of this holy man is, we learn from it, that he was the master of a family, and stood in the relation of a husband and a parent; and, which is something remarkable, we do not find that any of the patriarchs married younger than he; for his son Methuselah was born in his sixty-fifth year; which, considering the age of men in the antediluvian world, must be the bloom of his father's youth. With this family he lived three hundred years, governing himself, no doubt, by a resolution like that of pious Joshua, That he and his house would serve the Lord. His care would be, like that of Abraham in after-ages, to command his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.

He would probably often call them together to join in sacrifice and prayer; when perhaps his children, as we read of Job's, were remembered, according to the number of them all. He could not but be solicitous to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might learn to know the God of their fathers, and be inclined to serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

And he would be sure to enforce all his precepts by a good example. A soul so habitually near to God, and so constantly sensible of his presence, must be open to all the tenderest sentiments of humanity and benevolence. He would, of course,

study to make every body about him easy and happy, and, like your venerable and beloved pastor now with God, would wear a constant smile on his countenance, which he probably saw reflected from the face of every child and servant in the family. Happy were they that resided in it! for surely they might have continued there from one century to another with growing improvement and delight.

And could we have traced Enoch into public life, we should undoubtedly have found that part of his character agreeable to the rest. Like Jesus, he went about doing good, his head still full of wise schemes, and his heart overflowing with benevolent affections; so that whatever advantages his rank and circumstances gave him, were faithfully employed for the common good. We may conclude, that such a person was approved by men, as well as accepted of God, that, "when the eye saw him it blessed him, and when the ear heard him it gave witness to him."

There is great reason to believe, that his lips as well as his hands fed many; and so much the rather, as he was a prophet commissioned by God to teach the people, and to bring them some extraordinary revelations from him. Thus we read, in words which I hinted at above, That Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, or holy ones, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have impiously committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. From whence it plainly appears, that he lived in a very degenerate age, when impiety and immorality abounded, when insolent sinners, as in our days, set their mouths against the heavens, and gave their tongues an unbridled licence of walking through the earth. But he bore his undaunted testimonies to the truth of God in the midst of all their opposition and contempt. He resolutely set his face like a flint, as he well knew that in such a cause he should never be ashamed. His heart, humane and tender as it was, could not but we warmed with a generous indignation at the dishonours which were done to the divine Majesty, and knowing the terrors of the Lord, he endeavoured to persuade men. We would hope his endeavours were not entirely in vain, but that, through the concurrence of divine grace, he was the happy instrument of stemming the torrent for a while, or at least of recovering and preserving a few, who might be the companions of his walk with God here, and are now his associates in glory.

Such a governing care to approve the main series of his private, domestic, and public conduct to the Being in whose presence he always knew himself to be, must surely be comprehended in the phrase before us; and it will be pleasant to consider,

3. That the expression further intimates his being honoured with corresponding tokens of the divine acceptance and favour.

Enoch walked with God; and can two walk together, except they be agreed? It plainly implies, that he lived in a state of friendship with God; or, as the apostle expresseth it, even before his translation had a testimony that he pleased him. Thou meetest, saith the prophet, him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, even such as remember thee in their ways. Thus did Enoch remember God, and thus was he visited by him. The high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, who dwelleth in the high and the holy place, condescended to dwell with this holy man, as he was humble, and of a contrite spirit.

Public assemblies for divine worship were, no doubt, seasons of delightful converse with God; and Enoch would on that account honour and love them, whoever might forsake them, whoever might despise them. And in his house and his retirements, his journeys, and his converse with his friends, he had God still with him. He walked in the light of God's countenance, and was surely looking up often in a day, often in an hour, and saw by faith the most delightful sight on this side heaven, or even in heaven itself, the smiling face of a reconciled God and Father. He felt the gentle elapses of the divine love shed abroad in his heart by the Spirit given unto him, which, no doubt, though under a darker dispensation, witnessed with his spirit, that he was a child of God, and an heir of eternal glory.

As piety was the source of all his social and personal virtues, the fragrancy of it, as a sacred perfume, would mingle itself delightfully with all his social and personal enjoyments, and heighten them to a degree unknown to those who have not thus tasted the joys which a stranger intermeddleth not with. In every advantageous circumstance of life he saw and observed the hand of the divine bounty; and discerning also the interposition of the same providence in all his afflictions, (for afflictions he undoubtedly had,) he not only submitted to them in humble silence, but cordially acquiesced in them all, as the means which infinite wisdom and goodness had chosen to carry on his own kind designs, for his final everlasting happiness.

And such universally are the ways, and such the supports and pleasures, of those who walk with God. Happy the men that are in such a case, yea, happy the men whose God is the Lord; happy they by whom he is thus constantly owned and regarded, honoured and enjoyed. I persuade myself, that after such a description, I need not insist largely on the dignity, the security, and the delights of

such a life, especially as it is to be the business of my second general head.

Secondly, To consider the happy close of this pious course. He was not; for God took him.

For the further illustration of which, you will observe, that he was early and suddenly removed from our world,—that he was taken to dwell with God,—and that he was received to that happy state in a miraculous and unparalleled way. All these particulars evidently appear from the account which Moses gives of this important fact, as illustrated by the writers of the New Testament.

1. Enoch was early and suddenly removed from our world.

He was not, *i. e.* he was no longer here. You may perhaps wonder that I should speak of his early remove, when you recollect that he was then three hundred and sixty-five years old. But you will not blame the expression, when you consider the long lives of men in those antediluvian ages, to which this period bore but a small proportion. As his son Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, so his father Jared attained to nine hundred and sixty-two years; and therefore, being one hundred and sixty-two years old at his birth, continued in the world four hundred and thirty-five years after Enoch had left it; whose age at the time of his translation answered to about the thirty-first or thirty-second year of life at present, which you know is just the vigour and prime of it. But he had undoubtedly lived much in a little time, and had done more for God before he had reached what was then accounted the meridian of life, than many who had outstripped him in age by several centuries. On this a gracious God excused him from the trouble of passing through a longer pilgrimage, and of drooping under the burthen of declining years. And surely so wise and good a man would have been thankful for the favour, though it had not been bestowed in so extraordinary a way; especially as this removal was not only early, but sudden too.

This suddenness the words do beautifully express: He was not, *i. e.* he disappeared at once; as riches sometimes do, when they take their wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards heaven: on which account they are called things that are not. The apostle renders it, He was not found; perhaps intimating, that some diligent search was made after him, as after Elijah, when in a very distant succeeding age he was in an extraordinary manner received into glory.

Let us pause a little on this delightful thought. What a sudden transition this good man had from earth to heaven! He was not; for God took him. He probably rose in the morning in perfect health, and went forth with his usual composure and sweetness of temper to the appointed duties of the day; and while he was perhaps conversing with his pious friends, which was the case with Elijah, or while, like Christ, he was praying with and for them, or engaged in some other act of social worship, he was suddenly called away. No tedious illness, no sad farewell to those that were at home. This happy man was in the way of his duty one moment, and in the regions of immortality the next. He was not; for God took him; which further implies,

2. That he was taken to dwell with God.

He had walked with him in this house of his pilgrimage, yet still his faith and hope had been waiting for a more noble and more perfect state, and that hope did not make him ashamed. Having guided him by his counsels, God received him to glory. And this was to him the crown of all his honour and joy, that he was received to God. Divine grace had long since taught him to say, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee: and God treated him as a friend that loved him, and was beloved by him. As if he had not been satisfied with visiting him below, he called him to dwell above. He showed him the path of life, and conducted him to his presence, where there is fulness of joy; and to his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.

And that holy soul, which hath been trained up for heaven by so long a course of devotion and virtue, would find itself most happily attempered and connaturalized to the world to which it was received. He changed his place indeed, but his employments and pleasures were in the main the same. He still walked with God, but with a steadier pace, more unwearied ardour, and more exquisite delight. How gladly would he have obeyed this divine call to that world, though death in its most dreadful forms had stood to meet him in his passage thither! But through the peculiar favour of God to him, we are informed,

3. That he was received to this happiness in a miraculous, and, till that time, an unparalleled, way.

For his sake God was pleased to create a new thing on the earth, and permit a child of Adam to enter the gates of his glory, without taking the road appointed to the best of men in the course of nature, in passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

I cannot say that we could with any certainty have inferred this from the words of Moses alone: He was not; for God took him. That phrase might have been interpreted of a sudden death; as Rachel is said to lament, because her children were not; and Job expressed his apprehension of immediate death, by saying, Thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be. Now had Enoch passed out of life thus, it might have been said that God took him, as Asaph speaks of being received into

glory. And our Lord promises his apostles, who were to go the way of all flesh, that he would come, and receive them to himself. But St. Paul, who was guided by an unerring spirit, which would sufficiently secure him from being imposed upon by any fanciful comment, or precarious tradition, has fixed the matter beyond all reasonable doubt, by saying, That through faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him.

This was a case hitherto unequalled, nor hath the like happened even to the present day, excepting only the rapture of Elijah, and the ascension of Christ.

We are at large told in the book of Kings, that the pious Elijah, who like Enoch had signalized his zeal for God in a very degenerate age, was favoured with an extraordinary remove like his. He was fetched up to heaven by a detachment of angels, who brought along with them a splendid vehicle, which is called a chariot of fire prepared for that purpose, and which might possibly by some unknown operation be the means of purifying and refining the mortal part of his nature,* to such a degree as was necessary in order to its inhabiting that kingdom of God, which flesh and blood cannot enter, and which corruption cannot inherit.

I speak also of the ascension of our blessed Redeemer, as a parallel instance, because, though he died, yet he rose again from the dead, and continued a while upon earth, eating and drinking, and travelling from place to place, as he had done in the days of his flesh; so that his flight to the regions of glory was as miraculous, and might as properly be called a translation, as if he had not died at all.

And in this respect the saints which are found alive at the general judgment, shall be conformed to these great examples. For we are expressly told by St. Paul, who mentions it as a mystery till then kept secret, and now but imperfectly revealed, that we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And he illustrates it, when he tells the Thessalonians, that after the resurrection of those that sleep in Jesus, they who are alive shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, in order to our being for ever with him. Words with which we may justly comfort ourselves, and each other, for those consolations of God are not small.

And it is exceeding probable this would have been the stated manner of passing from earth to heaven, had not sin made its fatal inroads upon us, and death entered in its train. For nothing can be more certain than that, had not the increasing numbers of mankind been one way or another thinned and diminished, earth would several thousand years ago have been too small to nourish, or even to receive, its inhabitants.

It would be great presumption in me to pretend to describe the change made in the body of Enoch, by this translation, or to give an account of the circumstances that attended it; since the sacred historian hath not thought fit to record them. I will not pretend to say how much reason a learned and ingenious writer of our own† might have to conjecture, that all the antediluvian patriarchs whom Moses mentions, (except Adam, who was now dead, and Noah, not yet born,) might be assembled, perhaps with multitudes more, to see this great sight; yet I cannot think it passed without any witness at all. When Elijah was to be taken up, it is very evident, that not only he himself had some intimations of the time and manner, but that it was divinely revealed to the prophets of Bethel and Jericho, as well as that Elisha was permitted to be an eye-witness of it. And when Christ ascended, it was in the presence of all the apostles, while he spake with them, and they beheld, and looked stedfastly upon him. And there is the greater reason to believe that something like this might be the case with Enoch, because his translation might probably be intended to answer many valuable and important purposes, which required at least some competent number of witnesses, if not a large and public assembly.

So far as this important fact was known, it would be the most glorious testimony the world had ever received of God's regard to singular and distinguished piety. His permitting righteous Abel to fall by the hand of his cruel and wicked brother, might have been a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, and that career of prosperous tyranny and violence, with which the giants of those ages were then filling the earth, might have tempted men to suspect that the Lord had forsaken it. This no doubt imboldened ungodly sinners in their hard and impious speeches, as well as their ungodly deeds. But when Enoch, that holy prophet, who had so long been the object of their profane mockery and derision, was thus singled out from the whole race of men, as the friend of God, and taken to dwell with him, it would evidently appear, there was a reward for the righteous, and a God who judged in the earth.

It would also be a sensible demonstration of the reality of an invisible world, and would, by a train of easy consequences, confirm men's natural apprehensions of the immortality of the soul, and of the existence of some nobler orders of beings in the upper world, with whom wise and righteous men

* ——— Corpus mortale per auras
Dilapsum tenues, credita plumbea fundæ
Missa solet medios glans volitabile cœlo,
Pulchra subit facies.—*Ovid. Met. Lib.* xiv. v. 824, &c.

† Dr. Hunt, of Div. Rep. p. 44.

are at length to be incorporated, as members of the same blessed society.

And as the body of Enoch was thus translated, it would naturally appear an intimation, that God had prepared a future happiness for the bodies of his people, as well as their souls, and consequently that the trophies of the grave should at length be recovered, and the sleeping dust of the saints raised and animated anew. And a future state of punishment for the wicked, is so evident a counterpart to this doctrine, that few could be so stupid as not to infer it, from the fact here under consideration.

Such important lessons as these might the world have learnt from the translation of any persons of distinguished piety; but there were some peculiar purposes to be answered by that of Enoch, considered not only as a preacher of righteousness, but as a prophet too, and as one who had foretold the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints, to take vengeance on rebellious and impenitent sinners; and a day of vengeance to them, must surely imply a day of reward and glory to those men whom they had despised, reviled, and oppressed. Now if Enoch in his life on earth wrought no miracles, as we find not that he did, his ascension would be a most convincing proof of his divine mission; and indeed, as many of the miracles of Christ also were, it would be a specimen, as well as a seal, of the truth of the doctrine which he taught.

On all these accounts I think I may venture to say, the translation of Enoch would be a more important favour to others, than it was even to himself, and consequently it is reasonable to believe, that the same goodness which induced the Divine Being to perpetuate the memory of this fact for the instruction and encouragement of future ages, would likewise induce him to make it so public and visible, that there should be at least a few credible eye-witnesses to attest it.*

And thus, my brethren, you have heard of the piety of Enoch, and you have seen, as James expresses it, the end of the Lord. I shall conclude,

Thirdly, with a few hints, by way of improvement, which I shall leave you further to prosecute in your own meditations.

You will naturally fix on such reflections as these:

1. How pleasant it is to think of this friendly intercourse, which through a Redeemer is established between heaven and earth!

It is strongly illustrated in this great instance, Enoch walked with God, and God took him. Is it not at once a delightful and a surprising thought? That the great Sovereign of universal nature, who humbleth himself to behold the angels, when they stand around him, vailing their faces, and covering their feet in his presence, should form such a friendship with human, yea with sinful, creatures, that they may be said to walk with him; even they whose guilt might cause them to flee from his presence, like our fallen parents, and from whose pollutions he might justly turn away his holy eyes with abhorrence. Yet we see all these obstacles overcome; and hear of it not as the privilege of Enoch alone, but of all his true Israel, that he will dwell in them, and walk with them; that they shall be his people, and that he will be their God.

And in consequence of this, we are also raised to the blessed hope of being at length taken to him, though not in so immediate a manner, yet as surely, and at length as completely, as Enoch was. A mortal creature may say, Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Yea, the lowest real Christian has the security of his word and covenant, that he shall at last have a yet more solemn and more abundant entrance administered to him into the kingdom of his Father and his God.

And whence are these privileges and these hopes, my brethren? Let us often ask our own hearts the question, when we are enjoying God's presence, and waiting for his salvation. And let us answer it in those words of the apostle, "We that were once afar off, are brought near by the blood of Christ." By Christ hath God reconciled us to himself; by Christ have we now access to him as our Father: and as Christ, who hath the keys of death and the unseen world, is the person who is to call us from hence into that which is within the vail; so he is at length to complete the purposes of divine love to us, by coming again, and receiving us to himself, that we, like triumphant Enoch, yea, and with him too, in that day of his greatest triumph, may in our entire persons ascend to the regions of immortal holiness and perfect joy: Let us labour continually to feel the greatness of our obligations to this blessed Redeemer, and with daily dependence on his atonement and righteousness, his intercession and grace, let us, in every remaining step of this pilgrimage, be walking humbly with our God.

2. How solicitous should we be that we may have our lot, both in time and eternity, with those who, like Enoch, have walked with God!

I have now been describing the character and temper of a truly good man, a character common to all the children of God, whatever their particular denomination or profession may be. But must I not reasonably fear, that some among you are so

* I have taken no notice of that singular account which the ingenious Author of the Essay on Divine Dispensation, &c. gives of Enoch's Translation; which he supposes was not being taken to dwell with the Shekinah, in the terrestrial paradise. I have waved the mention of this, because it depends on a very precarious conjecture, that the Shekinah had so stated abode there: and also because were this to be allowed, since this author doth not pretend to say, that Enoch was with the Shekinah in the ark, it cannot be supposed that to have been during the deluge, he must grant that he ascended into heaven some time before the flood. So that I cannot see my end at all to be answered, by supposing his translation was any thing different from that ascension.

much strangers to it, that you find this an unintelligible language? Let me address myself to such of you with a word of expostulation, and to all with a serious exhortation. O that it might penetrate each of our hearts!

Why are you strangers to walking with God? Is it an imaginary thing, even this which Scripture so honourably records, which God himself so singularly owned, and through the riches of his grace rewarded too? O Sirs, there was surely as much reality and solidity in it, as in the heavenly world, in which it ended.

And let conscience answer; Is it not an honourable, is it not a pleasant, way of passing through life? Do you think that while Enoch was thus employed, and entertained, he had indeed any reason to envy the richest, the greatest, the most prosperous, or the most luxurious sinner? Do you not in your hearts believe that it must be a very comfortable thing to converse daily with God as a friend and a father, to conduct ourselves before him in such a manner as to be assured of his approbation, and to be able to rejoice that he knows every most secret thought of our soul? Do you not think it must sweeten solitude, to think of him as always near us, and increase the pleasures of society too, when our converse with others is made subservient to our communion with him? And above all, do you not really apprehend that reflections on a life like this would greatly soften the approach of death, and quite transform the very appearance of it?

And I beseech you to consider, that this is not a light thought. However you may neglect God now, you must have one awful interview with him; and if you do not and will not walk with him, he will, in another and very different sense of the word, *take you*. He will arrest your fugitive souls in the midst of these thoughtless ungrateful wanderings, and your spirits must return to God that gave them. Now doth not your own reason, as well as the divine word, tell you, that there will be an unspeakable difference between the manner in which different souls are received by him on that return; a difference between the reception of those who have lived in a holy friendship with him, and those who, like yourselves, have always been strangers to him; whose language it hath in effect been, "Let them walk with God that will, but I for my part have other company, and pleasures, and business, to attend." Is there not an apparent fitness that the former should be taken into a state of everlasting nearness to God, and the latter driven to a perpetual distance from him, whom they have chosen to forget and forsake? And with all your self-partiality, would it not appear an indecency and irregularity in the divine administration, to treat such different persons upon a foot of equal friendship?

See to it, my friends, that you are not self-condemned. See to it that you do not pass a sentence against your own souls, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Acquaint yourselves with God now, and be at peace with him, lest he resent the injury done to his offered friendship, and turn away from you in the day of your final distress, with a righteous disdain; for it is an everlasting, most obvious, but most important, truth, that they who are far from God shall perish.

Let me also address a solemn exhortation to those that have experimentally known what such converse with God means, and who by his good Spirit have been led into a holy walk with him. Pursue it, I beseech you, with greater resolution and care; for surely it is well worth your pursuit. I appeal to you, Christians, with pleasure on this head: Have not those been your most comfortable days in which you have most constantly attended to it? Days which have passed with the greatest delight, and which have been reflected upon with the greatest satisfaction? Is not this and that place recommended to you, by the dear remembrance, that you have walked with God there? this and that book and friend endeared, as having been instrumental in promoting that converse? Say then whether it be not worth your while, with the most attentive reflection, to concert measures for improving and cultivating this divine friendship! Whether, when you have fixed upon them, it will not be your wisdom diligently to pursue them, though some considerable difficulties may be in your way! Let not any estrangedness grow between God and your souls, but review the various branches of Enoch's character as your own model, if you would live with joy, and die with courage. Let your conduct be such, especially in secret, and then we may reasonably conclude, that your domestic and public behaviour will not be much unlike it. And then you may enter into the spirit of our next reflection, which is all I shall add.

3. With how much pleasure should we look up after those holy souls, who, having walked with God upon earth, are now taken by him to a heavenly abode!

Can any of us apprehend, that if the nearest relatives of Enoch were witnesses of his translation, they beheld it with weeping eyes, or sent out a gale of sighs or peal of groans after him; how tenderly soever they loved him, and how much soever of the support or delight of their lives might seem to depend on his continuance with them? Or if their fondness thus prevailed over their reason and their faith, can we imagine that their ascending triumphant friend would have approved of such a conduct? Would he not rather have beheld it with a mixture of compassion and displeasure; if displeasure could have been felt in so happy a circumstance? But we will

rather hope, that they hailed his flight to the paradise of God, and bore it away with them, as a long and a powerful cordial, under all the sorrows and distresses of life, that Enoch was so comfortably and so honourably delivered from them, and secured by adamantine walls from every invasion of sorrow and of sin; yea, from the sight of those crimes and miseries which had formerly tormented his righteous and tender spirit.

And why should not we in like manner congratulate our dear deceased friends, who are not any longer here with us, because God hath taken them? You will perhaps have a ready answer, and immediately say, Enoch was translated, but the friends we lament are dead, and our tears flow from that consideration. But let me further ask, Is there not a passage to the presence of God through the valley of the shadow of death? And do we not firmly believe they have found that passage? In some cases, especially in a case like this now before us, we should think it a kind of impiety to doubt it. And if so, methinks there is not so much difference between the temper with which we should regard the deceased and translated saints, as we may be ready at first to imagine.

It is true, the persons of whom we now speak have dropped their bodies in the grave; but that is no pain to them, nor any such important loss, as that for their sakes we should greatly regret it.

If we saw them after the labour of a fatiguing day, or after a long fit of painful and languishing illness, fallen into a gentle slumber, and knew that their minds were, during that interval, entertained with the visions of God, like those which the prophets saw, and raised to sublime and elevated devotion, beyond what they had ever before felt, should we mourn over them because their senses were locked up, and they did not, for that time, see the light of the sun, nor hear such poor conversation as ours? Should we not rather rejoice, and be tenderly solicitous to guard their sleeping moments, and watch that nothing might break in upon them, and call them down to earth and vanity too soon? And are not their slumbers now as sweet? and are not their visions as bright and glorious? What though they do not breathe? what though their blood does not circulate, and the curtains of the grave be drawn around them? Is there so much in these circumstances, to give us anxiety and distress?

O but, you will say, we should have a secret hope that our sleeping friends would awake again, and renewing the interrupted converse, relate to us what had passed in that interval; and we could with pleasure wait weeks and months in expectation of that. Nay, but shall we not ourselves ere long awake, if we are Christians indeed? if we are walking with God, shall we not ere long be taken by him, not to the amusements of a pleasing dream, but to those solid, substantial, everlasting pleasures, which his saints above are drinking in with unutterable delight.

Lord, we are hoping for thy salvation, may we in the mean time be doing thy commandments! While we walk with thee, we will not complain of the length or the roughness of the way; nor will we be inconsolable for the loss of the most pleasant companion, or most able guide. For thy name's sake do thou lead us and guide us, and we will wait thy call to enter into thy rest.

Such were the sentiments, and such the temper, of that truly reverend and excellent person, whose death was the occasion, the very mournful occasion, of my appearing this day amongst you; on whose character it would be easy for me to dilate much more largely than my time will now admit, or than I judge it proper to do in a funeral Discourse, where flattery is so often introduced, that the simplicity of most obvious truth is ready to be suspected. I shall only say, in a few words, that what I said of Enoch in the first head of my Discourse, (excepting only what was peculiar to his circumstances as a patriarch and a prophet,) is what, by long observation, I had seen in Mr. Norris. And I appeal to those of his family, and to you his people, whether there was not in almost every sentence a visible resemblance, and whether it might not very properly be repeated here with a mere alteration of the name. So evident was it that he walked closely with God; and firmly believing the great doctrine both of natural and revealed religion, made it his constant care to behave as in the divine presence, and lived under the sensible tokens of divine acceptance and favour: which diffused over his heart, and even over his countenance, an habitual joy, which is no where to be found on earth, but in Christians of such distinguished attainments in piety.

But though I must not allow myself to dwell on this pleasing subject, I hope I may be permitted publicly to acknowledge the sense I have of the favour of Divine Providence to me, in leading me so early into the acquaintance of this excellent person, and blessing me with so great a share of his friendship: with which I was honoured from my first entrance into the ministry, and which his singular humanity and condescension, wisdom and piety, have rendered exceeding delightful and improving to me in all the succeeding years of life.

And surely I should be greatly deficient in the duty of this day, if I did not solemnly charge it upon you frequently to recollect your obligations to the divine goodness, in giving you so able and so tender a shepherd, and in continuing him amongst you for so long a time with such cordial love, that repeated, unanimous, and earnest solicitations from

the most considerable congregations in the neighbouring counties,* could not prevail upon him to remove from you. So evident was it that he took the oversight of you, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

It may eminently be said of you, my friends, in a spiritual sense, that you have been fed with the finest of the wheat, as the pure and uncorrupted truths of the gospel have been preached amongst you, with plainness and seriousness, and in the spirit of love. Your minds have not been amused with useless subtilties and barren speculations: you have not been vexed with strifes of words unprofitable and vain, nor grieved with passionate invectives against your brethren of any denomination: invectives which are never more criminal than when delivered in the name of the Lord, and which too often turn the food of souls into poison, and that which should have been for their welfare into a trap. This good man brought out of the good treasure of his heart good things. His generous and benevolent soul overflowed with sentiments of candour and love, and he was never more in his own element, than when he was telling you that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And I firmly believe, that in the eight and thirty years of his ministry among you, he never delivered a sermon, or a sentence, inconsistent with that great principle.

I join with you in lamenting that none of those elaborate and judicious discourses which he delivered among you, from sabbath to sabbath, are, or can be, published to the world. For though it is certain, that his graceful and venerable aspect, and his easy yet lively manner, gave a peculiar beauty to them, as delivered by himself; yet, when I consider how judiciously his thoughts were selected, how methodically they were disposed, and with what propriety, elegance, and spirit, they were expressed, I am well assured, they would generally have been esteemed a rich addition to that great number of practical writings, with which our age and country is already blessed, and with which I hope it will still abound.

But I trust, my friends, it is not in vain you have heard those discourses which you cannot review. I know they fell as soft as showers of snow on the ears of his hearers; and I hope they also penetrated your hearts, and left permanent and fructifying effects there, which will not pass away like snow before the sun. Let your profiting then appear unto all men. And so much the rather, as you have had the advantage of seeing his precepts illustrated by the most prudent, inoffensive, and amiable behaviour. You have seen him providing things honest and honourable in the sight of all men. You know how gentle, how benevolent, how cheerful, and how useful his conversation was. How open his hand and his heart were to every office of friendship, to every work of charity. Go ye, therefore, and do likewise.

As for what he was in the domestic relation of life, I had almost said I wish it may not be too long, but I will rather say, too tenderly, remembered. The loss of a husband so constantly obliging, so affectionately sympathizing, so well furnished as a prudent guide, and a pleasant companion, and so well disposed for the offices of both, will, I fear, be too deeply felt. May the sense of it be tempered with those divine consolations, which he was so eminently fit to administer, but which have not surely lost their value, and will not, I hope, lose their relish, though no longer administered by him! May the children, which were dear to him as his own, never forget with how much diligence he instructed them, with how much importunity and constancy he prayed for them, and with what tenderness he watched over all their interests! May they ever behave answerably to those advantages, that the numberless petitions which have been put up for them, may descend in the richest blessings on their head!

I know, my friends, that the loss must sit heavy on all your hearts, and as to those with whom I have personally conversed, since this breach was made, I have heard your lamentations, and seen your tears. But remember, I beseech you, how much you owe to the divine goodness in giving you such a minister and such a friend, in continuing him among you, with such vigour of health and cheerfulness of spirits, for so many years, a burning and shining light; I may add, even in the decline of life, growing brighter and brighter. And though his removal, while his capacities of usefulness were to the last so great,† must be very affecting to you, yet I cannot forbear saying, that you have some peculiar reason to be thankful for the manner and circumstances of his death.

Nature was not racked with tormenting pain, nor worn out by a tedious consuming illness; but the good man grew a little drowsy towards the evening of his long day, and having served his generation according to the will of God, gently fell asleep, as he was going from one apartment of his house to another; and all the business and struggle of dying was over, in less time than could have served him to get up the stairs, as he was attempting to do. It is a delightful thought, that God dismissed his servant in so peaceful a manner, that his death so much resembled a translation, and *he was not; for God took him.*

I doubt not, but every one of us is ready to say, "So

* Particularly Birmingham and Nottingham

† It is observable, that Mr. Nonconformity preached his last sermon, and conducted the public services of the day, in a most lively and affectionate prayer for his people, which could not have been more suitable if he had known he was then taking his last farewell.

may I live, and so may I die!" But while we live here, if we have any regard to our own comfort, or the public good, it must grieve us to see our breaches thus multiplied upon us, to see the lights of the sanctuary extinguished, and his people here, and in so many neighbouring flocks, even at the very same time, left as sheep having no shepherd. Yet I must hope the great Shepherd of Israel will continue to feed you, and as the residue of the Spirit is with him will raise up a suitable supply. To him I most cordially recommend you, and all my other friends, who are mourning your losses and their own. And under all that burthen of care and sorrow, in which my share is so peculiarly apparent, would exhort you to say, and join with you in saying, The Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock, and let the God of our salvation be exalted!

SERMON VIII.

CHRIST'S MYSTERIOUS CONDUCT TO BE UNFOLDED HEREAFTER.*

John xiii. 7.

—What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has in all ages taken care to exercise the faith, the patience, and submission of his people: and he has done it, while carrying on the kindest designs towards them, and while he has been acting in the strictest prosecution of those designs. He was now engaged in a work of astonishing condescension and goodness: the disciples saw it with amazement, that He, the Son of God, and the heir of all things, the promised Messiah, the King of God's church, should condescend to wash their feet. Peter could not bear the thoughts of permitting it: and that occasioned the words I have now been reading; in which we have a general truth delivered by our Lord, which it is profitable for us frequently to reflect upon, and the reflection is now peculiarly seasonable.

The words presented themselves to my mind, as soon as I heard, to my unspeakable surprise, the melancholy tidings of the death of my dear pupil, and friend, and brother, who but the very last sacrament day was with us at the table of the Lord, and who but a few days before had been speaking to us in his name. When I heard, that God had by a sudden stroke, which left his friends in a mixture of astonishment and distress, taken away one so richly adorned with gifts and graces, so well qualified for public usefulness, just as he was entering upon it, just as he was unanimously chosen to preside over a numerous and important congregation, and was within a few weeks more to have gone from us to have taken up his stated residence among them; struck with the surprise, I say, and with the anguish, of this unexpected blow, which yet it was natural to consider as coming from the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great Sovereign of his church, and holds the keys of the unseen world and of death, these words immediately presented themselves to me: and therefore I determined to offer you some plain and serious meditations upon them; and shall accordingly raise three observations from them, which I shall endeavour to illustrate and improve.

I. That there may be some things in the conduct of the blessed Redeemer towards his people, which they may not at present be able fully to understand.

II. That nevertheless the time will come, when they shall have much clearer views of the reasons of his dispensations.

III. That in the expectation of this, it is highly fit they should acquiesce in what he does, how unknown soever the reasons may at present be. These several observations I shall briefly speak to, and then,

IV. Apply all this to the present occasion.

I. There may be some things in the conduct of our blessed Redeemer towards his people, now, which they may not at present be able fully to understand. It is a supposable case,—and when we come to consider the thing, it is also evidently fact.

1. It is in the nature of things a very supposable case, as will appear, when we consider,—who the Lord Jesus Christ is,—who and what we are,—and the relation in which he stands to us as our Lord and Sovereign.

Consider who he is: no less a person than the only-begotten Son of God, in whom are hid all the

* Preached at Northampton, May 15, on the death of the Rev. Mr. Jonas Shepherd, who died May 1, 1750, Ætat. 22.

treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge: and can it be thought wonderful, that the counsels of God are unsearchable? We know that his nature is so; for who can by searching find out God? who can find out the Almighty to perfection? And well may we conclude, his schemes must be so; and therefore say with the apostle Paul, Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! The God of Israel, and the Saviour, is oftentimes a God that hideth himself. His way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters.—The angels themselves cannot trace all his footsteps, and how much less can we poor frail mortals, so often perplexed in our own counsels, so often brought as it were to our wit's end, with difficulties and entanglements that arise from the management of our own little affairs, in this narrow and contracted circle! Can we expect then to fathom his depths? to comprehend his schemes? to form a perfect judgment of his royal, his imperial, plan? —How little a portion is it that is known of him, who is the King of all the world, and head over all things to the church! God has subjected to him all things visible and invisible: nor are we capable of discerning how one wheel touches another in this complex scheme; how the concerns of one province of his kingdom may be interwoven (as it were) with those of another; or what curious wheels may be within other wheels, and give them a motion which we know not of, and which it would be very unfit we should know. It is a labyrinth intricate in proportion to the art and design with which it is wrought up. We may in reason then expect it should be thus. And again,

2. It is also what we see in fact to be so. We know not in numberless instances what our Lord intends: we know not what the event will be. And we do in fact see, that though all things are under the government of Christ, yet many things happen, which we should have imagined his kindness and tenderness to his people would have prevented, as we are sure that his power could do it.

We often see his dearest children afflicted, we see the most holy, humble, watchful, spiritual souls often drooping and dejected; when yet we know, that he could in a moment pour in the oil of gladness to heal their wounds, and cause their faces to shine, and their hearts to overflow with a divine joy.

We see generous and public-spirited Christians, who could delight with a liberal hand to relieve his poor members, themselves poor, themselves perhaps after many a worthy service reduced to need that assistance from others, which they have once so readily imparted; though we know, that all riches are in the hand of Christ, that all events and all hearts are under his influence.

We see most useful and excellent persons removed and taken off, many of them in the prime of life, some in the midst of their usefulness, and some in the very beginnings of it; and these, not only persons amiable and exemplary in private life, but of public character, adorned by the hand of Christ himself with much of his own image, and with that rich furniture, which qualifies them for being (as we should imagine) most proper instruments to bring [illegible] souls to himself, and greatly to build up his languishing church and interest. We see some of them perhaps cut off before they have made any public appearance at all; and others, when they have just began to speak in the name of the Lord: and with regard to others, he weakens their strength in the midst of the way; diseases arrest them, and make them prisoners; and threaten perhaps in a little while longer to bring them down to the dust with their departed brethren: yet we know, Jesus is the universal Lord, to whom belong the issues from death; that he knows all the secret springs of life, and all the secret sources of disease, and could easily by one powerful word remove the causes of the complaint, or direct to means most efficacious for recovery.

We see churches made desolate by the enemy, whom we know he could restrain; we see them polluted with scandals, which we know he could prevent; we see their numbers diminished, though we know that he could easily send out his Spirit, and renew the face of them, and cause many to enter for one that he removes: yea, we see among those whom we must hope to be his little flock, many divisions, many errors, many imprudences and follies, that alienate the hearts of Christians one from another, and bring religion into disgrace, though Christ could easily let in beams of light which should guide into truth, beams of love which should sweetly unite and cement multitudes, so that they should sensibly be one in him.—So mysterious is his conduct, and so different the face of his poor church, as well as the state of many of its members, from what we should expect it to have been under the government of such a head. What he does, we know not now. But then it was observed,

II. That nevertheless the time will come, when we shall have much clearer views of the reasons of his dispensations,—Thou shalt know hereafter. And to illustrate this I would observe,—that sometimes these reasons open, even while we continue in this world;—but we may expect to know it in many other instances, when the present scenes are closed, and we enter on that which is within the veil.

1. Sometimes the reasons of Christ's mysterious dispensations open upon us, even while we are here in this world.

So in this instance that the text refers to, it was but a few minutes, and our Lord had cast the towel

with which he was girded, and sat down and told them, why he had washed their feet: that it was to teach them to wash one another's feet; that is, to promote their humility, and their readiness to serve one another in love, even in the most condescending offices they might have an opportunity of performing. And thus in many other instances, though the great end of Christ's dispensations be in regard to the eternal world, yet there are subordinate ends which may be answered here; and when we come to find they are answered, we may learn the design of Providence in these means which we did not before understand. As when the disciples saw the honourable manner in which Christ dismissed the poor Canaanitish woman at last, they saw the reasons why he seemed to neglect her so long; it was, that her faith might be displayed by the trial, that they might see she was a more excellent woman than they could otherwise have imagined; and that the mercy might be sweeter to her in proportion to the delay.

And do I not now speak to the experience of some that hear me?—Cannot many of you reflect with me upon strange dispensations of Providence, which have at length produced the happiest effects? It is a known story of a person, who having lost all his wealth, was led to apply himself to philosophy, and in consequence of that, attained such a government of himself, such wisdom, and such reputation, as made him abundantly happier than he ever had been; so as to make him say, "I had been undone, if I had not been undone." And thus perhaps one and another of us may say, "The Lord took away my parents when I was young, and I thought I had lost my only friends: but he raised up those for me, who did more and better for me than my parents could have done, and showed his special love and care in taking me up when my father and mother forsook me."

Another may say, "In younger life he exercised me with many disappointments, he stripped me of many of my comforts, and withered many of my hopes; but I found it good to bear the yoke in my youth: and by unthought-of turns, it may be, in relative life he has done much better for me, than with my fond passions I should have done for myself."

"He has been pleased," may a third say, "to take away my dear children, perhaps several of them successively, and those of them that were peculiarly the delight of my eyes; but he has drawn my heart more powerfully to himself by it, and he is better to me than ten children."

"He has blasted the work of my hands," may another say, "I have insensibly lost, perhaps what I painfully got; or I have been stripped of some considerable part of my possessions at once: but my poverty has enriched me. I have learned the vanity of the world more, and have been more fully convinced that it cannot be my happiness."

"My constitution has been much impaired," may another say, "I have passed solitary sabbaths, I have known a great deal of pain and languishing: but it has taught me to submit to my Father's will; it has directed my eyes to that world, where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, and where I shall be fixed as a pillar in the temple of my God."

"I would not have been without afflictions," may they all say; "nor without this and that particular affliction," may each perhaps reply, "upon any terms. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: thou hast humbled me, thou hast taught me to know what was in my heart; and I know by my afflictions, more than prosperity might have taught me, of the love that is in thine heart to me." But then,

2. We may expect to know the reasons of Christ's dispensations in many other instances, when we shall come into the future world. "In thy light shall we see light:" and I doubt not, but in the heavenly state many circumstances will concur to give us a much better acquaintance with the methods of the divine dealings, than it is possible for us to attain upon earth:—our eye will be strengthened;—our prospect will be extended;—our company will be improved;—and our Lord may perhaps give us plainer lessons by immediate discovery from himself.

In heaven, the eye of the soul will be strengthened, and our faculties raised to unutterable degrees. All indolence will be done away, and we shall be awakened into everlasting attention. All prejudices will be quite removed; and we shall be willing to admit truth in all its lustre, and to follow it wherever it may lead us.

Our prospect there will be enlarged, and we shall have much more extensive views of things: for we shall see the conduct of Christ, in its influence upon scenes that lie at present quite out of our sight. We see Christ's administrations now, as they regard this earth alone; but then we shall see them as they regard heaven. We may then perhaps see, that there was a certain post of service to be filled above, which required just such a one as divine grace had made this or that young person, who might indeed have been very fit to have served the church below, but for whom God meant much higher and better things.

Our companions in glory may also very probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the providence of God here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, the subject of our mutual converse.

And it is impossible for us to say, how immediately the Lord Jesus Christ may himself interpose

in giving us plainer lessons, and clearing up his conduct to us. By direct and immediate revelation he may communicate to us what his schemes were, and show us how they were going on in a direct harmonious manner, as the planets in the visible heavens, when they seem to us to stand still, or to go backwards. In the mean time, let me observe,

III. That it is highly fit we should acquiesce in what Christ does, how unknown soever the reasons of it may be to us. And that, upon these two plain and certain principles,—that we know, that in all he does his ends are graciously directed,—and that his means are wisely chosen.

1. We know that his ends are graciously directed. We know that he intends, in all he does, the honour of God, and the good of all his people. Can we make any doubt of this? One would think, we really did: and yet we know, that he has given them the most gracious promises, even of a glorious resurrection, and of a blessed immortality: and that he has loved them so well, that he has died for them, has shed his own precious and invaluable blood for their redemption and salvation. And can we after this allow ourselves to suspect him? Can we doubt that he intends to make his people for ever happy? And intending this, can he fail to effect it in the properest manner?—Surely I may add,

2. We know that his means are wisely chosen.

Can we have any room to question this? Is he not the incarnate Wisdom of God? And can you entertain any suspicion of him? If you trust not faith alone, trust sense. Look up to the heavens; look down to the earth: behold, how wisely all is ordered, in the growth of such a variety of plants, in the provision that is made for such a multitude of animals of various kinds, in the subserviency of all to the subsistence and delight of human life; and then say, Does this look like any deficiency in wisdom? And are not these things the work of Christ? Did he not lay the plan, and execute it? Were not all things created by him, whether visible or invisible? And will you still doubt whether he who made, and who governs and preserves, all things, is wise enough to conduct your affairs, or not? Methinks our Lord may justly expostulate with the suspicious, with the complaining, Christian, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt? Whom wilt thou trust, if thou trustest not me? Will thou trust thine own wisdom? alas! how often has it deceived thee! Wilt thou trust thy self-love? alas! how utterly has it undone thee! Can my Father trust me with all the infinite concerns of his glory and kingdom; and canst thou not trust me with thy little all? Did I die for thee! did I pour out my blood for the redemption of thy immortal soul! and canst thou imagine I will not take care of it? And if I do, will it not be safe? Or if thou canst confide in me, that I will take care of thy soul, and make it both safe and happy, canst thou not trust thine estate with me, thy health, thy reputation, thy usefulness, thy children, thy friends? Are these things more than that soul, which I have so dearly purchased, which I have so tenderly received, which I have so constantly watched over, and in which I have already made such a change for the better, that if thou wouldst be just to thyself and me, thou needest but to look upon it, and mightest find an argument from what it is, in comparison of what it once was, to trust me for every thing else?"

"Lord," should each of us by this time say, "it is enough! It is more than enough! I am ashamed of my weakness and folly. Behold, here I am, do with me as thou wilt! Dispose of me and my concerns just according to thine own pleasure! I will not object one word, I will not indulge one thought of suspicion: I will say, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. I will keep mine eye upon thy hand; I will sometimes look back to thy cross, and sometimes look up to thy throne; and I will not only be contented, but thankful. Yea, Lord, I will see what I can do towards obeying in the midst of all my troubles that great command of thine, which, great as it is, was a command fit for such a Redeemer to give, Rejoice evermore: rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say, rejoice."—And now, after what has been said, I would conclude,

IV. With applying all this to the present occasion, by hinting at some ends, which we may suppose our Lord to have had in view in this solemn transaction of his providence, which occasioned the discourse I have now been delivering.

Let us lay down this as the foundation, that it is the hand of Christ; that he has turned the key; that he has taken away his young servant, whom he raised up here, whom he called so early by his grace, whom he taught to pray when he was but a child; and to pray in such a manner, that I will take the liberty publicly to tell you, "that the account I had of a prayer of his, overheard when he little thought it, by a dear friend, almost seventeen years ago, that is, when he was but about five years old, had its influence in engaging me to come and settle in this place." It was from Christ that he received that steadiness, that tenderness, that ripe experience in the things of God, which made his private and his public labours so remarkably agreeable to the most judicious Christians of this society, and of other societies. It was the grace of Christ which bore him unhurt through so many temptations, by which others have been insnared and dishonoured, their characters sunk, and their usefulness diminished, if not [illegible]. And [illegible]

us not imagine, that the messenger of death came to him without a commission from the great Lord of life. Let us not imagine, that his spirit was called out of time into eternity without the voice of a Redeemer, or that the important doors of the invisible world were opened without his hand. Christ has taken him away; and he had no doubt his reasons for it; reasons, many of them perhaps unsearchable to us, yet we may conjecture as to some of them: and it may be profitable for a few remaining minutes to dwell upon the view; the rather, as so many breaches have been made, so many of this kind too, which have fallen under the notice of many of us. Particularly,

1. Our Lord by such a providence might intend to teach us, how little he needs any of our services.

Our dear departed friend seemed indeed a vessel of honour fitted for his Master's use; but he is broken in pieces, and we are ready to say with the afflicted church of old, The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! But herein our great Lord displays his royalty: he can form the most promising instruments of service; and can lay them aside, and carry on his cause without them. Let us not then any of us imagine ourselves, or each other, to be necessary to him. He will, if he pleases, do us the honour to use us; if not, he will immediately lay us by in the grave. We, and those who esteem us most, and who love us best, should submit, and say, Behold, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are we in the hand of the Lord our God. And it is fit it should be so: for we are weak as clay, and at the same time also are of as little value, and even less than the dust of the earth, when compared with him. Again,

2. It may be the design of our Lord by such a providence as this, to teach us to cease from man.

We are instructed by it, not to depend too much upon any of our surviving brethren and friends: for it is the language of this providence, Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of? God changes our countenance, and sends us away. But a few months ago, who was more likely to have continued than dear Mr. Shepherd! But God sent a mortal distemper upon him in the night, and his friends in the morning found him senseless; and he spoke no more, and hardly moved any more, till he died. Such is every man in his best estate! Thus may we fall, and those on whom we most depend. Lord, what do we then wait for? with regard to ourselves, with regard to thy church, our hope is in thee. Further,

3. Our Lord might thus intend in a peculiar manner to exercise our submission and resignation to his wise and gracious will.

We should look upon the death of every friend in this view, as a call to us to acknowledge his sovereignty over life and death. Behold, he taketh away, and who can hinder him? or who shall say unto him, What doest thou? And the more touching the case is, the deeper ought our submission to be; because the greater is that natural tendency which we are ready to feel in our minds, to rise against and to dispute his determinations. Particularly, when God takes away from aged Christians a young friend who has been the delight of their eyes, whom they have tenderly nursed up from his infancy, just when they most needed his assistance, and he was most capable of giving it, as well as strongly inclined and determined to do it: when God takes away, not only a young minister of eminent and distinguished abilities, but one who even from his childhood had been bred up amongst us; one who had constantly attended with us every sabbath day on public worship, with that endearment of mutual respect and affection on his part and ours, which must be the result of so intimate a relation: one of whom we have so particularly thought when we have been acknowledging the divine goodness in "raising up of our sons for prophets, and of our young men for Nazarites;" it is then particularly seasonable, that we should struggle with our own hearts to say, Thy will be done! Once more,

4. It may be the design of such a providence as this, to quicken us all in our work, and especially his surviving brethren.

Had it been the death of a stranger in such circumstances, it might have quickened us: to see a young person taken thus away; going to bed at night tolerably well, (for that was the case, though with some complaint, yet in no such immediate danger as should give any peculiar alarm,) and then found in his bed the next morning speechless and senseless, and continuing without perception, and in a great measure without motion, till he expired. I repeat these circumstances again, that young inattentive minds may be struck with them.—But it is particularly striking, when we consider it is one, whom we so intimately knew; one, with whom so many of us have been conversing and praying almost every day for many years, as well as worshipping every sabbath, and communicating every sacrament day. May we all hear that voice, which cries, Be ye also ready! Especially, may we attend to it, who are forming for, or engaged in, the ministerial work!

My dear brethren, and much beloved charge, suffer the word of exhortation. You knew this amiable and excellent youth in a most intimate manner: let me briefly recommend to you the many things which you saw exemplary in him:—his constancy and reverence in attending divine worship, both in public and private;—his diligence in

business;—his steadiness and regularity in conduct;—his prudent and honourable care to avoid silly and extravagant expenses;—his solicitude to take every opportunity of improving in every branch of learning, that was taught where he attended; especially what related most directly to his sacred profession;—his unwearied application to the study of the Scripture, and continued watchfulness for every opportunity of improving it; and above all, his zeal for the glory of God, and for the gospel of Christ, and its glorious and peculiarly distinguishing truths. I heartily wish each of you, who are to appear under such a public character, the like judgment and solidity in your compositions, the like grave, serious, unaffected, and experimental strain, the same solicitude to do good both to the bodies and souls of men, which made his work his pleasure. You see, how short his career of service here has been: yours may perhaps be as short, and yet shorter. However that be, I pray God, that you may fulfil it as worthily as he did. And then, should I also see your early deaths, I should congratulate rather than condole you; and esteem such a speedy removal, as a peculiar token of your Lord's favour to you, however I might lament it as an awful stroke on those of us who should survive.

I trust, that his dear aged relatives have that better world in too near a prospect, to stand in need of much condolence. May God sanctify every dark dispensation of his providence to them, and to us, and give us faith and patience to wait that day, when the last veil shall be taken off, and the terms on which we shall be restored to each other shall leave us no room to mourn, that we have been for a while separated, with whatever circumstances of surprise and distress that separation may have been attended! Amen.

A HYMN ON THE OCCASION.

I.

JESUS, we own thy sov'reign hand;
Thy faithful care we own:
Wisdom and love are all thy ways,
When most to us unknown.

II.

By thee the springs of life were formed,
And by thy breath are broke;
And good is every awful word
Our gracious Lord has spoke.

III.

To thee we yield our comforts up;
To thee our lives resign;
In straits and dangers, rich, and safe,
If we and ours are thine.

IV.

Thy saints in earlier life removed,
In sweeter accents sing;
And bless the swiftness of the flight,
That bore them to their King.

V.

The burthens of the lengthened day
With patience we would bear;
For evening's welcome hour shall show,
We were our Master's care.

SERMON IX.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR ANIMATED AND CROWNED.*

DEDICATION.

To the Right Honourable the Lady Frances Gardiner.

MADAM,

THE intimate knowledge which I had of Colonel Gardiner's private as well as public character, and of that endeared friendship which so long subsisted between him and your ladyship, makes me more sensible

* Preached at Northampton, October 13, on the heroic death of the Honourable Colonel James Gardiner, who was slain in the battle at Prestonpans, September 21, 1745.

than most others can be, both of the inexpressible loss you have sustained, and of the exquisite sense you have of it. I might, in some degree, argue what you felt, from the agony with which my own heart was torn by that ever to be lamented stroke, which deprived the nation, and the church, of so great an ornament and blessing: and indeed, Madam, I was so sensible of your calamity, as to be ready in my first thoughts to congratulate you, when I heard the report which at first prevailed, that you died under the shock. Yet cooler reflection teaches me, on many accounts, to rejoice that your ladyship has survived that dearest part of yourself; though after having been so lovely and pleasant in your lives, it would have been matter of personal rejoicing, in death not to have been divided. The numerous and promising offspring with which God hath blessed your marriage, had evidently the highest interest in the continued life of so pious and affectionate a mother: and I hope, and assuredly believe, there was a more important, and to you a much dearer, interest concerned, as God may be, and is, signally honoured, by the manner in which you bear this heaviest and most terrible stroke of his paternal rod.

God had been pleased, Madam, to make you both eminent for a variety of graces; and he has proportionably distinguished you both, in the opportunity he has given you of exercising those, which suit the most painful scenes that can attend a pious and an honourable life. But when I consider, what it is to have lost such a man, at such a time, and in such circumstances, I must needs declare, that brave and heroic as the death of the Colonel was, your ladyship's part is beyond all comparison the hardest. Yet even here has the grace of Christ been sufficient for you; and I join with your ladyship in adoring the power and faithfulness of him, who has here so remarkably shown, that he forgets not his promise to all his people, of a strength proportionable to their day; that they may be enabled to glorify him in the hottest furnace into which it is possible they should be cast.

To hear (as I have heard from several persons of distinguished character, who have lately had the happiness of being near your ladyship) of that meek resignation to the divine will, of that calm patience, of that Christian courage, with which, in so weak a state of health and spirits, you have supported under this awful providence, has given me great pleasure, but no surprise. So near a relation to so brave a man might have taught some degree of fortitude, to a soul less susceptible of it than your ladyship's. Nor is there any doubt, but the prayers he has so long been laying up in store for you, especially since the decay of his constitution gave him reason to expect a speedy remove, will assuredly at such a season come into remembrance before God. And above all, the sublime principles of the Christian religion, so deeply imbibed into your own heart as well as his, will not fail to exert their energy on such an occasion. These, Madam, will teach you to view the hand of a wise, a righteous, and a gracious God in this event; and will show you, that a friendship founded on such a basis, so very endearing, and so closely cemented, as that which has been here for many years a blessing to you both, can know only a very short interruption, and will soon grow up into a union infinitely nobler and more delightful, which never shall be liable to any separation.

In the mean time, Madam, it may comfort us not a little under the sense of our present loss, to think what religious improvement we may gain by it, if we are not wanting to ourselves: and happy shall we be indeed, if we so bear the rod, as to receive the instructions it so naturally suggests and enforces. Persons of any serious reflection will learn from this awful event, how little we can judge of the divine favour by the visible dispensations of Providence here: they will learn, (and it may be of great importance to consider it, just in such a crisis as this,) that no distinguished degree of piety can secure the very best of men from the sword of a common enemy: and they will see (written, alas, in characters of the most precious blood that war ever spilt in our island) the vanity of the surest protectors and comforters which mortality can afford, at a time when they are most needed.

These are general instructions, which I hope thousands will receive, on this universally lamented occasion: but to you, Madam, and to me, and to all that were honoured with the most intimate friendship of this Christian hero, his death has a peculiar voice. Whilst it leads us back into so many past scenes of delight, to the remembrance of which we now pour out our souls within us, it calls aloud, amidst all this tender distress, for a tribute of humble thankfulness to God, that ever we enjoyed such a friend, and especially in such an intimacy of mutual affection: and that we had an opportunity of observing, in so many instances, the secret recesses of a heart, which God had enriched, adorned, and ennobled with so much of his own image, and such abundant communications of his grace: it calls for redoubled diligence and resolution, in imitating that bright assemblage of virtues, which shone so resplendent in our illustrious friend: and surely it must, by a kind of irresistible influence, mortify our affections to this impoverished world; and must cause nature to concur with grace, in raising our hearts upwards to that glorious abode, where he dwells triumphant and immortal, and waits our arrival with an ardour of pure and elevated love, which it was impossible for death to quench.

Next to these views, nothing can give your ladyship greater satisfaction, than to reflect, how happy you made the amiable consort you have lost, in that intimate relation you so long bore to each other; in which, I well know, that growing years ripened and increased your mutual esteem and friendship. Nor will your generous heart be insensible of that pleasure, which may arise from reflecting, that the manner of his death (though in itself so terrible that we dare not trust imagination with the particular review) was to him, in those circumstances, most glorious, to religion highly ornamental, and to his country (great as his loss is) on various accounts beneficial. Far, very far, be it from us to think, that Colonel Gardiner, though fallen by the weapons of rebellion, has fought and died in vain. I trust in God, that so heroic a behaviour will inspire our warriors with augmented courage, now they are called to exert it in a cause, the most noble and important that can ever be in question, the cause of our laws, our liberty, and religion. I trust, all who keep up a correspondence with heaven by prayer, will renew their intercession for this bleeding land with increasing fervour, now we have lost one who stood in the breach with such unwearied importunity. And I am well assured, that of the multitudes who lay up his memory in

their inmost hearts with veneration and love, not a few will be often joining their most affectionate prayers to God, for your ladyship, and the dear rising branches of your family, with those which you may, in consequence of a thousand obligations, always expect from,

Madam,

Your ladyship's most faithful
and obedient humble servant.

Northampton, November 27, 1745. P. DODDRIDGE.

Rev. ii. 10, latter part.

—— *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

It is a glory peculiar to the Christian religion, that it is capable of yielding joy and triumph to the mind, amidst calamities, in which the strength of nature, and of a philosophy that has no higher a support, can hardly give it serenity, or even patience. Those boasted aids are but like a candle in some tempestuous night, which, how artificially soever it may be fenced in, is often extinguished amidst the storm, in which it should guide and cheer the traveller, or the mariner; whom it leaves on a sudden, in darkness, horror, and fear: while the consolation of the gospel, like the sun, makes a sure day even when behind the thickest cloud, and soon emerges from it with an accession of more sensible lustre.

The observation is verified in these words, considered in connexion with that awful providence, which has this day determined my thoughts to fix upon them, as the subject of my Discourse; the fall of that truly great and good man, Colonel Gardiner: the endearing tenderness of whose friendship would have rendered his death an unspeakable calamity to me, had his character been only of the common standard; as on the other hand, the exalted excellency of his character makes his death to be lamented by thousands, who were not happy in any peculiar intimacy or personal acquaintance with him.

While we mourn the brave warrior, the exemplary Christian, and the affectionate friend; lost to ourselves and our country, to the church and the world, at a time when we most needed all the defence of his bravery, all the edification of his example, all the comfort of his converse: struck with the various and aggravated sorrow of so sudden and so terrible a blow, methinks there is but one voice that can cheer us, which is this of the great Captain of our salvation, so lately addressing him, and still addressing us, in these comprehensive and animated words; Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

With regard to the connexion of them, it may be sufficient to observe, that our Lord in all these seven epistles to the Asiatic churches represents the Christian life as a warfare, and the blessings of the future state as rewards to be bestowed on conquerors. "To him that overcometh will I give" such and such royal donatives. Pursuing the same allegory, he warns the church of Smyrna of an approaching combat, which should be attended with some severe circumstances. Some of them were to become captives; the "devil shall cast some of you into prison:" and though the power of the enemy was to be limited, in its extent as well as its duration, to the tribulation of ten days, it seems to be implied, that while many were harassed and distressed during that time, some of them should before the close of it be called to resist unto blood. But their great leader furnishes them with suitable armour, and proportionable courage, by this gracious assurance, which it is our present business further to contemplate: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

In which words you naturally observe a charge,—and a promise by which it is enforced.—I shall briefly illustrate each, and then conclude with some reflections upon the whole.

First, I am to open the charge here given: Be thou faithful unto death.

Concerning which I would observe, that though it is immediately addressed to the church at Smyrna, yet the nature of the thing, and numberless passages of the divine word, concur to prove, that it is common in its obligation, to all Christians, and indeed to all men.

I shall not be large in explaining the nature of faithfulness in general; concerning which I might show you, that the word here rendered faithful, has sometimes a relation to the testimony which God has given us, and sometimes to some trust that he has reposed in us. In the former sense, it is properly rendered believing, and opposed to infidelity: Be not faithless, but believing. In the latter, it is opposed to injustice: He that is faithful in that which is the least, is faithful also in much: whereas he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. And it is in reference to this sense of it, that our Lord represents himself as saying to the man who had improved his talents aright, Well

done, good and faithful servant! Our deceased friend was so remarkably faithful in both these senses, so ready to admit, and so zealous to defend, the faith once delivered to the saints, and so active in improving those various talents, with which in mercy to many others, as well as to himself, God had intrusted him; that it was very natural to touch upon these significations of the word, though it has here a more particular view to another virtue, for which he was so illustriously conspicuous, I mean, the courageous fidelity of a soldier in his warfare.

In this sense of the word, it is opposed to treachery or cowardice, desertion, or disobedience to military orders. And thus it is used elsewhere in this same book of the Revelation, when speaking of those who war under the banner of the Lamb, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the inspired writer tells us, they are called, and chosen, and faithful, a select body of brave and valiant soldiers.

This hint will also fix the easiest and plainest sense in which the persons, to whom the text is addressed, are required to be faithful unto death: which, though it does indeed in general imply a patient continuance in well-doing, in whatever scenes of life Divine Providence may place us; yet does especially refer to martial bravery, and express a readiness to face death in its most terrible forms, when our great General shall lead us on to it. You well know this to be an indispensable condition of our being acknowledged by him in the day of his final triumph: and of this he warned those that gathered around him, when he was first raising his army, under the greatest disadvantages in outward appearance; expressly and plainly telling them, that they must be content to follow him to martyrdom, to follow him to crucifixion, when they receive the word of command to do it; or that all their profession of regard to him would be in vain. If any man, says he, will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for he that loveth his own life more than me, is not worthy of me; he does not deserve the honour of bearing my name, and passing for one of my soldiers, indeed he cannot on any terms be my disciple.

This therefore is in effect the language of our Lord, when he says, Be thou faithful unto death. It is as if he had said, "Remember, all you of Smyrna, or of any other place and country, that call yourselves Christians, throughout all generations, that you were by baptism enlisted under my banners: remember, that you have as it were sealed and subscribed your engagement to me, by every sacrament you have since attended;" (as indeed it is well known, the word sacrament originally signifies a military oath, which soldiers take as a pledge of fidelity to their general;) "remember, therefore, that you are ever to continue with me, and to march forward under my direction, whatever hardships and fatigues may lie in the way. And remember, that if I lead you on to the most formidable combat, you must cheerfully obey the word of command, and charge boldly, though you should immediately die, whether by the sword or by fire. Should you dare to flee, I am myself your enemy, and the weapons which I bear would justly be levelled at your own traitorous heads. But if you bravely follow me, I know how to make you ample amends, even in circumstances when no human power and gratitude can reach you; for it is my glorious prerogative to engage, that to those who are thus faithful unto death, I will give a crown of life." We are therefore,

Secondly, to consider the promise, by which the charge is enforced: I will give thee a crown of life.

And here I might observe, "a crown of life is the glorious reward proposed," and it is to be received from the hand of Christ.

1. A crown of life is the reward proposed: which we are sure in this connexion implies both grandeur and felicity; here, though rarely, connected together.

There is, no doubt, an allusion in these words to the ancient, and I think very prudent, custom of animating the bravery of soldiers by honorary rewards, and particularly by crowns; sometimes of laurel, and sometimes, in some extraordinary instances, of silver or gold; which they were permitted to wear on public occasions, and in consequence of receiving which they were sometimes entitled to some peculiar immunities. But here our Lord Jesus Christ, conscious of his own divine power and prerogative, speaks with a dignity and elevation, which no earthly prince or commander could ever assume; promising a crown of life, and that (as was observed before) even to those who should fall in the battle: a crown of life in the highest sense; not only one, which should ever be fresh and fair, but which should give immortality to the happy brow it adorned; and be for ever worn, not only as the monument of bravery and victory, but as the ensign of royalty too! a crown connected with a kingdom, and with what no other kingdom can give, perpetual life to enjoy it, perpetual youth and vigour to relish all its delights. And this is agreeable to the language of other scriptures, where we read of the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him; a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give; a crown of glory, which fadeth not away. We may also observe,

2. That it is said to be given by Christ.

This some pious commentators have explained as intimating, that it is the gift of the Redeemer's free and unmerited grace, and not a retribution due to the merit of him that receiveth it. And this is

an undoubted truth, which it is of the highest importance to acknowledge and consider. The proper wages of sin, is death; but eternal life is (in opposition to wages) the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We should humbly own it every day, that there is no proportion between the value of our services, and the crown which we expect to receive: should own, that it is mercy that pardons our sins, and grace that accepts our services; much more, that crowns them. Grace, grace, shall (as it were) be engraven upon that crown, in characters large and indelible: nor will that inscription diminish its lustre, or impair the pleasure with which we shall receive it. I could not forbear mentioning this thought, as a truth of the utmost importance, which stands on the firmest basis of very many express scriptures; a truth, of which perhaps no man living had ever a deeper sense than our deceased friend. But I mention it thus obliquely, because it may be doubted whether we can justly argue it from hence; since the word *μισθος* is sometimes used for rendering a retribution justly due, and that in instances where grace and favour have, in propriety of speech, no concern at all.*

But it is certain, that this expression, "I will give thee a crown of life," is intended to lead our thoughts to this important circumstance; that this crown is to be received from the hand of Christ himself. And the apostle Paul evidently refers to the same circumstance, in terms which show how much he entered into the spirit of the thought, when he says, The Lord the righteous Judge shall give it me: he himself, the great Judge of the contest, whose eye witnesses the whole course of it, whose decision cannot err, and from whose sentence there is no appeal: alluding to the judge who presided in the Grecian games, who was always a person of rank and eminence, and himself reached forth the reward to him who overcame in them.

So that, on the whole, when our Lord Jesus Christ says, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; methinks our devout meditations may expatiate upon the words, in some such paraphrase as this. It is as if he had said to you, and to me, and to all his people, "O my faithful soldiers, fear not death in its most terrible array, for you are immortal. Fear not them that can kill the body; you have a nobler part, which they cannot reach, and I will undertake, not only for its rescue, but its happiness. I will answer for it, on the honour of my royal word, that it shall *live* in a state of noble enlargement, of triumphant joy. Think on me: I am he that liveth, though I was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore: and because I live, you shall live also; shall exist in a state that deserves the great and honourable name of life, so that earth in all its lustre and pleasure, when compared with it, is but as a scene of death, or at best, as an amusing dream when one awaketh."

We may also consider him as pursuing this animating address, and saying, "My brave companions in tribulation and patience, you shall not only live, but reign. Think not, thou good soldier, who art now fighting under my banner, that thy general will wear his honours alone. If I have my crown, if I have my triumph, be assured that thou also shalt have thine. Thou mayst indeed seem to perish in the combat; and thy friends may mourn, and thine enemies insult, as if thou wert utterly cut off. But behold, true victory spreads over thee her golden wing, and holds out, not a garland of fading flowers or leaves, but a crown that shall keep its lustre, when all the costliest gems on earth are melted in the general burning; yea, when the luminaries of heaven are extinguished, and the sun and stars fade away in their orbs."

"Nor will I," does he seem to say, "send thee this crown by some inferior hand; not even by the noblest angel, that waits on the throne I have now ascended. Thou shalt receive it from mine own hand" (from that hand which would make the least gift valuable: what a dignity then will it add to the greatest!) "Nor will I myself confer this reward in private; it shall be given with the most magnificent solemnity. Thou shalt be brought to me before the assembled world; thy name shall be called over; thou shalt appear, and I will own thee and crown thee in public view. Thy friends shall see it with raptures of joy, and congratulate an honour in which they shall also share. Thine enemies shall see it with envy and with rage: to increase their confusion and misery, they shall see, that while by their malicious assaults they were endeavouring to destroy thee, they were only establishing thy throne, and brightening the lustre which shall for ever adorn thy brow; while theirs is blasted with the thunder of resistless wrath, and deeply engraven with the indelible marks of vengeance. This crown shall thou for ever wear as the perpetual token of my esteem and affection: nor shall it be merely a shining ornament, a rich ornament, a glorious authority, goes along with it. Thou shalt reign for ever and ever, and be a king, as well as a priest, unto God."

They who enter by a lively faith into the import of these glorious words, will (I doubt not) pardon my having expatiated so largely upon them. We have believed, and therefore have we spoken: and I question not, but that many of you have in the course of this representation prevented me in some of the reflections, which naturally arise from such a subject. Yet it may not be improper to assist your devout meditations upon them.

(1.) What reason have we to adore the grace of

* Compare Matt. xx. 8. Give the labourers their hire. Col. iii. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.

our blessed Redeemer, which prepares and bestows such rewards as these!

While we hear him saying, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; methinks it is but natural for each of our hearts to answer, "Lord, dost thou speak of giving a crown, a crown of life and glory to me! Too great might the favour seem, if I, who have so often lifted up my rebellious hand against thy throne, might be allowed to lay down this guilty head in the dust, and lose the memory of my treasons, and the sense of my punishment together, in everlasting forgetfulness. And is such a crown prepared, and wilt thou, my injured Sovereign, who mightest so justly arm thyself with vengeance against me, bestow this crown with thine own hand; with all these other circumstances of dignity, so as even to make my triumphs thine own!—What is my strictest fidelity to thee? Though I do indeed (as I humbly desire that I may) continue faithful unto death, I am yet but an unprofitable servant; I have done no more than my duty. I have pursued thy work, in thy strength; and in consequence of that love which thou hast put into my heart, it hath been its own reward: and dost thou thus crown one favour with another!—Blessed Jesus, I would with all humility lay that crown at thy feet, acknowledging before thee, and the whole world, (as I shall at length do in a more expressive form,) that it is not only the gift of thy love, but the purchase of thy blood. Never, never had I beheld it, otherwise than at an unapproachable distance, as an aggravation of my misery and despair, hadst not thou worn another crown, a crown of infamy and of thorns. The gems which must for ever adorn my temples, were formed from those precious drops, that once trickled down thine; and all the splendour of my robes of triumph is owing to their being washed in the blood of the Lamb." With what pleasing wonder may we pursue the thought! And while it employs our mind,

(2.) How justly may this awaken a generous ambition to secure this crown to ourselves!

Dearly as it was purchased by our blessed Redeemer, it is most freely offered to us, to the youngest, to the meanest, to the most unworthy. It is not prepared merely for those that have worn an earthly diadem or coronet; (would to God it were not despised by most of them, as a thing less worthy of their thoughts than the most trifling amusement, by which they unbend their minds from the weighty cares attending their station!) but it is prepared for you; even for every one, who thinks it worth pursuing, and accepting, upon the terms of the gospel covenant; for every one, who believing in Christ, and loving him, is humbly determined through his grace to be faithful unto death.—And shall this glorious proposal be made to you in vain? Were it an earthly crown that could lawfully be obtained, are there not many of us, notwithstanding all its weight of anxieties, and all the piercing thorns with which we might know it to be lined, that would be ready eagerly to seize it, and perhaps to contend and quarrel with each other for it? But here is no foundation for contention. Here is a crown for each; and such a crown, that all the royal ornaments of all the princes upon earth, when compared with it, are lighter than a feather, and viler than dust. And shall we neglect it? shall we refuse it, from such a hand too, as that by which it is offered? Shall we so judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life, as thereby indeed to make ourselves worthy of eternal death? For there is no other alternative.—But blessed be God, it is not universally neglected. There are (I doubt not) among you, many who pursue it, many who shall assuredly obtain it. For their sakes let us reflect,

(3.) How courageously may the heads which are to wear such a crown be lifted up to face all the trials of life and death!

Those trials may be various, and perhaps extreme; but if borne aright, far from depriving us of this crown, they will only serve to increase its lustre. It is the apostle Paul's express assertion; and he speaks as transported with the thought: For this cause we faint not, but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Surely, with this support, we may not only live, but triumph, in poverty, in reproach, in weakness, in pain: and with this we may die, not only serenely, but joyfully. O my friends, where are our hearts? Where is our faith? Nay, I will add, where is our reason? Why are not our eyes, our desires, and our hopes, more frequently directed upward? Surely one ray from that resplendent diadem might be sufficient to confound all the false charms of these transitory vanities, which indeed owe all their lustre to the darkness in which they are placed. Surely, when our spirits are overwhelmed within us, one glance of it might be sufficient to animate and elevate them, and might teach us to say, in the midst of dangers, sorrows, and death, In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Thus have some triumphed in the last extremities of nature; and both the subject and the occasion also, loudly calls us to reflect,

(4.) What reason we have to congratulate those happy souls that have already received the crown of life!

When we are weeping over the cold, yea, the bleeding, remains of such, surely it is for ourselves, and not for them, that the stream flows. The thought of their condition, far from moving our compassion, may rather inspire us with joy and with praise. Look not on their pale countenance, nor on the wide and deep wounds, through which, perhaps, the soul rushed out to seize the great prize of its faith and hope; though even those wounds appear beautiful, when earned by distinguished virtue, by piety to their country and their God. Look not on the eyes closed in death, or the once honoured and beloved head, now covered with the dust of the grave; but view, by an internal believing eye, that different form which the exalted triumphant spirit already wears, the earnest of a yet brighter glory. Their great Leader, whose care of them we are fondly ready to suspect, or secretly to complain of, as deficient, in such circumstances as these, points (as it were) to the white robes, and the flourishing palms, which he has given them; and calls for our regard to the crowns of life which he has set on their heads, and to the songs of joy and praise to which he has formed their exulting tongues. And do we sully and dishonour their triumphs with our tears? Do we think so meanly of heaven, and of them, as to wish them with us again; that they might eat and drink at our tables; that they might talk with us in our low language; that they might travel with us from stage to stage in this wilderness; and take their share with us in those vanities of life, of which we ourselves are so often weary, that there is hardly a week, or a day, in which we are not lifting up our eyes, and saying, with a deep inward groan, O that we had wings like a dove! then would we flee away, and be at rest.

Surely with relation to these faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, who have already fallen, it is matter of no small joy to reflect, that their warfare is accomplished; that they have at length passed through every scene in which their fidelity could be endangered; so that now they are inviolably secure. How much more then should we rejoice, that they are entered, not only into the rest, but into the joy, of their Lord; that they conquered, even when they fell, and are now reaping the fruits, the celestial and immortal fruits, of that last great victory!

A sense of honour often taught the heathens, when attending those friends to the funeral pile who had died honourably in their country's cause, to use some ceremonies expressive of their joy for their glory; though that glory was an empty name, and all the reward of it a wreath of laurel, which was soon to crackle in the flame, and vanish into smoke. And shall not the joy and glory of the living spirit affect us, much more than they could be affected with the honours paid to the mangled corpse?

Let us then think with reverence, and with joy, on the pious dead; and especially on those, whom God honoured with any special opportunities of approving their fidelity, in life, or in death: and if we mourn, (as who, in some circumstances, can forbear it?) let it be as Christians, with that mixture of high congratulation, with that erect countenance, and that undaunted heart, which becomes those that see by faith their exaltation and felicity; and burning with a strong and sacred eagerness to join their triumphant company, let us be ready to share in the most painful of their trials, that we may also share in their glories.

And surely, if I have ever known a life, and a death, capable of inspiring us with these sentiments in their subliment elevations, it was the life and the death of that illustrious Christian hero, Colonel Gardiner; whose character was too well known to many of you, by some months' residence here, to need your being informed of it from me; and whose history was too remarkable, to be confined within those few remaining moments, which must be allotted to the finishing of this discourse. Yet there was something so uncommon in both, that I think it of high importance to the honour of the gospel and grace of Christ, that they should be delivered down to posterity, in a distinct and particular view. And therefore, as the providence of God, in concurrence with that most intimate and familiar friendship with which this great and good man was pleased to honour me, gives me an opportunity of speaking of many important things, especially relating to his religious experiences, with greater exactness and certainty than most others might be capable of doing; and as he gave me his full permission, in case I should have the affliction to survive him, to declare freely whatever I knew of him, which I might apprehend conducive to the glory of God, and the advancement of religion; I purpose publishing, in a distinct tract, some remarkable passages of his life, illustrated by extracts from his own letters, which speak in the most forcible manner the genuine sentiments of his heart. But as I promise myself considerable assistance in this work from some valuable persons in the northern part of our island, and possibly from some of his own papers, to which our present confusions forbid my access, I must delay the execution of this design at least for a few months; and must likewise take heed, that I do not too much anticipate what I may then offer to the public view, by what it might otherwise be very proper to mention now.

Let it therefore suffice for the present to remind you, that Colonel Gardiner was one of the most illustrious instances of the energy, and indeed I must also add, of the sovereignty, of divine grace, which I have heard or read of in modern history. He was in the most amazing and miraculous man-

ner, without any divine ordinance, without any religious opportunity, or peculiar advantage, deliverance, or affliction, reclaimed on a sudden, in the vigour of life and health, from the most licentious and abandoned sensuality, not only to a steady course of regularity and virtue, but to high devotion, and strict, though unaffected, sanctity of manners: a course, (in which he persisted for more than twenty-six years, that is, to the close of life,) so remarkably eminent for piety towards God, diffusive humanity, and Christian charity, lively faith, deep humility, strict temperance, active diligence in improving time, meek resignation to the will of God, steady patience in enduring afflictions, unaffected contempt of secular interest, and resolute and courageous zeal in maintaining truth, as well as in reproving and (where his authority might take place) restraining vice and wickedness of every kind; that I must deliberately declare, that when I consider all these particulars together, it is hard for me to say where, but in the book of God, he found his example, or where he has left his equal. Every one of these articles, with many more, I hope (if God spare my life) to have an opportunity of illustrating, in such a manner as to show, that he was a living demonstration of the energy and excellency of the Christian religion; nor can I imagine how I can serve its interests better, than by recording what I have seen and known upon this head; known to my edification, as well as my joy.

But oh, how shall I lead back your thoughts, and my own, to what we once enjoyed in him, without too deep and tender a sense of what we have lost! To have poured out his soul in blood; to have fallen by the savage and rebellious hands of his own countrymen, at the wall of his own house; deserted by those who were under the highest obligations that can be imagined to have defended his life with their own; and above all, to have seen with his dying eyes the enemies of our religion and liberties triumphant, and to have heard in his latest moments the horrid noise of their insulting shouts;—is a scene, in the view of which we are almost tempted to say, Where were the shields of angels? where the eye of Providence? where the remembrance of those numberless prayers, which had been offered to God for the preservation of such a man, at such a time as this? But let faith assure us, that he was never more dear and precious in the eye of his divine Leader, than in these dreadful moments, when, if sense were to judge, he might seem most neglected.

That is of all others the happiest death, which may most sensibly approve our fidelity to God, and our zeal for his glory. To stand singly in the combat with the fiercest enemies, in the best of causes, when the whole regiment he commanded fled, to throw himself with so noble an ardour to defend those on foot, whom the whole body which he headed were appointed to support, when he saw that the fall of the nearest commander exposed those brave men to the extremity of danger; were circumstances that evidently showed how much he held honour and duty dearer than life. He could not but be conscious of the distinguished profession he had made, under a religious character; he could not but be sensible, how much our army, in circumstances like these, needs all that the most generous examples can do to animate its officers and its soldiers; and therefore, although when his men would hear no voice but that of their fears, he might have retreated without infamy, he seems deliberately and rightly to have judged, that it was better he should sacrifice in such a cause the little remainder of his life, than attempt to preserve it, by a conduct which might leave the least room even for envy and prejudice to suggest, that the regard to religion and the public, which he had so remarkably professed on all occasions, was not strong enough to lead him to face danger and death, which natural bravery itself had in early youth taught him to despise. He had long since felt the genuine force of honour sanctified by piety, and consequently had too just a zeal for his king and country, to bear the thought of deserting the trust committed to him in such an important moment; too warm a love for the protestant religion, not to rejoice in a call of Providence to bleed in its defence. And therefore, that he might make the last and utmost opposition in his power to a rebellious crew, by whose success, (should it go on,) an inlet would be opened to the cruel ravages of arbitrary power, and to the bloody and relentless rage of popish superstition, "he loved not his life unto the death." And in this view his death was martyrdom, and has, I doubt not, received the applauses and rewards of it; for what is martyrdom, but voluntarily to meet death, for the honour of God, and the testimony of a good conscience?

And if it be indeed true, as it is reported on very considerable authority, that before he expired he had an interview with the leader of the opposite party, and declared in his presence "the full assurance he had of an immortal crown, which he was going to receive," it is a circumstance worthy of being had in everlasting remembrance: as in that case Providence may seem wonderfully to have united two seemingly inconsistent circumstances in the manner of his dying: the alternative of either of which he has spoken of in my hearing, as what with humble submission to the great Lord of life he could most earnestly wish; "that if he were not called directly to die for the truth," which he rightly judged the most glorious and happy lot of mortality, "he might either fall in the field of battle, fighting

in defence of the religion and liberties of his country, or might have an opportunity of expressing his hopes and joys, as a Christian, to the honour of his Lord, and the edification of those about him, in his departing moments; and so might go off this earthly stage," as in the letter that relates his death, it is expressly said that he did, "triumphing in the assurance of a blessed immortality."

How difficult it must be in our present circumstances, to gain certain and exact information, you will easily perceive; but enough is known, and more than enough, to show how justly the high consolations of that glorious subject which we have been contemplating, may be applied to the present solemn occasion. From what is certain with relation to him, we may presume to say, that, after he had adorned the gospel by so honourable a life, in such a conspicuous station, God seems to have condescended, as with his own hand, to raise him an illustrious theatre, on which he might die a venerable and amiable spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men; balancing to his native land by such an exit, the loss of what future services it could have expected, from a constitution so much broken as his was, by the fatigues of his campaign in Flanders, where by his indefatigable services in a very extreme season he contracted an illness, from which he never recovered.

On the whole therefore, whatever cause we have (as indeed we have great cause) to sympathize with his wounded family, and with his wounded country; and how decent soever it may be, like David, to take up our lamentation over the mighty fallen, and the brightest weapons of our war perished; (and oh, how naturally might some of us adopt the preceding words too!) yet after all, let us endeavour to summon up a spirit like that with which he bore the loss of friends, eminent for their goodness and usefulness. And while we glorify God in him, as on so many accounts we have reason to do, let us be animated by such an example to a resolution of continuing, like him, stedfast in our duty, amidst desertion and danger, and all the terrors that can beset us around. As he, having been so eminently faithful unto death, has undoubtedly received a crown of life, which shines with distinguished lustre, among those who are come out of much tribulation; let us be courageous followers of him, and of all the glorious company of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Then may we be able to enter into the comfort and spirit of them all, and of this promise in particular, and shall not be discouraged, though we are called to endure a great fight of afflictions, or even to sacrifice our lives, in defence of our religion and liberties: since in this cause we know, if we should fall like him, even to die is gain. We are assured upon the best authority, that as he fought the good fight with so heroic a fortitude, and finished his course with so steady a tenor, and kept the faith with so unshaken a resolution, there is laid up for him a crown of brighter glory than he has yet received, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give unto him in that great expected day: and we know, that it shall be given, not unto him only, nor only to those who have had an opportunity of distinguishing themselves by the most heroic services or sufferings in the cause of their divine Leader, but unto all them that love his appearance. Amen.

A HYMN SUNG AFTER THE SERMON.

I.

Hark! 'tis our heavenly Leader's voice,
From his triumphant seat:
'Midst all the war's tumultuous noise,
How powerful, and how sweet!

II.

"Fight on, my faithful band," he cries,
"Nor fear the mortal blow:
Who first in such a warfare dies
Shall speediest victory know.

III.

"I have my days of combat known,
And in the dust was laid;
But thence I mounted to my throne,
And glory crowns my head.

IV.

"That throne, that glory, you shall share;
My hands the crown shall give;
And you the sparkling honours wear,
While God himself shall live."

V.

Lord, 'tis enough! our bosoms glow
With courage, and with love:
Thy hand shall bear thy soldiers through,
And raise their heads above.

VI.

My soul, while deaths beset me round,
Erects her ardent eyes;
And longs, through some illustrious wound,
To rush and seize the prize.

SERMON X.

MEDITATIONS ON THE TEARS OF JESUS OVER THE GRAVE OF LAZARUS.*

To Mrs. Sarah Clark.

The worthy relict of my ever honoured friend and father the Reverend Dr. Clark, this Sermon is most respectfully inscribed, as a sincere and affectionate, though inconsiderable, token of tender sympathy with her, and of indelible veneration for the exemplary character of the dear deceased.

By her most obliged
and faithful humble servant,

Northampton, January 7, 1750-1. P. DODDRIDGE.

JOHN xi. 35.

Jesus wept.

THE only-begotten Son of God, while he sojourned in human flesh, passed through a sad variety of calamities, and on the whole bore all that a humane heart, untainted with guilt, and untouched with remorse of conscience, could suffer; that he might learn to pity us more affectionately under the like sorrows; that he might lay in for us a stock of divine consolations; and especially, that he might teach us by his sacred example to avoid the opposite and fatal extremes, of despising the chastening of the Lord, and fainting when we are rebuked by him. Let us learn of him; and while we feel our afflictions like men, we shall bear them as the children of God, and the heirs of glory.

We here view our blessed Redeemer in a circumstance, in which most of us have frequently, and alas! very lately, been; and in which, should our lives be prolonged, we may again and again be: a circumstance, which is the common lot of mortality, and must of course be the most frequent affliction of those who are richest in dear and valuable friends, and which will be most tenderly felt by those who best deserve to enjoy them. It is the sad tribute, and I had almost said, the sad equivalent, which in these regions of death we pay for loving and being beloved. We see Jesus approaching the new grave of a friend; of such a friend, as providence and grace had concurred to render, in some measure, worthy of those precious and honourable tears, which were now dropped upon his tomb. It was Lazarus of Bethany. We know the tender story too well, to need a large rehearsal of it in moments so precious as these. We know, that when Jesus drew near to Bethany soon after the interment of his deceased friend, and was going with his sisters and a train of other mourners to his grave, he wept.—We shall inquire into the cause of these tears,—shall consider the useful lessons we may naturally learn from them,—and then shall give the few remaining moments of our time to what is peculiar to the sad occasion of our present assembly, the death of the truly reverend, pious, and amiable Dr. Clark; concerning whom I think I may justly say, and your consciences will attest how justly, that we have personally known few, over whose tomb Christ would more probably have wept, had he stood near it in mortal flesh. May this seasonable review of his tears over Lazarus regulate and sanctify those, which so naturally flow from our eyes in the present circumstance, where almost every object we behold calls them up afresh!

I. Let us consider on what accounts we may probably suppose that our blessed Redeemer now wept.

All we can do to answer this inquiry is, to take an attentive survey of the circumstances of the case, so far as our information reaches, that we may observe what occurred in them proper to have

* Preached at St. Albans Dec. 16, 1750, on the death of the Rev. Samuel Clark, D.D. who died the 11th of December, in the 63rd year of his age.

impressed a wise and benevolent mind. For though we pretend not to limit the infinitely more capacious views of our divine Master, yet we may assure ourselves that nothing material and important was passed over by him without due regard.

On these principles we may naturally observe, that our Lord was now near a grave, the grave of a pious and amiable friend,—surrounded with a train of affectionate mourners,—and with some obstinate sinners in his view, who were bringing upon themselves dreadful and final destruction.

1. Our Lord was now going to visit a grave; and that might awaken some meltings of compassion.

He was coming to a place where the king of terrors had lately erected a new trophy, and given a specimen of his universal triumph. Now, had Christ been a stranger to the person of Lazarus, it might have touched him to think of his untimely fate; (for untimely it seems to have been;) to have seen the sad monuments of mortality before his eyes, and have thought, "this is the sepulchre of Lazarus: he who, but a little while ago, was in the prime and vigour of his days, and in the ample enjoyment of what earth could afford to make him happy,* is now the prisoner of the grave. The residue of his days is cut off in the midst; and how many purposes are broken! how many hopes are blasted! How melancholy a change from yonder elegant and pleasant mansion, to this house of darkness and of silence, from the cheerful converse of his affectionate sisters, and these numerous friends who are fondly prolonging their attendance, though the rites of his funeral are ended! He, who was thus beloved and caressed, is already brought to say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister."

"Sad change!" might any of us naturally have said on such an occasion; "melancholy catastrophe! not of Lazarus alone, but of the whole human nature! For this is the end of all men; this the house appointed for all living." Here their magnificence and power, their beauty and vigour, their learning and wisdom, be they ever so remarkable, must, ere long, mingle with meanness and indigence, deformity and weakness, ignorance and folly. Here the human frame, that masterpiece of the divine contrivance, which wears so much of the image of its Maker, must, ere long, be thrown aside as a broken vessel, in which there is no pleasure: and all the present generation of men, and all that are to arise in future ages and most distant nations, shall in their turns lie as low as Lazarus. Such are the awful monuments of the divine displeasure for that first offence; when, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so the sentence of death passed upon all men, as all had sinned in him. Hither, even to the darkness, the abasement, the putrefaction of the grave, are they all travelling through a road of disappointment and vanity, of pain and sorrow. Thus are the original glories of man tarnished and withered, and his paradise turned into a Golgotha! And all this to the apostate creature is only the beginning of punishment and misery, did not sovereign grace interpose for his deliverance.

Who can say, that such natural and obvious thoughts as these, did not now arise in the mind of the blessed Jesus? Who can think it impossible, that he should thus, from the tomb of Lazarus, take a view of this wide ruin, and drop a compassionate tear over the various miseries of mortal man? But such reflections as these might have arisen from the funeral of one who had been an entire stranger to him: we are, therefore, further to consider,

2. That our Lord was now attending the grave of a pious and amiable friend; and on that account it would be very natural for him to weep.

The evangelist takes particular care to tell us, verse 5, that Jesus loved Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary; nor do we read of any family in which he more frequently lodged when he came up to Jerusalem, or where he conversed with more freedom and endearment. We may therefore assure ourselves, that, on the death of Lazarus, the remembrance of this intimate friendship would be recollected by the faithful and affectionate Jesus with due regard: and accordingly we see, that when he would inform his followers of this mournful providence, he uses this kind language, verse 11, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. Where, by the way, we may observe, that he not only speaks of him by the appellation of friend, but represents his death as a sleep; as if there were something in the word dead so harsh and doleful that he hardly knew how to connect it with so dear a name.† Now, on the same principles, it is natural to conclude, that, when our Lord came to the house of his deceased friend, and saw the apartments or gardens, in which he had often conversed with him to their mutual delight; when he reviewed the places, in which they had taken sweet counsel together, and from which they had gone to the house of God in company; the recollection must naturally awaken a tender sorrow, not unlike what we feel on such an occasion.

Christ could not fail to recollect, what a friend

* I have here taken it for granted, that Lazarus was a young man, and in prosperous circumstances of life. We may probably conclude the former, as we only read of his sisters, but of no wife or children, and from his living so long after them, as travellers both to and from the latter seems very evident, not only from their names as mentioned at Jerusalem, John xi. 19; but also from the splendid entertainment afterwards mentioned, John xii. 2. † Compare Luke x. 38, et seq.

Lazarus had been to him and to his interests: and according to his ability to the village of Bethany, and the city of Jerusalem, whence so many came to pay their last office of respect to his remains. Had he been employed in the ministerial work, (as I think ecclesiastical history tells us, that after his resurrection he was,) his fidelity and zeal under that character would, no doubt, have been tenderly recollected. As it was, we may assure ourselves, that if Christ will another day acknowledge so cheap a kindness as a cup of cold water bestowed on a disciple in his name, he could not possibly forget, how hospitably he had himself been entertained by Lazarus; how cheerfully, and how thankfully, that generous man had opened, not only his house, but his heart to him, and to the least of his servants, who no doubt had been cordially welcome to him for his Master's sake. A tear over the grave of such a friend might have seemed but an equitable tribute, had it fallen from any other eye; and a common spectator would have thought of no further cause. Accordingly the Jews who were present, made this reflection upon it, verse 36, Behold, how he loved him! which by the way seems to intimate, that it was not only a drop or two, which silently stole down the cheeks of our Lord, but that it was a copious shower; and as before it is expressly said, that he groaned in spirit, so perhaps some strong gestures might concur to express his grief. And though the immediate prospect of the resurrection of Lazarus would administer a relief peculiar to this case; yet the thoughts of those agonies through which he had passed, of the melancholy situation in which the body now lay, and perhaps of the death he was again to encounter, and from which he should not arise till the heavens were no more, might all contribute to melt the compassionate heart of the blessed Jesus; especially in concurrence with what we are next to mention: for,

3. Our Lord certainly wept out of compassion to surviving relatives and friends, whom he saw almost overwhelmed with their sorrow.

This reason is expressly assigned in the 33d verse: When Jesus saw her (that is, Mary) weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled. The original expression* properly signifies, he troubled or afflicted himself; that is, he gave the reins in some measure to his grief, he allowed a set of sorrowful ideas to arise and lodge in his mind, which he could at pleasure have banished or exchanged: and thus he set himself to practise that lesson, which he afterwards taught by his apostle, of weeping with them that weep!

And indeed, it was in this respect a very moving scene, which may justly demand a tear from us in the review of it. Had the deceased left behind him an affectionate widow, who might have seemed but half to survive, while what she esteemed the better part of herself had been torn away; or had a train of lovely children appeared, in such various gradations of filial sorrow as their respective ages might have admitted, like tender flowers drooping their heads surcharged with rain; we may reasonably conclude, a suitable sympathy would have been extended to them, and an additional tear have been given to each. But here were the two pious sisters, whom friendship and grace had concurred to join in such endearing bonds to the deceased, and to Jesus himself. The Jews also were weeping; partly for Lazarus, partly for his sisters, and partly for themselves; and perhaps some of them, for that sorrow which Jesus himself discovered in his aspect and deportment, before these tears fell. Now we cannot wonder, that this penetrated the heart of Christ yet more deeply, when he saw grief reflected from breast to breast, and each affectionate friend in that mournful assembly bearing (as it were) the burthen of all.—What I now see before me, what I persuade myself we all feel, gives me so lively an idea of this part of my subject, that it will scarce permit me to pursue it.—I will only add, that if there were any of the spectators then present, who did not weep with the rest, and bore no part in so general a lamentation, even they might perhaps be an occasion of yet greater distress to him, who always formed the truest estimate of things, and saw through every fallacious appearance by which our ignorance and credulity are daily misled; which leads me to add,

4. The Lord Jesus Christ himself might justly weep, to think of that dreadful ruin which was coming on some present for their continued impenitency and unbelief.

He who saw what was in man, undoubtedly discerned that malignity of heart, which so soon bore some of them to contrive the death of Lazarus, that he might not remain a living testimony of Christ's miraculous power, and which would so soon lead them to reject the yet more important evidence of his mission, produced by his own resurrection from the dead, expressly foretold and appealed to in that view. He saw all the dreadful consequences of this obstinacy, in their utter ruin by the Romans: and as hell was open to him, and destruction had no covering, he foresaw distinctly the horrors of their guilty spirits, when they entered these gloomy regions; and the increasing horrors that should seize them in the judgment day, when in their graves they should hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth to the resurrection of eternal damnation. And though our Lord could not but on the whole approve of that vengeance, by which a

righteous God would plead his cause, and revenge the quarrel of his rejected gospel; yet some sentiments of pity mingled themselves with the view, as when he had lately wept over Jerusalem: just as a humane and compassionate judge looks with compassion on those criminals, whom for wise and, on the whole, benevolent reasons, he given up to destruction. But I mention this only incidentally, as it is not hinted at in the context, and has no immediate connexion with the event which is now so ready to engross our thoughts. We have seen the cause of these tears; and now,

II. Let us consider to what purposes of practical edification we may improve them.

The following reflections may naturally arise from the subject; and I hope it may be useful to dwell a while upon each of them.

1. This may serve to vindicate a compassionate temper from the imputation of contemptible weakness.

The fierceness of some minds, and the indolence of others, leads them to despise those whom they frequently see under the impression of tender passions. But wherefore should they despise them? Surely when God implanted in our nature these melting emotions of soul, he intended them for some valuable purpose; and not that we should look upon them as weeds, to be rooted out of every well cultivated soil. I am sure, we cannot learn any such stoical maxims from the word of God; for there, not only the most eminent saints, but many of the bravest heroes, are described with the softest sentiments of humanity about them, and are frequently painted in tears.* What greater names has the Old-Testament history transmitted to us, than those of Abraham and Joseph, David and Jonathan, Hezekiah and Jeremiah? Yet we are told of various occasions on which they wept. And the tears of Paul, that great Christian hero, who could so courageously face imprisonment and martyrdom for the cause of truth and goodness, are frequently spoken of, either in his history, or his letters. But a greater than these is here: Jesus wept. In the days of his flesh he poured out tears, not only under the pressure of his own personal sorrow, but sometimes out of compassion for others: and he particularly did it in the instance before us, though he was to receive a public honour, which rendered this day one of the most illustrious of those which preceded his own resurrection. He behaved in every circumstance of his conduct, with a dignity worthy of his general character, and of the present occasion;† as one equal to the great work to be performed, and no way elevated or transported at the signal honour he did him: yet, (to allude to an expression of Job concerning himself,) while he was amongst them with a majesty beyond that of a king even in his army, he tempered that majesty with the gentlest sympathy which could have been expected from one, whose professed business it was to comfort the mourners. Surely in this respect, as well as every other, the disciple is not above his master; nor can those marks of tenderness be a reproach to us, which were not unbecoming in him. In circumstances like these in which Jesus wept, tears are so far from being an unmanly weakness, that they may rather be called (as they are by one of the most celebrated of the Roman poets, *nostri pars optima sensûs*) one of the most amiable parts in the constitution of human nature; which God seems to have provided on purpose, that we might be able to give each other a sensible token of commiseration and affection, which cannot so easily be counterfeited as fond words may; and he has taken care, that while they testify our passions, they should also ease them, and unload the heart when almost ready to sink under its pressure.

2. We may also learn from the preceding discourse, what may be of use to direct our compassion in the most affectionate workings of it.

We well know, that the blessed Jesus had all the passions in the most harmonious order, and that the symmetry of his soul was entirely unbroken. We may therefore assure ourselves, that tears which flow from the considerations on which he shed them, are the drops of wisdom and of virtue.

To weep with him over the grave of a departed friend, especially of one remarkable for piety and usefulness, is most easy and natural. The more difficult task will be, to restrain those tears within such bounds, that they may not swell into a torrent, which will bear down our comforts, our hopes, and our graces. But while they are duly moderated, and submitted to the great Lord of life, we shelter ourselves under the great example of Jesus. And indeed, without such an authority, our sorrows on such an occasion might be vindicated, not only as a tribute of humanity due to the living as well as the dead, but in some degree as a proper expression of our pious humiliation under God's rebuking hand. For nothing is an affliction, any further than it is felt; and the very end of Providence with respect to us would be frustrated, if our hearts were not deeply penetrated and impressed by the stroke.

But let not personal and domestic calamities engross all the tenderness of our souls. Let our compassions spread themselves all abroad, and take in every proper object which may fall under their notice. Let us endeavour to pass through the world, as the friends of God, and of mankind; as those,

* See those of Homer, and Virgil, are often remarkable; which plainly shows, that those most judicious observers of human life thought, there was nothing so much a mark of mind accompanied with the most exalted courage and magnanimity.

† This is most beautifully illustrated by the Reverend Dr Lardner, in his vindication of this story against Mr Woolston's objections; which is written with a spirit of candour as just and noble, as that of his antagonist was false, invidious, and inhuman.

who have a cordial affection for the whole human species, and being ourselves men, can think no human concern entirely foreign to our hearts. Let us often think of the state of human nature in general; how it is defaced and pained, and wounded even to death: how man grows up to lamentation and mourning; and every age, and station, and circumstance, has its affliction! Even tender and innocent infancy is not excepted; those little helpless strangers in life, though they have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, are born under the sentence of it. What numbers of them are brought into the world, only to smart, and weep, and die! And in other instances, when the human blossom begins to open, and the beautiful colours discover themselves in the bud, how does it wither before it be fully grown! Children, who have all the charms and all the hopes their early age can admit, seem to have been spread for a few years, only to take a deeper root in a parent's heart, that it might ache and bleed the more, when they are plucked up, sometimes by a sudden stroke, and sometimes by a slow progress which prolongs to weeks and months that dreadful operation by which we are losing a part of ourselves. Youths are taken away in the full bloom and vigour of their nature, in the gay delusive dream of their mortal hopes. And we who survive, find so many thorns springing up in our most pleasing paths, that we are sometimes tempted, with him who knew most of the magnificence and luxury of life, and so most of its vanity, to "bless the dead which are already dead, rather than the living which are yet alive." Such is the course of mortal man. Thus are we, like the rebellious Israelites, doomed to wander in the wilderness, with but one certainty before us in it, the sad assurance of dropping our carcasses there! Surely had we no distinct and peculiar sorrows of our own, we might feel those of this unhappy family to which we are allied, and there would be an evident propriety, as well as humanity, in the tears we shed for it. Yet while we are lamenting its ruined state, let us own the righteous sentence of that God, who is thus consuming our days in vanity, and our years in trouble, so that we spend them as a tale that is told, or rather, as the word might be much better translated, like a sigh or a groan.

But there is another subject of yet juster lamentation, to which our thoughts are directed by what we have now been hearing: I mean, that obstinacy of heart with which multitudes reject the counsel of God against themselves, and despise that sovereign remedy which divine grace has provided for all their sorrows in the everlasting gospel. How many wilfully make themselves, as it were, blind and deaf, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted and healed. Dying souls are a sad spectacle indeed; especially, when they are dying under the means and offers of life, and aggravate their ruin by the only method of cure. Where is the faith of Christians, if we do not regard them as on the borders of eternal ruin! and where is the tenderness of human nature, if we can see them with indifference in so dangerous and miserable a state? David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; and rivers of waters ran down his eyes, because men kept not God's law. Will it be less fatal to reject his gospel! Or should we be less impressed, when the tears of the Redeemer over perishing sinners are added to all the other moving considerations which attend their case? O that our head were waters, and our eyes were fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night, for our neighbours, our friends, it may be, some of our dearest relatives too! who seem so near to that state, where there will be perpetually weeping and wailing, and even gnashing of teeth; where the torment of all the raging, shall be added to the distress of the mourning, passions.

3. With what cheerfulness may we address this compassionate Saviour, when we are weeping on such accounts as called forth his own tears!

I might take occasion from hence to argue the encouragements we have, at all times, and on all occasions, to apply ourselves to him, as (according to the apostle's representation) a high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; or (according to Isaiah's description) a gracious shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.

But that we may not too much digress on so copious, though so delightful, a theme, let us now apply the thought to the view of those sorrows in particular, which gave occasion to the mention of it; the removal of dear and pious friends, and the consideration of the calamity and degeneracy of mankind.

When our heart is overwhelmed within us, on occasion of the removal of those who were dearest to us in the bands of nature and of love, what a shelter is here!—to come to this immortal friend, and open to him all the anguish of our souls. "Blessed Redeemer, behold me in a case which was once thine own! Thou knowest what it is to be in this sad circumstance, to be weeping over the grave of a friend. Let what thine own gentle benevolent heart then felt, engage thee to pity what I now feel, and to pour balm into this deep and painful wound! O let my heart be more open to thee, now this dear guest has quitted his apartment in it! Raise my soul from that dust to which it is fondly cleaving, to thy glorious and amiable self! Make up my loss in a more abundant communication of thy divine friendship, and I shall own it a rich equivalent for whatever mortality can invade!"

Again, under that distress on account of the calamities or degeneracy of human nature, which the best of men do most tenderly feel, let us apply ourselves to Christ as the great physician, who can cure the one and the other; as one who condescended to come into the world, that the world through him might be saved. And when we see, as we shall often see, the feebleness of our own attempts; and are grieved to observe, how little we can do to supply the necessitous, to comfort the sorrowful, or to reform the vicious; let us humbly commend them to him, whose arm is almighty, whose treasures of grace and love are inexhaustible. In a word, let us with all the importunity of faith and prayer urge him to redress what he once bewailed, and to hasten that happy day, when every thing that offends shall be taken out of his kingdom, and a face of universal holiness and joy shall be spread through all its spacious provinces, and triumph for ever there.

4. From the tears of Christ at the grave of Lazarus, we may infer, that the death of his saints is still precious in his sight.

There is not surely in human life a more cutting circumstance, than the sight of a dying friend. When all the importunity of prayer, the prescriptions of art, and the offices of love, have been tried in vain; when physicians own the case to be desperate, and the symptoms of it are so evident, that we cannot so much as flatter ourselves with one remaining, though delusive, hope, in favour of a life which perhaps we would gladly ransom with our own: yet even then, with what officious though unavailing eagerness do we return to the bed of languishing! and while our eyes are weeping, and our hearts bleeding, how willingly do we pass through days of confinement and nights of wakefulness, if we may but contribute to make the passage to the grave a little the smoother, when the journey cannot be prevented! But alas, how poor do our efforts appear, and how weak and impotent all our pity and our friendship!

Let us then, from the subject we are now upon, draw a consolation with regard to our pious friends, which may surely, as a reviving cordial, raise our spirits when they droop, and mingle praises with our tears. Jesus attends them, though in an invisible form; and the eye that wept over Lazarus, is with incessant care fixed upon them. Can we imagine, that he is grown less gracious on his removal to the heavenly world? It is true that he has laid aside those expressions of compassion, which are peculiar to animal nature in this inferior state; and drops of grief, and sentiments of sorrow, can have no further place. Yet still on the throne of his glory he retains a kind of royal compassion; and in this respect, as well as another, having loved his own that are in the world, he loves them even to the end. He doth indeed, for wise and gracious reasons, permit and appoint their death; but as he cannot be absent from any place, or unacquainted with any circumstance of mankind, we may assure ourselves that he is not an unconcerned spectator, when his servants are struggling away their breath, and fainting off from the stage of mortality. The compassions of a fellow-mortal are vain and fruitless; but those of a God are infinitely important. He can moderate their dying agonies, or communicate inward strength in proportion to them. He has a gentle voice, which can assure them that their sins are forgiven them; and attendant angels are at his command, to convoy them to the regions of glory. Nay, we may assure ourselves, that as their great and good Shepherd, he will himself be with them when they pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and his rod and his staff will yet comfort them. We may hope, that by his care rays of glory shall cheer them through the gloom; and the gates of the invisible world, of which he holds the keys, shall be opened upon them, in a manner which shall least shock and surprise. He will surely manifest himself to them by such gracious tokens, and embrace their separate spirits with such unknown endearments, as shall leave no room for one moment's terror, or even a moment's suspicion. He will delight to teach them the songs of heaven, as soon as the breath passes from their mortal lips; and attemper the rays of opening glory in such a manner, as he knows most suitable to the state of spirits new-born from flesh.

These meditations seem naturally connected with the subject; and I am sure, they are full of divine consolation, to support us under the death of our pious friends, and in the views of our own, which is so soon to succeed it: especially when connected with the last reflection I shall suggest, viz.

5. With what holy triumph will Christ rejoice over all his people, when he hath finally recovered them from the power of the grave, and destroyed that last enemy!

What our Lord did in this instance for Lazarus, was but an imperfect specimen of what he intends shortly to do for all that sleep in him. All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Delightful prospect, for the Redeemer, and all the redeemed! While Christ was thus weeping over Lazarus, he knew what he would do; and we may assure ourselves, that his gracious heart felt a secret unutterable pleasure in the thought of it. It must be delightful to him, while sympathizing with these mournings, to reflect how soon he should give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; how soon he should turn their sorrow into raptures of pleasing surprise, by the revival of this lamented

friend. And when he came to the tomb, and spoke those divinely efficacious words, Lazarus, come forth! who can describe, or imagine, the moving circumstances that attended it! With what transport did Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, embrace and congratulate each other! With what a mixture of amazement and gratitude did they all prostrate themselves at the feet of their almighty Saviour! and with what fervours of devotion and love did the newly-ransomed captive of the grave consecrate to him the life which he had renewed! A stranger must have beheld such a sight with pleasure: how much sublimer delight must it then give to the great Author of such mutual happiness!

But, O my brethren, what was this resurrection of Lazarus to a mortal and a sinful state on earth, when compared with that resurrection to immortal holiness and glory which Christ is designing for all his people! Surely the very prospect of it must delight his compassionate heart, and add new joys to his throne at the right hand of the majesty on high. Death is making havoc among his subjects here; those whom he loveth are sick and dying; their countenances gather blackness, and their bones are scattered at the grave's mouth: but he foresees the day, when he shall lead captivity captive; and he seems to glory in the view of it, and to comfort himself (as it were) in the thought of that ample vengeance which he will shortly take on their cruel destroyer. Is not that the language of those sublime words, I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. "Like an inexorable conqueror, I will abolish the very memorial of thee."

And when the glorious work is accomplished, with what complacency and delight will he survey it! How joyfully will he welcome that important day, which is to wipe away the reproach of his servants, and to clothe them with beauty, honour, and immortality! When he sees them springing out of their graves, as a mighty nation born at once, and shining in his own complete likeness, with what pleasure will he view that happy change, hear their mutual congratulations, and accept their united praises! Attendant angels will undoubtedly rejoice: the morning stars will sing sweeter, than at laying the foundations of the earth, and the sons of God will shout louder for joy. With what pleasure then must the blessed Jesus view it, as the work of his own love, and the travail of his very soul!

It is a known circumstance in the story of Augustus Cæsar, that when he was quitting empire and life, he expressed his great satisfaction in the improvements he had made in the buildings of Rome, so that, whereas he found it brick, he left it marble.* But surely Christ may much more justly glory in it, when he descends in all the pomp of the resurrection-day, that he has made a nobler change, even in this corporeal part of our nature; and that whereas he found it mortal, corruptible clay, he has raised it to a strength and splendour superior to that of marble or adamant. This is the joy and triumph of the blessed Jesus; this is the glorious hope, that animates the Christian under the mournful prospect of the ravages of death.

Glorious hope! reviving thought! at once adequate to the sorrows of this day; to the solemn occasion of which I must now turn, and persuade myself I shall not trespass on your patience, though I should a little transgress the limits of your time, while I speak of that venerable and excellent person, of that dear, amiable, generous friend, whose much-lamented removal has directed our meditations to this fruitful subject, on which it has been so hard to confine them.

The reverend and eminently worthy Dr. Samuel Clark had the honour to be descended from ancestors remarkable for their learning and piety. Mr. Samuel Clark of Bennet Fink, so well known by his historical writings, was his great-grandfather by the father's side;† and Mr. Samuel Clark of Aylesbury, the author of those judicious annotations on the Bible, which are still so generally esteemed, was his mother's father. As he bore the name of each, he imitated them both, as well in their ministerial as Christian character. His immediate parents were very valuable persons, whom God spared to an advanced age to rejoice in such a son; whom, in regard to the early marks both of genius and seriousness which they discerned in him, they early consecrated (together with his younger brother, the late reverend Mr. Daniel Clark) to the service of the sanctuary. He pursued his academical studies under the direction of the learned Dr. Ker, with whom (as I have been assured by those who were then his companions) he acquired an early reputation; particularly, for that accurate acquaintance with the Greek language, and that intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, in the original, which is so important, I had almost said so indispensable, a part of ministerial furniture.

When he left the academy, he did not choose to enter on preaching directly, though I believe few of his years were better qualified for it; but he resided some time in two families of rank, under the

* Lucr. Tit. glorietur, marmoream se reliquisse, quam lateritiam acceperat. Suetonius Vit. Aug. cap. 28.

† I have often heard Dr. Clark express the great satisfaction he had in meeting, [illegible] with a valuable School Book, in a [illegible] In several passages [illegible] where [illegible] the Latin [illegible] Dr. Clark [illegible] happy [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

capacity of a chaplain and tutor; where, while he was directing the studies of young gentlemen committed to his care, he was greatly improving his own. He had in one of these families considerable offers of preferment in the established church; which, in concurrence with other much weightier considerations, put him on studying the foundations of nonconformity with great attention. The result is well known to you, by the happy effects of it, which you enjoyed for so many years: and though no man was less enslaved to a party spirit, or more ready to do justice and honour to learning, moderation, and piety, wherever he found any of them; yet I am authorized to say, he never repented the choice he made, under all its temporal disadvantages: nor is it any wonder to me, that the observation of growing years, and the freest converse with men and books, and above all, the nearest views of eternity, increased his satisfaction in it.

During this period of retirement, of which I have just been speaking, he gave that accurate examination to all the most remarkable theological controversies, on which he fixed his judgment in relation to them. And as he heard all the different parties of Christians pleading for themselves, and endeavoured to try them all by Scripture, as the only infallible standard, he happily steered between opposite extremes: and his great natural sagacity enabling him to see much further into many questions, than the generality of mankind do, he plainly discerned, that many matters which have been most warmly debated, have related to what is circumstantial rather than essential in the doctrines of Christianity, and when sifted to the bottom, relate rather to different phrases than different ideas. This gave him that moderation, for which he was so eminently remarkable and amiable; and engaged him, while he was vigorously supporting and strongly enforcing the great peculiarities of the gospel, to hold the truth in love, and not only to bear with those that expressed themselves differently with respect to some of them, but to pay a real deference to those valuable qualities which he discerned in them, and to which no man seemed to render more impartial justice. It was a maxim, which he early imbibed, and constantly retained, "that all the heresies which had corrupted and afflicted the church, owed their original to men's departing from the simplicity of Scripture, and must derive their cure from a return to it."

When he appeared under the character of a preacher, he happily joined the rational and pathetic with the Scriptural and evangelical strain. In consequence of this, the most judicious hearers were entertained, whilst the least knowing were instructed, and they who had made the greatest progress in the divine life were led on to further improvements. It was an honour to the taste and judgment of those who then constituted this society, that they unanimously made choice of him for their pastor: and who can express how great a blessing it has been to the church and auditory, to have enjoyed the benefit of his labours more than thirty-eight years? During which, as every public assembly in which he presided, has been witness to the fervency of his prayers, and the excellent matter and tendency of his discourses; so he has had a testimony in the conscience of every one that knew him, how powerful his instructions and exhortations were enforced by the most blameless and honourable conversation.

Most remarkably may it be said of him, that in strenuous imitation of his Divine Master, he went about doing good; and all the branches of his work were his delight. As his mind was furnished with a rich variety of knowledge, in consequence of a long and very close attention to reading, meditation, and prayer; so he was always ready to communicate it, and desirous to support, wherever he came, a spirit of rational and improving conversation; that he might fill up his time profitably abroad as well as at home, and redeem the hours which are so frequently lost even by persons of knowledge and piety. Seasons appointed for meals were not exempted from this care; and as the book of God of course furnished out in his own family food for the mind during that of the morning,* so what he daily met with in other books, (often greatly improved by his own judicious reflections,) was happily introduced on other occasions.

His generous heart was always working with some benevolent and useful design; and he endeavoured to inspire all about him with such sentiments, and to encourage to the utmost every worthy pursuit, whether in his brethren in the ministry, or in private Christians. His steadiness of temper carried him through the various accidents of life with uncommon composure. Far from that desultory temper, which is often so fatal to the usefulness even of great men, he pursued with persevering patience whatever good design he undertook; and that prudence which was so distinguished a part of his character, enabled him to judge of the importance of ends, and the properest measures of obtaining them: so that I have seldom known any, who appeared to suffer fewer disappointments in the prosecution of their schemes than he.

His great modesty did indeed prevent him from some public services, of which he was on many accounts very capable; I mean, instructing the world more frequently from the press. But the few specimens of this kind which he has given, are

* It was in Dr. Clark's family a general custom, [illegible] every morning and evening [illegible] Scripture: and I have known [illegible] those [illegible] observed.

sufficient to make us regret there are no more; and to excite our wishes that some way may be found of rescuing from oblivion some of his many valuable remains.

It was one instance of Dr. Clark's remarkable wisdom, that he was a most attentive observer of providence: and the conduct of providence towards him was, in many respects, peculiarly worthy of observation: he delighted himself in the Almighty, and God gave him the desire of his heart.

He was undoubtedly one of the happiest, as well as one of the best of men, in domestic life; and indeed for a long course of years prosperity seemed to attend on all his steps. As he was greatly blessed in a most suitable, affectionate, and amiable consort, and in a train of lovely children, he treated them always with the most endearing tenderness, and was perpetually labouring to improve all his influence over them, for their advancement in religion, and in whatever else might make them capable of increasing happiness.

Prudence taught him to form friendship with due deliberation, and none could cultivate it more faithfully; nor could any one be happier in expressing the kind sentiments with which his heart overflowed, wherever he professed it; or more ready to think himself obliged, or to return with interest every good office he received. And the good hand of his God was remarkably upon him in this respect, in sparing to him for many years some intimate friends, for whom he had through life the highest esteem; and in raising up others towards the close of his life, who showed in the most obliging manner the high respect they paid to his merit as soon as they began to know it, and the pleasure they took in contributing to his happiness.

As God had placed him in more plentiful circumstances than many of his brethren, it appeared that he well knew how to use and become them. His mind was too great to be in any degree elated with them, too wise and too good to fail of improving them for the best purposes. His liberal soul devised liberal things, which yet he was studious to conceal. He took a peculiar pleasure, in hospitably sharing with his brethren and friends the bounties of divine Providence; and gave and received a new supply of spirits, while he was conversing with them in such circumstances.

Thus did this good and happy man pass through a long series of years, increasing in knowledge and in piety, in zeal and usefulness; loving all, and by all beloved; honouring all, who deserved any peculiar regard, and by all such honoured, in proportion to their knowledge of him, bringing joy into every house which he entered, and most of all into his own when he returned to it. And when towards the close of so bright a day, heavy afflictions visited him, he took occasion from them to exhibit new virtues and graces, and to demonstrate that it was not from speculation alone, he had known how so well in prosperity to inculcate the duties of adversity. He bore frequent visits of acute pain, with uncommon patience and cheerfulness: and though the unutterable pleasure he took in exerting himself continually in public service, rendered his paralytic disorders peculiarly grievous; yet even these he supported with great resignation to the will of God, and cheerful hope in his long-experienced goodness. And in this visitation, mercy surrounded him in a manner well worthy of our recollection. Though his speech was so much affected by it, as to render him, for more than a year and a half, incapable of the labours of the pulpit, yet his understanding continued in its full vigour; nor did I ever hear him discourse with more sagacity and penetration, or pray with more readiness or propriety of expression, than since this lamented complaint seized him: and he was still capable of study, which to his latest days he pursued with as much eagerness, as if he had just been laying in his furniture for the ministry.

There seemed also a providential beauty in the vicissitudes of Dr. Clark's illness and recovery. Whereas he was so extremely afflicted for a considerable time at Bath with a complication of distempers, that his skilful physician scarce expected to have found him alive at his return, for several days; his spirits still kept up, to the amazement of all that were around him, and he discovered a serenity which nothing could discompose, a cheerfulness which nothing could overbear. Thus he triumphed over death, when it seemed to make its nearest and most deliberate approaches: and after this you know, in how surprising a manner he was given back to the prayers which were offered for him, and restored to his own house, and the house of his friends, again; yea, what was to him most delightful of all, restored to the house of his God. I cannot express the pleasure with which I reflect upon it, that the last sabbath, and almost the last day of his life, was spent with you in this place; and that he was administering the sacrament of the Lord's supper to you, but a few hours before he received his final discharge from the services of this lower world.* And truly, I think the circumstances of that discharge peculiarly favourable. To be so suddenly struck, as to be able only by a speaking smile to testify to the dear relatives then near him, the secret tranquillity and joy of his heart, when all the powers of utterance and of nature were failing him at once; and then to take flight for heaven, without so much as a groan, is a death greatly to be congratulated, when viewed in connexion with such a life.

* On Lord's day, Dec. 2, whereas he died on the Tuesday following.

O my brethren, what shall I say? With difficulty indeed do I restrain a thousand thoughts which are rising in my mind, while I speak of my friend, of my father, for such I may properly call him, if all the offices of paternal tenderness and care can merit that title. We cannot but mourn, yet let us rejoice too. Let us rejoice, that we have known him, and known him to be such a man; that he has marked his way with such distinguished usefulness, and scattered so many blessings, of which so many are left behind him. As when Dorcas was gone, surviving friends showed the garments which she had made for the poor, as memorials of her goodness; so may I this day show many remaining, many present, effects of Dr. Clark's piety and zeal; and though so many of them may seem to be hidden in the grave, yet neither are they lost. To him, I may truly say, that under God I owe even myself, and all my opportunities of public usefulness in the church; to him, who was not only the instructor of my childhood and youth in the principles of religion, but my guardian when a helpless orphan, as well as the generous, tender, faithful friend, of all my advancing years. By him were many of you instructed with me in the course of catechistical lectures, and other exercises of the like kind, which he so happily invented and diversified for the benefit of the rising generation.* To him, as the instrument in the hand of divine grace, do many of you owe it, that early religious impressions were made upon your minds; that you were introduced betimes to the table of the Lord; and that you were formed, by all the advantages of instruction and example, to those characters which many of you so worthily and usefully sustain. In some families he has been in all these respects successively a blessing to parents and children; and he has with unutterable pleasure seen in many of you, that his labours have not been in vain in the Lord. And I cannot look upon the children of the charity school now present, without recollecting, that it is now more than thirty years since it was founded by his pious care, exciting the generality of his flock to make (if I mistake not) the first effort of this kind, that was ever made among the dissenters in the country; which has since been followed in many other places with happy success, and which I hope will still be, as I am sure the institution here has already been, a means of great good, with respect both to the temporal and eternal interest of many, who must otherwise have been exposed to great ignorance and wretchedness.

Such are the monuments which our honoured friend has left behind him; and may they long remain! May the effects of his pious and excellent labours be more and more conspicuous! Grievous indeed would it be, if any who heard such exhortations, and saw them illustrated by such an example, should remain unimpressed with a sense of divine things. If there be any such present, let me entreat them to hear him once more, while dead, yet speaking. Let me entreat them to give an attentive perusal to those excellent sermons on the folly of irresolution in religion, which at our united request he published: they seem sufficient to convince every conscience; and O that divine grace might add efficacy to the conviction! As for those of us, who by that grace have felt and submitted to the power of such considerations, and are now serving God in the sincerity of our hearts, what can be more seasonable, under our present distress, than to have recourse to that collection of Scripture promises, which he so judiciously ranged in comparison with the characters to which they are made. Let us drink of these living streams, from that fountain which can never be drawn dry, and our souls shall be refreshed; and we shall be taught to say, with a joy which a loss like this will not be able to take away, The Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock; and let the God of our salvation be exalted. Amen!

* It was customary with Dr. Clark for many years, to meet young persons at the vestry on the Thursday evenings for religious conversations, in which he went over successively some useful subjects, of which he gave them some schemes in writing, that they might give him an account of them. Thus he went over the history of Scripture, the evidences of natural and revealed religion, the reasons of the reformation from popery, and the ethics of Solomon, collected from a very judicious analysis which he made of his Proverbs and book of Ecclesiastes. He has left behind him, fairly transcribed in short hand between two and three hundred discourses on this last subject, which I could wish in every hand, so far as I can judge of the specimen I have seen of them.

ORDINATION SERMONS.

SERMON XI.

THE TEMPER AND CONDUCT OF THE PRIMITIVE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.*

2 Cor. iv. 5.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

The apostle observes, that what had happened to him with regard to his imprisonment at Rome, though it seemed to bear so melancholy an aspect, yet did on the whole fall out by the special providence of God for the furtherance of the gospel: and we may justly apply the same reflection to several other very afflictive circumstances of his life, and particularly to the most perverse and unjust opposition which he met with from those factious teachers, especially of the circumcision, who gave so much disturbance to him and the churches. The attack which they made upon his character and interest at Corinth, laid him under a necessity of saying many things which he would have gladly omitted, and of mentioning some circumstances in his history, which had otherwise perhaps remained unknown, at least could never have appeared with equal evidence and spirit. While he is engaged in his own vindication, and entering into the particulars of his character and conduct, he drops many very edifying expressions, which are worthy the most attentive regard both of ministers and private Christians; of which the words I have now been reading are none of the least considerable. He was obliged to say something which might look like an encomium on himself, and therefore chooses to speak in the name of all his faithful brethren in the ministry, as well as his own. Now after he had declared that they had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, (which were the great mysteries of the heathen priesthood, and probably the secret spring which actuated these judaizing teachers,) not like them, walking in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully, or adulterating it with any foreign and corrupt mixtures; but acting so constantly in the sight of God, as to secure to themselves a secret testimony in the consciences of all that intimately knew them, and accurately observed them; he adds, For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.† O that every Christian minister, who in succeeding ages hath read these words, had been delivered into the mould of them! O that we whom God hath honoured with this high and holy calling, may make it our increasing care to form ourselves by them; and beholding as in a glass the beautiful model, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory!

It will be my business in the process of my discourse from these words,

I. To illustrate the account which the apostle here gives of his own conduct, and that of his brethren in the Christian ministry.

II. To consider the principles on which we may reasonably conclude they acted, and by which they were influenced to it.

III. I shall close with some reflections on the whole.

I choose to throw my Discourse into such a form, as it will give me an opportunity of suggesting my advice and exhortations to you, my dear and reverend brother, who are this day giving yourself up to this excellent work, in the most humble and respectful manner; which I am now the more solicitous to do, lest I should seem to dictate to those from whom I shall always be ready, with great pleasure and deference, to receive instructions.

I. I am to consider the account which the apostle gives of his own conduct, and that of his brethren in the Christian ministry: We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. In which words he

* Preached at Wadesworth, June 8, 1737, at the Ordination of the Rev. William Johnston.

† It seems evident to me, that ver. 5 and 6 come in as a parenthesis.

plainly declares, that they did not make themselves the chief end of their ministry, but faithfully devoted it to the service of Christ as the great Lord, whom they endeavoured to serve by all the most humble and affectionate condescensions to those that were committed to their ministerial care.

1. The apostles did not make themselves the chief end of their ministry.

We, says St. Paul, preach not ourselves. It is to be feared that some did so even in these early days, for the antichristian spirit began to work betimes; so that it gave Paul reason to say, that they served not Christ Jesus, but their own belly, while they preached him out of contention rather than love, supposing to add addition to his bonds; insomuch that he complains of it as a general, though, blessed be God, not a universal, character, all seeking their own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But this was far from being the character of the apostle, or any faithful disciple of Christ; who must have learnt, in some measure, that essential branch of the Christian character, to deny himself, and taking up even his cross to follow his Master to crucifixion itself, should he lead him on in that painful and dangerous way.

It may be worth our while more particularly to observe, that these good men did not seek their own applause, their own interest, or their own power and authority, as the chief end of undertaking and prosecuting the ministry; for each of these particulars must be included in this general expression, We preach not ourselves; and it will be our wisdom to regard each.

These primitive ministers did not, in preaching the gospel, aim at their own applause and reputation.

The greatest men amongst the heathens did it, and avowed it; they reckoned the love of fame amongst the noblest of passions, and the pursuit of it appeared a mark of the most generous mind. But Christian apostles had higher views. They considered themselves as in the presence of God, and had the truly great ambition of being accepted of him, and then human applause and admiration disappeared as less than nothing. It is, says good St. Paul, a very small thing to me, the smallest matter one can imagine,[a] to be judged of man's judgment, for he that judgeth me is the Lord. On this principle we find, that when he came to Corinth, though it were so learned and polite a city, he did not affect to come with the excellency or loftiness of speech, and the persuasive words of man's wisdom; he did not labour for the exactest forms of expression, nor study to compose and deliver his discourses in such a manner as might most easily have gained him the reputation of an exact orator, so that people should point after him as he passed through the streets, and say, That is Paul! a little circumstance with which poor Demosthenes was so highly delighted, but he contented himself with preaching the plain things of the gospel, in a plain and serious, a rational and unaffected, manner, whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear. And indeed, he was rather on his guard against too pompous and florid a style, lest it should seem that a man who was so studious to adorn the doctrines of the gospel, did not thoroughly believe them; and so the cross of Christ should have become of none effect, when an apostle seemed so little penetrated with the argument drawn from it, as to be at leisure for trifles.

Such a turn of mind we may easily perceive in his epistles. They appear to be written out of the fulness of his soul, but without any anxiety about the style, or any very exact care even to range the ideas according to the most methodical order; abounding every where with a great many lively and beautiful digressions, that often run into each other in a manner which the strictest rules of polite writing will hardly allow. In a word, we eminently see in St. Paul, perhaps beyond any other writer in the world, a good man bringing out of the good treasure of his heart good things, with a kind of magnificent negligence. His works are like a wilderness of beautiful and fragrant plants, springing up promiscuously out of a happy soil, and amidst all their seeming confusion, producing, to a natural taste, a finer effect than if they were drawn out with a solicitous care, set in the most regular figures, and cut into a thousand artificial forms.

Again, the apostles, and their fellow-labourers in the gospel ministry, were not governed by a view to the possessions of the present life.

These holy men abhorred the very thought of making the church of Christ a kind of porch to the temple of Mammon. The circumstances in which they undertook their work, were such as could leave no room to suspect that they sought it only as a gainful trade. On the contrary, at their very first setting out in it, they left all, that they might follow their Master. And though it may be objected with regard to some of them, that their *all* was little, yet they had at least food and raiment, and a habitation which they could call their own; whereas, when they devoted themselves to the ministry of the gospel, one of them could say in the name of the rest, Even to this day we are hungry and naked, and have no certain dwelling-place. And this was St. Paul, who seems to have resigned very great prospects, which his liberal education, his remarkable proficiency and zeal in the Jewish religion, and the degree of favour which he had even in his younger days with the greatest men of his nation, might fairly have given him. But those things, which were before gain to him, he counted loss for

[a] Ἐλάχιστον, 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Christ, and when he had once devoted himself to his service, his actions as well as his words plainly showed, that he was crucified to the world by the cross of his Redeemer. He could therefore appeal to the Corinthians, that his conduct had proved he sought not theirs, but them; and when writing to the Thessalonians, could make an appeal to God himself, that he had never used a cloak of covetousness. Nay, when leaving the Ephesians, amongst whom he had made so long an abode, that his real temper must have been discovered, he could assure them, and they themselves could testify the truth of it, that he had been so far from coveting any man's silver, or gold, or apparel, that his own hand had ministered to his necessities; and that, in order to prevent his being burthensome to them, even for the necessaries of life, he had sometimes added the labour of the night to that of the day.

Nor did these holy men arrogate to themselves any secular power, or pretend to any authority, over the civil liberties of mankind.

Grotius supposes this to be the direct and principal meaning of the text; We preach not ourselves as lords, but proclaim Christ Jesus alone under that character. And this, undoubtedly, is included in the phrase, though I can see no imaginable reason for such a limitation as he would lay upon it. These primitive pastors of the church, according to that excellent advice of St. Peter, (so peculiarly forgotten by those who have contended for the honour of being his only successors,) did not behave as lords over God's heritage;* and though they insisted upon it, that what they wrote by a divine revelation and direction, should be received as the commandment of Christ, yet Paul himself expressly renounces all claim to a dominion over men's faith; thereby confessing himself not to be the master of the family, but merely a servant in it, who desired to be regarded by them no further than he could prove that he spake in a greater name than his own. Let a man, says he, so esteem of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, of whom the great thing required is, that we be found faithful to him whose commission we bear. Nor did they ever pretend that this extraordinary character of messengers from heaven gave them any claim to secular power on earth; they assumed no authority in temporals in order to spirituals; and they were not penetrating enough to understand the doctrine of the two swords, with which many have since been so fond of meddling, I fear to their own wounding, as well as to the dishonour of the Christian name, and the destruction of many of their fellow-creatures. The weapons of the apostle's warfare were not carnal, but spiritual, as it was necessary they should be, in order to the bringing every thought into subjection to the law of Christ.† Which leads me to pass on from this negative part of their character, to observe, that, as they did not preach themselves, so as to make their own reputation, or interest, or dominion, the end of their labours; so,

2. They faithfully devoted their ministry to the service of Christ.

We preach Christ Jesus the Lord; which plainly intimates, that they made Christ the great object of their preaching, and that they endeavoured to speak of him in such a manner as to promote his empire over the hearts and consciences of men.

They made Christ the great subject of their preaching.

So they declare, We preach Christ crucified, though to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. At Corinth, in particular, curious as it was, the apostle declares, I determined to know, *i. e.* to make known, and insist upon, nothing among you save Jesus Christ, even that crucified person; with whatever scorn and contempt such a subject might be treated. And therefore it is observable, that preaching Christ is sometimes used as a comprehensive expression for all that the apostles taught. Not that Paul or his brethren neglected the great doctrines of natural religion, which are so evidently the foundation of the gospel itself, that it is perfect madness to pour contempt upon them. We might in reason conclude, as we find it to have been fact, that, when they came amongst Gentile and idolatrous nations, they began with asserting the being and attributes of the only true God, the universality of his providence, and that certainty of a state of future retribution, which is so naturally connected with it. All this they taught; but they did not stop here, for they well knew, that it was their duty to make these things the plan on which to raise that glorious superstructure which Christianity hath built upon them. They served God with their spirit in the gospel of his Son, and therefore proclaimed the glory of the Father, as reflected from the face of Christ Jesus the Lord.

They established the truth of his deity, the mystery of his incarnation, the necessity of his atonement, the perfection of his righteousness, the riches of his grace. They described him as living on earth an example of universal goodness, as dying on the cross a sacrifice for sin, as rising from the dead, and ascending into heaven, and as reigning there the Lord of universal nature, and head over all to the church. You cannot but know, that these are their darling topics, on which they most copiously insist, in their sermons and writings which are transmitted to us: and if St. Paul at Athens seems to touch

* De Latinorum exegesi non semel me dissensisse et dissentire [illegible] my text at the Ordination of Messieurs Gregory and Dupuy will more fully supply the deficiency of these brief remarks of mine upon it; and further I do with great pleasure refer the reader.

more sparingly than usual on these important doctrines, it is to be considered, that we have only the beginning of a discourse, in which the rudeness of the philosophers interrupted him, before he could proceed to open and establish those doctrines which were peculiar to his character as an ambassador of Jesus. And I am persuaded, that whoever impartially peruses the epistles of that great apostle, and observes not only his direct arguments, but his lively and pathetic digressions on this glorious subject, when it comes in his way, will not only see that Paul was delighted with it, but will himself be disposed to wish that every Christian minister may copy after this great original. Especially when it is considered,

That he and his brethren preached Christ in such a manner, as might most effectually establish his empire over the hearts and consciences of men.

We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, *i. e.* we preach him under the character of the great Lord, the ruler and governor of his church. They very well knew, that the design of Christianity was not merely to amuse the world, but to reform it; and that its sublimest speculations were received and admitted in vain, if the life were not regulated, and the heart subdued, by the gospel. Therefore do they on all occasions inculcate it, that God had exalted Christ to be a Prince as well as a Saviour; had ordained, and even sworn, in his holiness, that every knee should bow unto him. These good men did not think it enough to declare the grace of the gospel, and then leave it to the Spirit of God, by his own immediate agency, to draw the proper consequences relating to duty; but they expressly draw those consequences themselves, and enter into a very large and particular detail of those duties. They insist upon it with great spirit and earnestness, as a faithful saying, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works, and direct succeeding ministers to affirm it constantly. They declared, that it was the very purpose for which the saving grace of God had appeared unto all men, to teach them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. They urge Christians therefore to yield themselves to God, as alive from the dead, and to employ their members as instruments of righteousness. Beseeching them by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which was indeed their most reasonable service. Nor did they think it beneath the honour of the evangelical ministry, sometimes to insist on arguments taken from the terrors of the law. Knowing those terrors, they laboured to persuade men by them; they affectionately warned them, that the ground which under divine cultivation brought forth nothing but briers and thorns, was nigh unto cursing, and its end was to be burned; that to those who did not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, there remained a certain fearful expectation of wrath, and fiery indignation, which should devour them; yea, that they should be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. This was the apostolic method of preaching Christ; so warning every man, and teaching every man, as that they might, through the divine blessing, most probably hope to present every man perfect in Christ; that having their fruit unto holiness, their end might be everlasting life.

You see I have generally expressed these things in Scripture language, that the illustration and proof might advance together. And if we desire to approve ourselves faithful in the same cause, we must conduct our ministration thus, and must also imitate these good men in the third particular of their conduct, which alone now remains to be considered from these words; which is,

3. That they endeavoured to serve their great Master, by the most humble and affectionate condescension to those that were committed to their care.

So far were they from lording it over their brethren, that according to the example and command of Christ himself, they owned themselves the servants of all: nor was it merely an empty compliment, for their actions spoke it as well as their words; they exercised great humility and condescension towards all, and they did it for Jesus' sake.

They exercised great humility and condescension towards all their brethren, not excepting even the meanest of them.

To this Paul frequently exhorts others: Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. In love serve and be subject to one another, and let each esteem others better than himself. Thus he advised, and thus he acted: and his brethren, no doubt, behaved like him. They well knew their calling as Christians, and plainly saw, that not many mighty, not many noble, were called, but that God had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; that he had chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom of eternal glory. And if God would stoop thus low, they were cordially willing to do it. They could discern a dignity in a child of God, and an heir of glory, which shone through all their poverty and meanness in their dress, and outward appearance; inconsiderable circumstances, which could not prevent these holy men from honouring them that feared the Lord, though they might want some of those decorations which the vilest of mankind may wear, and perhaps to their greater infamy.

St. Paul was a memorable instance of this amiable temper: though by his education fit for higher

company, and from his early years accustomed to it, he did not disdain the meanest of the people, and was not only easy of access to them, but visited them at their own dwellings, and carried his instructions and consolations from house to house, even to those where he could expect no entertainment, but such as arose from religious converse, society in worship, and a consciousness of being useful to the souls of men. And it is worthy of our notice, that in subserviency to this great design, this holy man was a very affectionate friend to their temporal interests; and that to such a degree, as to be far from imagining that he had done his part, when he had exhorted his hearers to contribute liberally to the supply of their indigent brethren. Most instructive in this view is the address he makes to the presbyters or bishops of the church of Ephesus; in which, appealing to them, that they themselves knew that his own hands had ministered to his necessities, and those that were with him, he adds, I have showed you, that so labouring, you ought to support the weak: and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The same true greatness of soul which engaged him cheerfully to contribute out of his small stock, for the relief of those that were yet more necessitous than himself, disposed him with great condescension and tenderness to bear the infirmities of his people, and in many instances to sacrifice his own taste and humour to theirs. Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was offended, and he did not burn with desire to remove the offence? When his converts behave with too much of the peevishness and perverseness of children, he did not haughtily chastise them, but rather chose tenderly to expostulate with them, and if possible to love them out of their follies. He put on not only the bowels of a father, but the indulgence of a nurse towards them: We were, says he, gentle amongst you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, and ready to have imparted to you, not only the gospel of Christ, but our own souls or lives also, *i. e.* to have died, as we lived, for your service, because you were singularly dear to us.

This was the governing temper of St. Paul, and it carried him through some circumstances which required great and resolute self-denial; he became all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some sincere converts to the gospel. And in particular, to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain them; *i. e.* he voluntarily laid himself under all the restraints of the Mosaic law, though he knew it was now abolished, that he might as a Christian apostle convert the Jews. And this he carries so far, as to declare his readiness, not only to forbear those kinds of food which the law of Moses pronounceth unclean, but to give up all animal diet, and subsist entirely on vegetables, rather than he would grieve and offend his brethren, *i. e.* the feeblest Christian. If meat, says he, make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth. Thus, though the apostles were free from all, they nevertheless voluntarily became the servants of all, and indeed condescended to do and forbear many things, because disagreeable to their Christian brethren, which few hired servants would have done or forborne out of regard to those who were properly their masters. But let us not fail to remember that

They did all this for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. It is certain, that such condescensions as we have been describing, are either great or mean, according to the principle from whence they proceed. Ambition can creep, that it may soar; and soothe, that it may afterwards insult: but the apostles stooped, that they might raise others; and pleased, that they might profit. We, says St. Paul, please all men to their good for their edification. This was their great concern, that whether they ate or drank, or whatever they did, they might do all to the glory of God. This was their earnest expectation and their hope, that in all things Christ might be glorified in them, whether by their life or their death. They sacrificed not only their humour and their ease, but life itself, to the great purposes of pleasing and serving the blessed Jesus; and Paul spake the sentiments of them all, when he said, Neither bonds nor imprisonments move me; nor do I count my life dear unto me, that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord. But while I insist on such expressions as these, I do in part anticipate what I am to offer under the second head. Where I proposed,

II. To consider what were the principles by which they were animated to so noble a temper and conduct.

I the rather enter into the survey of them, as we shall find they were not only suited to the age and circumstances of the apostles, but ought also to have a very great influence upon us, whom God has favoured so far as to count us faithful, putting us into something of the same ministry with them, which can never be comfortably and honourably fulfilled, but by those who govern themselves by the like maxims and principles. They were undoubtedly influenced by an affectionate love to the blessed Redeemer, a pious zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of souls, and a prudent regard to their own present and future happiness. And if these great motives have their due weight with us, we shall not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves the servants of his people for his sake.

1. The apostles were engaged to the conduct we have described, by a most grateful affection to the blessed Redeemer.

That dear name is precious to every believing soul, and how precious it was to these holy men, almost every page of their writings will declare. Divine grace had deeply humbled them under the conviction of their own guilt and weakness, and then taught them to view the Lord Jesus Christ as made of God unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. They knew the grace of the Son of God in descending, and living, and dying for their salvation; and in passing through all the most dreadful scenes of suffering which imagination can suggest, with a love to them, which all those waters could not quench, nor the floods drown. And believing this, they could not but speak in his cause, they could not but desire to spend and be spent in his service. On this principle therefore doth Paul vindicate those ardours of zeal, which a profane world censured as enthusiasm and madness. If we are beside ourself, it is to God, for the love of Christ constraineth us while we thus judge, and approve the argument in the coolest moments of reflection, that if one died for all, then were all dead; for had they not been in a state of condemnation and death, they would not have needed such a ransom. And he died, that we, who live only in consequence of his dying love, should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again. And we may assure ourselves, that while their souls were thus drawn with the cords of a man, and the bands of love, they saw a peculiar beauty in the condescensions of so great a personage and so dear a friend, which inclined them with pleasure to trace his steps, in making themselves the servants of others for his sake, who took upon him the form of a servant, though he were Lord of all.

And ought not these considerations, my brethren, to have a constraining force upon us? Was it for the sake of the apostles alone, that the blessed Jesus stooped so low, and bore so much? Did he not love us, and give himself for us, and was not the news of our salvation contained in those glad tidings which he brought from heaven, which he proclaimed on earth, publishing them with long-continued labour, and at length sealing them with his blood? Have not we our lot amongst his people? nay, I will add, are we not distinguished from most of the rest of them, by his favour, in that he hath committed to our trust his glorious gospel, the important cause that lay so near his heart, the great end of his toils and his sufferings? And where is our gratitude, where is our fidelity, where is our common integrity, if we can forget such engagements, and lose our concern for that gospel, in a mean solicitude about our own applause, or interest, or dominion? I trust, my brethren, it will never so be lost. I am persuaded, through divine grace, there are those amongst us, whose bosoms glow with such undissembled love, that we can truly say, we reckon the title of servants of Christ, and of the church for his sake, a thousand times more honourable than to be called, and to be, the lords of the whole world; that we had rather approve ourselves the faithful interpreters of his laws, than see assembled nations bowing down before us, and with the profoundest submission receiving law at our mouths.

2. The apostles were animated to the conduct we have been reviewing, by a pious zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

They well knew, that the grace of the Father was the original source of all the blessings they received by the interposition of the Son, and their hearts were so subjected and united to God, that they could not fail of being tenderly concerned, that being bought with such a price, and maintained by such a constant emanation of divine favour and bounty, they might glorify God with their bodies and their spirit, which they owned to be the Lord's, by so many important claims.

And they must further infer from the complete all-sufficiency of the divine Being, that the only way whereby we are capable of glorifying him, is by promoting the display of his attributes; which are most nobly illustrated in the perfection and happiness of his rational creatures; especially their final and eternal happiness. It plainly appears from the whole strain of the apostles' writings, that those holy men were deeply penetrated with the views of an invisible world: and as it was their great concern for themselves, that their own souls might be given them for a prey; so sentiments of compassion and humanity, joined with those of piety, to engage them to wish and labour the salvation of others.

They certainly knew, however others might forget it, that every human creature hath in its breast an immortal soul, which must survive not only the dissolution of the body, but the wreck of this lower world; a soul that, by its original constitution, was capable of shining in the image of God, and the glories of paradise, when the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. They were likewise sensible that these precious souls were naturally in a very dangerous state, and by sin stood exposed to everlasting darkness, despair, and ruin. And this appeared to them such a lamentable sight, that they could not but weep over those whose end would so probably be destruction. And when they saw them going on in a gay insensibility of danger, and a proud confidence, on the very borders of hell, it cut them to the heart, and put an eagerness and pathos into the manner of their address, which nothing but such an infinite

concern could have given. They were attempting to recover those out of the snare of the devil, who were led captives by him at his pleasure: to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that instead of meeting all the terrors of his wrath, and sinking into eternal destruction, they might receive the forgiveness of their sins, and an inheritance amongst his sanctified people. And while this was the view in which they regarded them, who can wonder that they did, as it were, travail in birth for their conversion? Who can wonder if it appeared to them even an inhuman thing, to be more solicitous about soothing men's ears, or gaining an influence over men's temporal concerns, than saving their souls? As it would indeed be a more cruel kind of folly, than for a physician to be more careful that his bill were elegantly written, than that the life of his patient should be saved by the suitableness of the prescription.

I must further add, in order to complete the argument, that the apostles well knew, that nothing was so likely to save the perishing souls of men, as the great doctrines of the everlasting gospel; nothing so like to recover them, when fainting and dying, as the vital savour of a Redeemer's name; which is indeed the power of God to the salvation of every one that believeth. This engaged them, in this manner, to preach Christ Jesus the Lord; and I hope, my brethren, we shall never imagine, that our wisdom can find out another more effectual way. I hope we shall never practise so dangerous a complaisance to the unbelievers of the present age, as to wave the gospel, that we may accommodate ourselves to their taste; which if we do, we may indeed preserve the name of virtue, but I fear we shall destroy the thing itself; lose it in our congregations, and probably in our hearts too. For, I confess, it seems to me much more probable, that the doctrines of natural religion alone should be blessed as the means of reforming heathens, who never heard of Christianity, than that they should have much effect upon those who, under the profession of it, slight its most glorious peculiarities; as if the revelation of Jesus were a mere encumbrance, which, while we own it to be true, we might nevertheless forget, without great danger, or much inconvenience. But if we imbibe the spirit of the apostles, and make their conduct the model of ours, we may cheerfully expect that presence of God with us, in consequence of which the great ends of our ministry may be answered, to the reformation of men's lives, and the salvation of their souls.

How glorious a hope! how rich a recompence for all the fatigue, for all the condescension, for all the self-denial, which our office may require! Most forcibly doth St. James express the importance of the thought, if one man be the happy instrument of gaining another to the cause of truth and holiness, let him know, let him pause upon it and reflect, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, an immortal soul! And how much is comprehended in those few words! We are sometimes perhaps ready to envy the opportunity which the great men of the world have to promote the happiness of others, and it is the most generous, and indeed the only rational, view in which riches and power can be desired. But let us remember, my brethren, such is the nature of an immortal soul, that to bring it into the way to eternal life, is a greater good than any merely temporal blessing, which can be conferred upon the greatest number of men for the longest duration in the present world. And it is most certain, that the moment will at length come, when the sum of happiness which hath actually been enjoyed by every particular soul, that we have led into that blessed world, will be greater than what the most uninterrupted peace, liberty, and plenty could have given to the most numerous nations, in a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand years. Let so sublime a thought animate our pursuit, and make us willing to spend and be spent in such a service.

3. The apostles well knew, that by such a conduct as we have now been surveying, their own present and future happiness would be most effectually secured.

They seemed indeed to sacrifice their present interest, and in many important instances they did so; yet surely they found a rich equivalent in the consciousness of such a temper, and a prospect of that reward which would through grace attend it.

The pleasures of gratitude and humanity, are a thousand times superior to that which can arise from gratifying the senses, or even from improvements in science. I hope all that hear me this day, know the delight of serving a friend whom we highly esteem and love; many of us, I question not, do particularly know how agreeable it is to find some opportunity of expressing our cordial sense of those favours, which it is impossible for us fully to repay. Let us judge by that, how delightful it must be to these good men, when their hearts were full of the most lively and penetrating sense of a Redeemer's love, to see themselves in such a situation, as that their whole lives should be spent in serving his interest, and every day of them should do something to promote it.

And the influence which their labours had upon the happiness of mankind, must also add a most delightful relish to them. Our nature is so constituted by the wise and gracious Author of it, that some degrees of pleasure inseparably attend every attempt for the real improvement of any part of his creation, even the meanest. It is pleasant to view

a spot of ground, which from a barren and useless wild has been manured and cultivated, planted and adorned, by human industry, so that it is reduced to a fruitful garden or field; and he who hath laboured to effect it, reviews it with double satisfaction. It is much more delightful to have been instrumental in forming and cultivating the mind, and reducing those who were once little better than savages to discipline and arts, to the improvements and elegances of life, whereby they may as it were be broken into men; but surely the apostles must with incomparably greater satisfaction look round about them, and see whole regions enlightened by the rays which they had diffused; thousands of their fellow-creatures recovered from darkness and ignorance, superstition and vice, and formed to wise, regular, noble sentiments, subjected to God, united to Christ, and conducted into the ways of peace and life by their means. Accordingly, I doubt not but you have often observed in how sublime and pathetic a manner St. Paul expresseth himself on this occasion, in the name of his brethren as well as in his own, in the progress of this epistle. We approve ourselves, says he, the ministers of God, in all the various circumstances through which we pass, in honour and dishonour, treated indeed by the world as deceivers, yet conscious to ourselves that we are true, and the great patrons of truth; as obscure and unknown to a proud and insolent world, who affect to overlook us with sovereign contempt, yet well known, even by the happiest tokens, to those blessed souls who are brought home to God by our means; as dying daily, yet behold we live, through the singular interposition of our great Lord for our preservation; as sorrowful on account of various calamities that surround us, and yet in spirit always rejoicing, because though we appear in the world as poor in these things, yet we are making rich in grace and glory. Blessed leaders in the army of Christ! who would not emulate such a character and state? Who would not wish for your hardships and trials, might his supports and success be proportionable to yours? Such were the pleasures they found in preaching Christ Jesus the Lord; and undoubtedly their generous minds delighted to do it in the condescending manner we have described. To converse with their flock in such a free, easy, obliging way, as their brethren, as their servants for Jesus' sake, on the foot of equal and respectful friendship, suited their taste and their temper much better than all the homage, and all the revenues, which secular power could have given, and secular terror could have extorted.

I only add, in the conclusion of this head, that the apostles were influenced to such a conduct by a regard to their own eternal interest:

That great important concern, which swallowed up all others in their mind, and with which nothing here seemed by any means worthy to be compared. Paul himself did not think it unfit to reflect, and to say, a necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. He well knew, that if such vigilance was expected from a Jewish prophet, that the souls who perished by his neglect should be by God required at his hand, the danger of such a neglect under the Christian dispensation, would be yet greater in proportion to the clearer degree of evidence with which life and immortality was brought to light. He, therefore, and his associates in this important work, made it their care, as himself expresseth it, to watch for souls as those that must give an account, and were exceedingly solicitous, that they might do it with joy and not with grief. They looked on their converts as those who should be their crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord, and their delightful companions in the glories of the heavenly world. And when, conscious that through the divine assistance they had fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept their fidelity, they were humbly bold to look forward with cheerful expectation, as well as desire, to that crown of life which the Lord had laid up for all his faithful servants, that love his appearance. Such may our hopes be, my fathers and brethren, and such our triumphs in the near views of death and eternity. Our days are passing away apace, and no secular powers or advantages can prolong them; nay, perhaps, were we in the number of the richest and greatest of those that call themselves the ministers of Christ, life might run out only so much the sooner, while on the one hand, the baits of luxury, and on the other, the cries of the oppressed, might concur to shorten it. When this scene of vanity is closing, when we are to exchange every ornament for the dress of death, and all the amusements and cares of mortality, for the solemnities of the eternal state; in that awful hour, I say, it will be no grief of heart to us, that we have chosen in all humility to serve Christ and the souls of men, rather than to make our names great, and our families wealthy. And when we come to appear in the presence of that great Redeemer, who hath been witness to all our conduct, and all our designs, we shall really find that we have lost nothing by whatever we have sacrificed to his cause and interest. The applause of thousands is but an empty sound when compared with that of Well done, good and faithful servant; and all the honours and possessions which the greatest princes could bestow, would be lighter than vanity, when laid in the balance with that unfading crown of glory, which every faithful minister may expect, when Christ the chief Shepherd shall appear.

I have dilated so much on these pleasant and copious topics, that I have hardly left myself time.

III. So much as to mention the reflections which

may naturally arise from what we have been hearing. You will easily apprehend they are such as these:

How greatly is the truth of Christianity confirmed by the character of those who were first employed in the publication of it; who gave the greatest evidence that can possibly be imagined of their being entirely devoted to the sacred cause of truth and piety, and expressed, as we have heard, the most disinterested and self-denying zeal in the service of both.

How happy is it for the Christian cause, that these original monuments are still preserved, and that we are not left to form an idea of its ministers merely from the general history of succeeding and distant ages, or by the canons and decrees of the greatest part of ecclesiastical councils; which are commonly drawn up with so different a spirit, that, were we to judge by them alone, charity would have inclined us to hope, that those who called themselves the chief successors of the apostles, had never heard of the character of those holy men; but had rather formed their conduct, and even their maxims too, I will not say by the Jewish, but by the heathen, priesthood.

Nevertheless, let us bless God, that, in the midst of so general a depravation, there have been, in all ages, and particularly in our own, a select remnant, who have not defiled their garments, nor prostituted their sacred character and office to those idols of jealousy, which have been so shamefully erected, even in the house of the Lord. Persons, so far as I can judge, of all denominations, both of established and separate churches, at home and abroad, who have been, and are, in their respective spheres, burning and shining lights; men of God, who, however differing in opinion, in discipline, or in worship, have agreed to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, to bow their hearts and souls to the obedience of his laws, to value the souls committed to their care, serving them in humility and love, candidly excusing the frailties of their brethren, praying, that wherein they were otherwise minded than reason and Scripture directed, that God would, in his own time and way, reveal it unto them; and in the mean time labouring, that whereunto they had already attained, they might walk by the same rule, and might mind the same thing.

Let us daily bow our knees in the most importunate supplications to the God of grace and of peace, that this happy number may be increased; and as he is from time to time laying those in the dust, who were once the joy of our assemblies, and the glory of their profession, let us tenderly feel, let us deeply lament, the desolations of his sanctuary.* And let us earnestly pray, that he would raise up in all the churches a generation of faithful and laborious, serious and spiritual, candid and evangelical, ministers, that instead of the fathers there may be the children, by means of whom a people that are yet to be born may see the salvation of our God in its genuine glories.

And this, in connexion with the subject before us, might also lead us further to reflect, how important a part of an education for the ministry it is, to endeavour to lead young people into the knowledge of this Jesus, whom their office obligeth them to preach and to serve. Polite literature is not by any means to be neglected, nor will it be despised by any but those who know not what it is, yet surely it is not the one thing needful. The Sacred Scriptures are the grand magazine whence the most important, and therefore I think by far the greatest number, of academical lectures are to be drawn. And they who are honoured with a charge of so great importance to the church, should surely be concerned, that those of the rising age, in whose hands this invaluable treasure of the gospel is to be deposited, may not rest in a cold speculative acquaintance, either with the evidences or contents of it; but may feel its vital transforming power, and speak of this great Redeemer as of one on whom they have themselves believed, and whom their own souls do most cordially love.

But I must wave the prosecution of these copious reflections, to conclude with two which are yet more immediately the concern of those who attend the gospel ordinances; and which I would particularly recommend to you, my friends of this society, who are now, through Divine Providence, so well settled with a workman that needs not be ashamed, and one whom you so highly and justly esteem.

Think how solicitous you should be to know and acknowledge Christ Jesus as your Lord.

I know you think it your happiness often to hear of him: O let it not be in vain. Own his authority in your lives as well as your assemblies; or those who have most frequently preached him to you, will be the swiftest and severest witnesses against you in that dreadful day, when all that have not bowed to his sceptre must fall by his sword.

And, to add no more, think also how willing you should be to use the assistance of your ministers, as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Do not neglect to attend on their ministrations, and thereby shut out wisdom and piety at its first

* N.B. This sermon was preached a few days after the death of that great man of God, the truly reverend and excellent Mr. David Jennings

entrance. Do not increase their burthen by any unkind usage, lest, by weakening their spirits, you may injure yourselves, and disable them from doing you that service, in which they are cheerfully spending their lives, though perhaps they apprehend they are thereby shortening them.

And, once more, be not unwilling to use a proper freedom with them in your religious concerns. Officiously to pry into the secrets of families and persons, is a meanness which a generous man will scorn; and particularly to know them is a burthen, and often a snare too, which a wise man will gladly decline: but some knowledge of your spiritual state and experience is necessary to our knowing how to address you, and to address God on your account. Nor can you expect such suitable assistance from your spiritual physicians, as might otherwise be hoped for, if you will not communicate to them some particulars of your complaints.

On the whole, my dearly beloved, fulfil you our joy, and let it be your great care so to receive our message, and so to improve it, that it may be the delight of our souls now to proclaim the honours of our Redeemer amongst you, as your servants for Jesus' sake, and that the more tenderly we love you, the more abundant satisfaction we may find in our present labours, and our future account. Amen.

A CHARGE,

Delivered at St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr Jacob Jennings; on August 12th, 1742.

My dear friend and brother,

I doubt not but your own sagacity has prevented me in observing, that the discourse we have been just now hearing is in effect a charge, though with great dexterity couched under the form of a popular address. Your general work has been well represented to you, and you have been instructed as to the authority by which you are to act in it, the subject on which you are chiefly to insist, and the end which you are to pursue. The particular offices in which you are to endeavour to serve Christ, in serving the souls of men, have also been happily touched upon; and the grand arguments which should engage you to attend this service, with diligence, resolution, and delight, have been powerfully suggested. It would therefore be easy for me to go over all the most natural branches of it, in an application of it to you, by which I might well answer the whole purpose of the province particularly assigned to me, in the work of this day. But lest by such a repetition I should seem unseasonably sparing of my own labour, as well as a sense of my inability to express these things in a more agreeable manner than that in which they have already been handled, I shall now attempt a method something different; only observing, that the hints I am now to address to you will appear with some peculiar advantage, when considered in their connexion with the preceding discourse.

I am willing to believe, Sir, that in consequence of what my reverend brother has been laying before you, your heart is now glowing with a vigorous yet humble resolution, that, in the divine strength, you will emulate the character and conduct of the great apostle, and will preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and that you will be ready to approve yourself the servant, the lowly, affectionate servant, of the meanest of your brethren for his sake. I will suppose your inquiry to be, How may I serve this great Master in the most acceptable and successful manner? How may I conduct myself, so as another day to hear him saying to me, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord? I know not how to answer such an inquiry better, in a few words, than to remind you of another lively and proper expression of the same apostle St. Paul, when, speaking of the blessed God, he says, I serve him with my spirit in the gospel of his Son. You serve God in the same Gospel. I hope it will indeed be the same. God forbid we should any of us introduce any other. Labour therefore to do it *with your spirit*, with all the united powers of your soul, and labour at all times to keep your spirit in a proper situation for it.

For your assistance in this respect, I shall make it my present business to show you, as well as I can, what must be the situation and temper of that spirit, which would, in the happiest manner, serve Christ in the great work you have this day undertaken. This will give me an opportunity of suggesting hints which will have their use, not in this or that particular respect alone, but in every cir-

cumstance through which you pass, and in every service to which you are called out, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished and prepared to every work. Nor can I think of any thing which appears to me a more proper supplement to the many particular advices I have given you, with respect to your business as a preacher and a pastor, in those academical lectures on that subject which you have heard from me, and the hints of which are still in your hand. Permit me now to remind you, that they come recommended to you by a very material circumstance, as several important passages in them were taken from the lectures of my honoured tutor, your reverend and worthy father; whose name will long be precious in the churches, and my relation to whom I must always esteem as, under God, one of the greatest blessings of my life. You will no doubt frequently review them, and pardon me if I say, you will in effect hear two fathers speaking in them, with a united voice; if the most endearing affection, and the most intimate converse, even from your infant years, can give me a title to that tender name.

If you desire to serve Christ with your spirit in his gospel, I confess you undertake a difficult task. So difficult, that were there not a much better spirit than our own, in the strength of which we attempt it, even the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ himself, I know not how any of us could encourage our younger brethren, or how we could find any encouragement ourselves, in the midst of so many infirmities, temptations, and oppositions. But at once exhorting you, my dear son, to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and praying, as the apostle expresses it, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with your spirit, I proceed to give you some hints, as to that frame and temper in which it must be your business and mine to preserve our spirits, if we desire they may be fit for so great a service. And my younger brethren who hear me this day, of which there is so large an appearance, will, I hope, consider a great deal of what is now to be said, as their own concern, as well as ours, and lay it up in their memories, as against their own ordination day. Not to say how much every preacher, and every private Christian, is obliged, on the common principles of religion, to cultivate the main branches of the temper I am to recommend. Now, with respect to this, I may indeed say, as Solomon does, Keep thine heart with all keeping; bestow the utmost attention upon it, and let every thing be done that can be imagined, with any appearance of propriety, in subserviency to so great an end. May it be your constant care, and the grand, noble point of your ambition, to have a mind as well ordered as possible. So that no one irregular affection may be admitted or encouraged, no one good affection wanting or languid. But the general exhortation may further be illustrated in such particulars as these which I shall touch upon, not as exhausting the subject, but as containing some of the most material instances of watchfulness and duty, to which it may lead.

Be solicitous, my dear friend, if you would serve God with your spirit in the gospel of his Son, that your spirit be habitually devout—and humble,—that it be elevated and free,—that it be attentive and active,—that it be courageous and resolute,—that it be tender and gentle.

1, 2. Let it be your care that your spirit be evangelically devout; that it be set upon God, upon God in Christ. He is your Master, and you are always in his sight; labour to act as continually in it. Converse much with him, and you will love him the more, and, by a very natural consequence, you will serve him the better. Labour after the knowledge of the Divine Being, so far as feeble mortals can attain it: and see to it that it be a practical knowledge, affecting your heart with those powerful emotions of reverence and love, due to the great Father of the world, and to your God and Father in Christ. Know and honour him under the various views in which he appears by the light of nature and revelation, realizing to your own mind continually, his existence and his presence. "O my soul, there is a God, and such a God as I discourse of to others: and he is this day, this moment, present with me, and observing what regard I will show him, and what effect all the discoveries he has made of his greatness and goodness will have upon my mind and my life!"

Let this engage you to make devotion a considerable part of your business, and to attend to it as such. You will often be speaking to God, in the name and presence of others; and a regard to your own reputation will engage you then to address him in a solemn, reverend, composed, and affectionate manner.

It will engage you to awaken and regulate your thoughts, while employed in social prayer, which indeed seems to me by far the most difficult part of our public work, as performed in such assemblies as ours. But surely that minister has great reason to suspect the integrity of his own heart, that can pray with some copiousness, affection, and pleasure with others, and in secret can only find in his heart to run over a few hasty, inattentive, and customary words, in such a manner as he would be ashamed to do, if any one of his fellow-creatures was present. Guard against this, my dear brother; and especially guard against it in the evening, when the fatigues arising from the labour of the day may expose you to the peculiar danger of it. And for that purpose take time to retire, if possible, before the fatigue becomes too great and sensible, that there may be flame for the evening sacrifice.

Be assured, that as prayer is the food and breath of all practical religion, if I may be allowed the expression, so secret prayer in particular is of vast importance; insomuch, that I verily believe, that if a man were to keep a particular and accurate journal of his own heart but for one month, he would find as real and exact a correspondency between the temper of his soul at seasons of secret devotion, and in other parts of his life, as we find between the changes of the barometer and of the weather.

To furnish out matter for prayer, let meditation be called in to your assistance; and let the word of God, above all, be the subject of your meditation. You know it is placed among the most distinguishing characters of a good man, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Various matter of prayer may by this means be suggested, and the soul brought into a proper frame for pouring out itself before God. Observe in what channel the devotion of David and Asaph ran in the Old Testament, and that of Paul, John, and the other apostles, under the New, and, above all, that of our great Lord; and labour, with allowances for the difference of circumstances, to have your heart affected with divine things, as theirs seem to have been.

Labour not only to breathe out this temper before God in the seasons of solemn devout retirement, for which you will do well to have your hours and your plan, to be, if possible, strictly and resolutely observed, but also endeavour to carry it along with you into the world: and be lifting up your heart to God, in many of those little vacancies of time which often hang on the hands even of the busiest of mankind, but might this way be profitably employed. Why should you, for several hours together, be in the presence of such a Master, and such a Friend, without speaking one word to him? Or why should any of his most affectionate servants, in former ages, have addressed him with a devotion warmer and more constant than yours? If this advice be observed, you will also be glad to have an occasional errand to the throne of grace, will be heartily glad to sweeten the hours of friendly conversation, by making them subservient to communion with God. It will glad you often to conclude your visits with prayer, and cheerfully to come into any scheme of seeking God in a more solemn and express manner, on any particular emergencies that may arise relating to yourself and friends; as also to encourage what we commonly call private meetings for social prayer at stated times, which, so far as I can judge, greatly promote a minister's usefulness, and which are generally kept up with the greater spirit, and the best order, when he accustoms himself to be often present at them.

But permit me, Sir, before I dismiss this head, to remind you, that it is evangelical devotion I am recommending; a devotion in which a due regard is habitually maintained, to the love and grace of Christ, and to the influence of his good Spirit. Indeed one would think, if a man believed the gospel, his devotions should naturally and unavoidably take this turn. Would to God we find it so; nevertheless this I may confidently say, so far as reason and experience can justify a confidence in saying any thing, that very much will depend upon turning our thoughts into the channel to which the gospel has directed them, and viewing things in the light in which that has placed them. No devotion so sweet, and none so lasting, as that which is thus guided and animated. Remember it is the Gospel in which you are serving him; and you can never serve him so effectually, as by a close and constant attendance to it. Keep your heart therefore full of those impressions, which it will naturally introduce into an attentive mind. Think what a friend the blessed Jesus has been to you, and how much you are, and must for ever be, indebted to his life and death, his resurrection and ascension, his guardianship and intercession. And when this view grows daily familiar to your own soul, your heart will teach your mouth, and add this best kind of knowledge to your lips. So that you will be in no danger of starving or destroying the souls of your hearers, as I fear many who should be ministers of the gospel do, by a criminal and fatal silence upon these heads: and this will happily influence you to all humility of spirit in the service of Christ; for nothing has so great a tendency to humble the soul, as the sight and converse of the blessed and glorious, Jehovah, in whose presence we are less than nothing, and vanity; especially when we consider ourselves as introduced to him by the blood of Christ, and animated by his own Spirit, in every thing which is pleasing, in every thing which is not offensive, to him. Pride, my dear brother, is one of the most subtle, and one of the most dangerous enemies that you will encounter with, in the whole course of your Christian and ministerial warfare. It is at once astonishing and grievous, to think under how many specious forms it insinuates itself into the very sanctuary of God, and hides itself, if I may be allowed the expression, even under the vestments of those who serve at his altar; indeed frustrating its own most darling end, and exposing them at once to the displeasure of God, and, to what they seem yet more to fear, the contempt of men. You must therefore continually and constantly guard against it; and make it one of the chief cares of your life, not only to suppress its growth, but to root it out of your soul.

If you would be honourable in the sight of the Lord whom you serve, you must be humble, and

that humility must be seated, not merely in the external behaviour but in the heart. A small degree of common sense may be sufficient to preserve a man from the ridiculous folly of making encomiums upon himself, and his own performances; or from the madness of putting on imperious airs in common life, which is indeed no other than bespeaking the scorn and aversion of all about us. I had almost said, a manly pride will set a minister above these things, and teach him to curb every appearance of them. But our humility should dwell in our very souls; and I am well persuaded, the greatest and the best of men may find enough in themselves to nourish it from day to day. When I think, for instance, what the man and the minister, in the most perfect view of his character, ought to be, in comparison with what I myself am; when I look about on all the negligences and irregularities of my life; when I look in especially on all the folly and corruption of my heart; and further recollect, that all these things are open to the eyes of God, who sees what I am, and what I have done, in comparison with what I should have been, and should have done, in comparison to what I might have been, and might have done, for his glory, and the good of mankind, if all my capacities, and all my opportunities, had been improved to the highest possible degree; what reason do I find for the deepest abasement in the divine presence! what reason to abhor, rather than applaud, myself; to hide my head with conscious blushes, rather than to lift it up in a haughty supercilious manner, as if I had whereof to glory before God or man! It is not a freedom from gross matter of reproach among men, no, nor some distinguishing share of genius, of learning, of eloquence, of reputation and popularity, that will raise a man's esteem for himself, when such views as these are made familiar to the mind. He will apprehend it to be, at least a supposable, and indeed a very probable, case, that many who, in these things, and in the eye of the world, are his inferiors, may on account of their better temper and conduct be in the eyes of God far superior to him; and may be fitted for much more distinguished honours in that world which is to fix our rank for ever: and we shall certainly find it very much for our own ease and comfort in life, thus to esteem others better than ourselves, in honour preferring one another. When we do not look upon any distinguishing regards as our due, if we miss them we shall not be much disappointed, and if they meet us, we shall think ourselves obliged to the world for its kind partiality in our favour; and behave so much the more humbly, while we endeavour indeed to be, what they are so kind as to think we are: and thus, in more senses than one, it will be prudent for him, who would be the greatest, to be the least, and servant of all. Our blessed Redeemer is such an example of this amiable temper, that nothing in the world illustrates the natural pride and corruption of the human heart more, than that this lesson is so little learnt and practised, by those who call themselves his disciples, and even his ministers.

3. Let it be your concern to preserve a due freedom and elevation of spirit. I join these together, as being nearly of a kin, and the latter only a superior degree of the former. And therefore when I mention liberty of mind, you will apprehend I intend not only or chiefly what the world calls freedom of sentiment. You have long since been taught to indulge that, and have I hope taken your religion from the word of God, and not from any human system or composition whatever. Go on to act upon this maxim. I dare not say, like St. Paul, Continue in the things thou hast learnt and been assured of by me, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. It rather becomes me to say, Examine all I have taught you, and search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so or no. You will not, I am persuaded, run the matter to extremes, and imagine, like some half-thinkers, that liberty consists in boldly daring to decide against received opinions, as soon as some new difficulties are discerned; and confidently venting raw and undigested notions, however noxious, without fearing any of the consequences. And while you guard against this, I am not so conscious of the weakness of any cause in which I am embarked, as to fear it should be brought to the test of strict inquiry. But this inquiry, how well soever guarded and regulated, is not the whole that I mean by freedom. I intend something much nobler and greater; something which many who boast loudly of their liberty are entirely ignorant of. I mean a freedom from all undue attachments to every thing that would debase and enslave the mind, and render a man the ignominious servant of corruption.

If Paul thought it proper to say to Timothy, Keep thyself pure, and flee youthful lusts, the admonition cannot be unseasonable to any who are early in life entering on the ministry. And indeed, if after so many years spent in the apostolic office, he represented it as a daily labour of his life, to keep under his body, and bring it under subjection; we may reasonably conclude, that the most advanced servants of Christ had need to be cautious on this head; had need, while they dwell in an animal body, to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation. Especially considering that some of the excesses to which unguarded appetite may betray a man, are of such a nature, as to fix a lasting stain upon his character. A minister especially may, in one single hour, incur a reproach, which past and future years of the strictest temperance shall not be able to avert, remove, or efface. Yet I cannot but say,

that to a person in whom the habits of a temperate and regular life are formed, I apprehend the passions to be much more dangerous enemies than the appetites; and especially those excesses of the passions, which are generally, among virtuous and worthy men, reckoned weak rather than infamous. By these has many a wise and good man been miserably enslaved, and fallen far beneath the dignity of his character and office; not to mention the unhappy consequences they have often drawn after them, with respect to the ease and comfort of future life.

Wisdom is not indeed intended to root out the passions, but she seldom dwells in the heart in which they are suffered to grow wild. They turn the soul into a desert, and render it a disagreeable abode to so divine a guest; or rather, to speak in language more becoming a Christian divine, the blessed Spirit of God is by this means driven away, and it is impossible to say how much the evil spirit may sometimes do, in his absence, to irritate our minds, and drive them into the most fatal extremes. It must therefore be of great importance to keep a resolute guard on these turbulent subjects, and to check the first rising of sedition among them; lest they gather strength by insensible degrees, and break out into such open rebellion, as to depose reason and religion from the throne, reducing the soul into a state of anarchy; or rather, making its noble rational powers the slaves of those whom they were formed to command.

To be secure from all the danger, and all the appearances, of so great an evil, let it be your care, Sir, to maintain a becoming elevation of spirit, and to fill your mind with sublime ideas, principles, and views. This the Christian religion naturally suggests to all its votaries, and above all to its ministers. Think, what a Master you serve, and in what a work you are engaged! Think how little all the titles which the princes of this world can give must appear, when compared with that of the minister of Jesus, and a servant of God in the salvation of souls. Think how low the employments of secular life are, even those in which the nobles and kings of the earth are engaged, in comparison with yours. In this respect, it is good to magnify our office; not as if it gave us any the least power to tyrannize over our brethren, to invade their liberty of thinking, or of acting, or to command their properties in any degree. Secular power seems too inconsiderable a thing for our Master to give to servants, whom he has set so high in his family, and intends for a charge so much greater and more important, in which the exercise of that would necessarily interrupt them. We are appointed to be, in subordination to Christ, the friends, the guardians, the deliverers of souls; and if our labour succeeds, the effect is everlasting. All the productions of human art and industry shall perish; the palaces and citadels which it raises shall moulder back to dust, and be levelled with the earth; the mightiest nations, whose interests divide the globe, shall soon be blended together, and distinguished no more. But every soul whom we recover to Christ and to holiness, will be an everlasting monument of the power of divine grace, and of our fidelity to our Master's service; will be an honour and delight to us, ten thousand thousand thousand years after the earth itself has been removed out of its place. Think and act like one that has such grand schemes in view; like one who is continually realizing to himself the presence of God, and the prospect of immortality, and has learnt by them not an affected and counterfeited, but a real, contempt for the pleasures and interests of this perishing state; like one who has learnt heartily to pity those whom mistaken mortals imagine the objects of congratulation, or of envy.

4. Let it be your constant care to keep your spirit attentive and active.

The great employments and views in which you are engaged, should, methinks, effectually engage you to this. Since the work is so grand, and to be carried on in the midst of so much opposition, as you well know is to be expected from the indispositions and corruptions of our own hearts, and the influence of so subtle and so powerful an enemy as the prince of darkness is, you will naturally apprehend that many difficulties and obstructions will arise; so that you had need exercise an habitual prudence, both to guard against temptations, and to seize opportunities; precious but transient opportunities, which perhaps, if they are once suffered to slip by, may never return. "Bright as the heavenly world appears to my view and my hopes," says an eminent Christian in one of his letters, "I am sometimes afraid of going thither, till I have done something considerable for the service of Christ upon earth." Methinks such a thought as this, while the uncertainty of human life is remembered, should engage us to a watchfulness of soul, should lead us every hour to recollect, "What can I do for my great and glorious Master? What can I do for him immediately? Supposing this should be the very last day I have to spend in his service, how may he find me employed in a manner that will be most acceptable to him?"

Labour, in this view, to do good every day, and every day to do as much good as possible; and if any thing can conveniently be done to-day, defer it not, by any means, till to-morrow. To-morrow is God's, and not yours; and if it come, and find you here in a capacity of service, it will so far take thought for the things of itself, that whatever you can do to-day, there will be business enough remain, for that and for the next day too, and for

all the days and hours God shall assign you. Therefore, Sir, guard not only against a slothful and inactive temper, but against unnecessary delay. Here are certain duties so apparently great and important, that Satan himself has not the assurance so much as to propose it to us, that we should come to a resolution that we will always omit them. All he will demand is, that you would this day wait for a more convenient opportunity, and continue waiting to-morrow, and so on for one day more, till he can find you no more excuse for further procrastination. And it is by this artifice, palpable as it is, that he enervates the usefulness of the greater part of Christians; that he makes their life but a shadow of what it might be, and sinks them into so insignificant a kind of being, that one would imagine a rational soul should be continually upbraiding itself with its own importance, while its noble furniture and capacity is employed to such low purposes; and instead of acting, is only dreaming first of one vanity, and then of another; always intending to be wise and useful hereafter, but not allowing itself so much as to say when. I have always observed, that those tradesmen who are most solicitous to execute their orders immediately, give the greatest satisfaction to others, and generally improve their own stock best. But alas, the children of this world are, in this respect, and almost every other, wiser than the children of light. I would only add, that as growing years will naturally impair the activity of the spirits, it will be your wisdom, while you are young, to accustom yourself to vigour and despatch, that so the force of habit in riper years may be some equivalent for the want of the vivacity which will then, in the course of nature, be diminished. And I really think activity and cheerfulness to be so nearly allied, that one can hardly take a more effectual method to secure the latter, than to cultivate the former. Especially when, as in the present instance, it is employed to sow the seed of an immortal harvest, which will be rich and glorious in proportion to our present diligence and zeal.

5. In order to this activity, it will be necessary to see to it, that your spirit is maintained in a courageous and a resolute temper.

The difficulty and obstructions which I hinted under the former head will render this necessary, and necessary in proportion to your diligence: just as the resistance of any dense fluid, through which a body is moved, acts more forcibly, in proportion to the velocity with which the body is impelled. You must therefore lay your account thus; the ministry is not an easy employment; it will not always go on smoothly; many entanglements will arise, even from the pleasantness of our circumstances, from the kindness of our friends, many of whose importunities we must break through, if we desire to improve our time well, and to pursue the business in which we are engaged; and in the execution of some part of it, other and greater difficulties must be expected. It is possible you may not be able faithfully to discharge your duty, without greatly disobliging some whom you respect and love; some on whom your temporal circumstances may very much depend. Perhaps you may be obliged, in conscience, to bear a public testimony against their *errors*, or against their irregularities, and it may be against both, as they are frequent companions: or at least you may be obliged plainly to admonish them in private, and expostulate with them in a manner that they may not be disposed to bear; even after all the most prudent address on your side, to make it as inoffensive as is consistent with fidelity. Nor is it impossible, that in consequence of some distant and unforeseen change in public affairs, you may be called forth even to martyrdom, and obliged either to resist to blood, or to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. An heroic resolution must therefore be put on, that in the strength of Christ you will be faithful to the death; that your Master may be pleased, whoever is displeased, and that your crown of glory may be secure, whatever else is lost. And it will be the part of Christian prudence sometimes to exercise a voluntary self-denial, in smaller matters, that it may become easier to you in circumstances of considerable difficulty, importance, and necessity. But while you are setting your face like a flint in the midst of all the most violent and forcible opposition,

6. Let this courage and resolution be tempered with a becoming degree of tenderness and gentleness.

Labour to preserve your mind continually under the influences of benevolence and love. Remember you serve the most benevolent of masters, in the most benevolent of works. The whole business of your life is to do good; and therefore, to make that business easy, cultivate love; for the labours of love are easy labours, and are indeed no other than their own reward.

Indulge too a continued sensibility of heart. Be willing to look upon the sorrows of others, and to feel them, and live continually mindful of the common tie of brotherhood and of kind. Look upon the human family as one, and then do all you can to make it an orderly and happy family. Especially cultivate love and compassion to the souls of men. Seriously think what an immortal soul is, and to what extreme danger the souls of multitudes are exposed. Think also in how languid a state religion is, so far as actions can discover it, in the souls of many, concerning whom, charity would hope that they are not quite estranged from all the principles of the divine life; and long earnestly to bring them into a more healthful state, and to see them lively and active.

Under this head let me recommend to you a tender love for the rising generation, and particularly for little children, dear amiable creatures, who, one would think, should need no advocate to plead their cause, with a person of a humane and generous disposition. Christ was an example of condescending regard to them, and he certainly meant to teach it to us. Learn this meekness and lowliness from him. Converse with them, instruct them, and as you are often praying for them, be sometimes praying with them too; and for that purpose appoint a number of them at proper seasons to attend you, and then, when you have talked with them in a free and affectionate manner about the things of religion, pray over them, in such easy natural language as they are most likely to understand, and recommend them to God with that tenderness of heart which their presence will naturally inspire.

I have often observed numbers of them melt into tears upon this occasion; and when that is the case, it is a secret encouragement to hope, that even while we are praying, God hears. And would parents sometimes try the same method with their children, and appoint but a few minutes every week to pray with them alone, they might find, as to my certain knowledge some pious parents have done, not only that it had a good tendency to compose and soften the temper of those little creatures, but possibly, in some instances, to give such a turn to the mind of those grown up to some maturity, as might be carried through the remainder of life; and fixed upon, as the probable season from whence their conversion to God might take its first rise.

While I am on this head, I must exhort you also, to condescend to the least and weakest, as well as the youngest. Remember you can never stoop so low to others, as Christ has stooped to you; and that, when you have done all, your great Master will exceed you in condescension, as much as he does in glory.

Let this tenderness also engage you to enter into the sorrows of others. Who, says St. Paul, is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? i. e. feel fire, as it were, kindled in my bosom, which makes me restless till I have done all I conveniently can to make him easy. You, Sir, must accustom yourself to bear the burthens of others, that you may fulfil the law of Christ, and with greater advantage teach others to fulfil it. You must not shun the cottages of the poor, or the chambers of the languishing; nor must your ear be so intent on the more pleasing sounds, as to turn away from the sighs and groans of the distressed. You must often be visiting your brethren, that you may see how they do; and their personal or domestic afflictions must be tenderly weighed, in their various circumstances, that your heart may feel its part, and so prompt you to do all you can, if possible, to remove them; or if that be impracticable, as it often will be, at least to alleviate them; and sometimes the sight and conversation of a Christian friend does so much to alleviate them, that one would imagine so cheap a charity should not be denied. Let not our Master say, in reference to any of his servants, I was sick and ye visited me not; I was confined and ye did not come unto me. You will, I hope, be ready, according to your ability, to relieve the necessitous: you will also, I hope, improve your interest among your Christian friends, to procure that relief which you cannot immediately give; and be assured that, while thus employed, you are performing a kind action toward the rich and the prosperous, many of whom are so ready to forget the indigent and afflicted, that when one thinks upon the great day of account, one is ready, as the world generally appears, to congratulate the poor, and to tremble for the rich. Let benevolence to both, therefore, remind you of St. Paul's words to Timothy, Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.

And before I close this head, I must also beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that you endeavour to exercise a meek and gentle temper under contradiction and opposition. I hope and believe you will meet with very little of this sort, from so kind, so generous, and so obliging a people, as that to which you have the happiness of being related: yet there is no soil so good, but some root of bitterness may spring up in it, and if not among your own people, and among your nearest brethren in the ministry, yet among others injuries may arise; but if you are reviled, revile not again; if you are injured, let forgiveness be all your revenge; for it is all Christianity allows, and all that it is good for us to take. And if you should, which is always too supposable a case, be called out to combat with error and immorality, venture to do it in the spirit of meekness. It is the method which the God of truth and holiness has taught us. The servant of the Lord, says the apostle, must not strive, but must be gentle towards all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance. We must be cautious lest the old serpent find out a way of brooding over our hearts, and diffuse his venom there, while we mistake the fermentation it occasions to be only a warmth of zeal for Christ, and so do the work of his enemy in his name. I cannot, for my part, apprehend satire to be an ordinance of Christ, at least I believe he will be more ready to excuse those who

have erred on the tender than on the severe extreme. The knowledge I have had of your natural disposition, prevents my enlarging on this head, which, with regard to you alone, it might not here have been material to mention: nevertheless it is a sin that easily besets young divines, who, as I suppose, with their wits and passions warm about them, have had the chief hand in bringing theological fury into a proverb. As for you, Sir, whatever personal ill usage you may meet with in life, be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good; and trust in him who has given you the command, to bear you harmless while you are careful to observe it. Goodness will, on the whole, not only be safe, but victorious; and the wisdom of this and all the other rules of our great Master, will be demonstrated, not so much by debate, as by experience. Go on, therefore, my dear friend and brother, not only in this respect, but in all others, to conduct your spirit by these, and you will find them your ornament and defence. The satisfaction of a well governed, and of an acceptable and successful, ministry, will infinitely over-balance all the pains you can take with your spirit, to keep it in such a temper. God will approve the effect of his Holy Spirit's agency on your heart; and when I have said you will be the object of his approbation and delight, it is little to say the happy fruits of this care, which will appear in the sight of your fellow-creatures, will entitle you to their veneration and affection, and gain a degree of both, which neither the exalted stations, the most flourishing circumstances, or the most extensive genius and learning, could possibly secure in the neglect of these things. And as there is no room to doubt but divine grace will bless your labours, while conducted on such principles, you will be continually laying up in store new treasures, to be possessed in the celestial world, among multitudes whom God will make you an instrument of bringing on into the way to it, or of conducting in those peaceful and blissful paths.

I conclude with exhorting you, my friends of this congregation, to continue your affectionate regards to my dear brother, who has now commenced a more intimate relation to you than before, and is become your pastor. Never give him reason to repent that he is so, and that he has preferred you to other congregations, who would gladly have engaged his settlement among them. Encourage his valuable labours by your constant attendance, and by your friendly care for his support: above all, endeavour to improve in religion by his means. I am well satisfied that he seeks not yours but you, and will think he lives indeed, if you stand fast in the Lord. You will not, I persuade myself, grieve him by any personal unkindness: God grant that none of you may distress his soul by undoing your own! God grant that none of you may send him back to his great Master with lamentation, on account of your refusing to accept of that message of pardon and life he brings! I do indeed hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, and conclude with my hearty prayer, that he may rejoice in every soul of you in the day of the Lord, that he has not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Amen.

A CHARGE,

Delivered at Norwich, at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr Abraham Tozer; on June 20th, 1745

My dear brother,

When I consider the rational and edifying manner in which the solemnities of ordination days amongst us are adjusted and conducted, and recollect what I hope I may justly call the various and delightful tokens of the divine presence in our assemblies on such occasions, I cannot but esteem it my happiness to have been an attendant on so many of them. My memory goes back with joy to many former years, in each of which Providence has given me, in one part of our country or another, to see young ministers, who have a good report of all men, and of the truth itself, after having approved themselves to Christian societies, generally by some considerable series of probationary labours, unanimously chosen by the respective churches, and invited to the pastoral office over them without one dissenting voice. With delight have I heard their faithful and affectionate testimony to the great truths of the gospel, in judicious summaries of the Christian religion, drawn up by them in such expressions as they freely chose, without the imposition of human

forms; summaries which, in this connexion, I must acknowledge to have been in the number of the most affecting and edifying public discourses. If I have ever known the spirit of prayer poured forth, as in a kind of celestial torrent, to add at once dignity, sanctity, and transport to our assemblies, it has been on such occasions; and the exhortations of my brethren in their sermons and charges, have often been the means of humbling, of melting, and of animating my soul.

The present pleasure attending these sacred hours, the religious improvement received from what has passed in them, the cheering prospect which they give relating to the church in future years, and even in generations yet to come, do all concur to demand my thankfulness, that I have so often on such seasons been called to go with the multitude to the house of God. But I will freely own, the enjoyment has often been abated by the obligation I have been under to officiate, not only in some public work, but especially in the part which is now devolved upon me. Nor should I, after having delivered so many charges, as well as opened my heart so fully to you, dear Sir, in a more private manner, on almost every subject relating to the ministry, know how to set myself with any spirit to what must be in a great measure a repetition of former things; if I did not recollect, that what is immediately addressed to one's self, in the midst of such peculiar solemnities, may have some singular weight, beyond what the same thing would have in a more private address, or if thus publicly offered to another person. And therefore I persuade myself, you will hear me with all attention and regard, while I give a little vent to the fulness of my heart, in such fraternal congratulations, admonitions, and encouragements, as may suit the present occasion, and may, by the divine blessing, be of some service to you, and my other beloved and honoured brethren, who are sharing in the honours, the labours, and the burthens of this evangelical ministry, to the full exercise of which you have now been solemnly called and set apart.

I. Let me most cordially and affectionately congratulate you, my dear brother, that you have now been thus publicly called and devoted to the ministerial and pastoral office.

Paul esteemed it matter of most joyful reflection, when he said, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, that he hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. And I thank him from my soul, as the great head of the church, that he is still raising a succession of those who are to bear it, and that you, dear Sir, are numbered among them. I most heartily congratulate you on the honour,—the pleasure,—and the usefulness, of that station of life, on which you now enter.

1. I congratulate you on the honour of your office. For with whatever contempt ignorant and profane men may treat it, it is highly honourable in its simplest forms, and needs none of the external ornaments which men can hang about it, to render it so. If it be honourable to be (though confessedly in a lower sense than the title was applicable to the apostles) an ambassador of Christ, and a man of God, you have that honour. If it be honourable to sustain the highest trust that can, in the methods of common providence, be reposed in mortal man, even to have the glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to our charge, and to be made guardians of souls which are to exist for ever; if it be honourable to bear an office which was sanctified by Christ, who himself bore it, and by bearing it has dignified it for ever; an office, which is mentioned in the sacred oracles as the great gift of Christ to his church; as the immediate, though not the ultimate, end of the most visible and extraordinary effusion of his Spirit: for when he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, he gave gifts unto men; and distributed the royal donative, giving first apostles, then prophets, then evangelists, then pastors and teachers; that by it holy men might be perfectly fitted for the work of the ministry, that so the body of Christ (that is, his whole church) might be edified, or built up:* —rejoice, that your name is now (as it were) inserted in the catalogue of these his servants, and reflect frequently on the honour: not to be exalted above measure, but to be awakened and animated to a dignity and sanctity of behaviour correspondent to it.

2. Let me also congratulate you on the pleasures of that office on which you are entered.

For pleasures mingle themselves amidst all its labours and difficulties, all its reproaches and its persecutions; yea, when duly executed, it is a series of pleasures. Pleasures will meet you in your secret retirements, they will attend you here in the house of your God; they will follow you to the house of your friends; they will crown all your days, and above all, your sabbaths: and these, rational, pure, sublime pleasures, which the *man* may approve, the *Christian* relish, and which, did *angels* dwell in human flesh, they surely would pursue.

Must it not necessarily be pleasant to a devout heart, (and God forbid that any other should here be in question!) to give itself up in secret to the contemplation of divine things, to search the rich mines of Scripture, to investigate the glorious mysteries with which they are pregnant, and which angels stoop down that they may look into! to compare one part of the sacred oracles with another, that each may be illustrated by the comparison * to

* This verse I think the original words will [illegible]

discover, I will not say new doctrines of importance, (for I persuade myself God has not left his Christian church to learn them in these last days,) but new illustrations of the great and acknowledged truths of the gospel, new beauties in the arrangement and expressions of particular texts, new methods of touching the hearts of men, by truths already familiar to their ear?

What can be more delightful also, than to rise up to lead the public devotions of a worshipping assembly? to spread before the blessed God, in their name, and our own, prayers and supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings? to remind them of the divine mercy? to proclaim among them the everlasting gospel, animated with a secret hope, (while meditating in private, while speaking in the assembly,) that by the divine blessing, the knowledge and love of God in a Redeemer may be shed abroad on some ignorant and wretched soul, hitherto destitute of it; and in many other instances, that truly Christian sentiments may be kept alive in hearts that have already received them, and be transmitted from the present to the next generation!

Nor can any subjects of conversation administer a nobler delight in the houses of your friends, than those which will naturally fall before you, as a minister. For if religion add so much sweetness and endearment to friendship, when contracted between persons of the most private characters, it must much more do it in such instances; where past ministerial services may be recollected, where the fruits of them may be made apparent, and the man of God more abundantly furnished for the future discharge of his office, in the most suitable, and therefore the most edifying, manner. Which naturally leads me,

3. To congratulate you on that prospect of usefulness, which this happy day may open upon you.

It is true, that how well soever we may be furnished for the ministry, and how agreeably soever we are placed in it, we must not hope, that our success will be universal; hardly can we flatter ourselves, that it will be general. What are we better than our fathers, or how comparable to our Master, that we should never complain with them, and even with him, that we labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought? Yet we can ourselves witness, from what we have seen, and from what we have felt, the blessing that hath attended the ministry of others. And I trust, that even those of us, who are least advanced in life, least experienced in the work, have already been favoured with some seals of our ministry, some who are as letters of recommendation, written as it were by the hand of Christ himself; and that you, Sir, will be thus honoured. O that it might be abundantly! Yes, I trust, God will give you to convert many. And if it were but one, who can express the happiness of saving one soul from death, of conducting one immortal creature to life and glory everlasting!

You will also, I doubt not, edify many by every public prayer you offer, and by every sermon you preach. Your words, proceeding from your own heart, will reach the hearts of others, and rekindle the languishing flame of devotion. Every virtue and every grace will, I hope, flourish under your cultivation; while you strengthen, with renewed exhortations, every good resolution already formed: and the rising generation, growing up under your care, in concurrence with that of pious parents whom you animate to the important charge of their education, will, by insensible degrees, be furnished with the knowledge of religion, and brought, not only to the speculation, but to the sentiments and practice, of it. So that while others have, it may be, their bags, their houses, their furniture, and their fields, to show as the effect of their labours; you will have captives of Satan, rescued from his tyranny, adopted into the family of God, and honoured with the privileges of his children, crowding his courts, and surrounding his table, as the infinitely more valuable fruits of yours. You will see the character of Christians brightening from sabbath to sabbath, under your evangelical and practical instructions; their blemishes wearing out, and their graces contracting (as by exercise they will contract) more strength and more beauty continually.

God will also undoubtedly give you, to wipe the weeping eye, to cheer the mourning heart; to be his instrument in taking off the burthen from tender depressed spirits; in which number you will sometimes find those, who may (if any in the world may) be justly called the excellent of the earth. Christ, the great Lord of the church, will in many instances make you (as it were) the almoner of his bounty, and messenger of his love; while he is giving to them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, and sending them the garments of praise in exchange for the spirit of heaviness. Your kind offices, and the happy effects of them, will attend your friends, not only in all the darkest hours of preceding affliction, but even on their dying beds. There will you animate their faith; there will you be a helper of their joy, and furnish the hand of the departing pilgrim with the promises of God as a sure staff, to support him in his way through all the gloomy horrors of the last valley, by which he must pass to the New Jerusalem.

By such traces of usefulness will you mark (as it were) the several years, and months, and days of life; while the passage of so many others through it is like that of an arrow through the trackless air: until at length you die with a pleasing consciousness, that you have not lived in vain, and rise to rewards never to be described by mortal voice,

never to be conceived by the human heart, and of which I must not say any thing more now, as I am briefly to touch upon them in the concluding part of my discourse.

Now while you have these things in view, do you not, my brother, congratulate yourself upon this happy occasion? I am persuaded you do. I am persuaded, that your heart is even now bowing itself in secret thankfulness before God, that he hath honoured you with capacities for this work; that he hath furnished you with the means of a proper education for it; and that his providence has at length called you out to it. Nor can your gratitude forget his distinguished goodness in settling you with so generous, so affectionate, and so pious a people, and now in the bonds of joint-pastorship with that faithful and venerable servant of Christ, with whom you share the office.* You will, I doubt not, serve with him, as a son with a father, in the gospel of Christ. Nor can the warmest friendship form a greater wish for you, than that you may learn by the daily opportunities of conversing with him, to improve more and more in that rich variety of Christian and ministerial graces, which have for a long series of years rendered his name so honourable in our churches, and his flock so peculiarly happy. O that I could also congratulate you, and them, on returning and continued opportunities of learning, as formerly, by his public labours! In the mean time, permit me with these cordial congratulations to intermingle,

II. Some faithful admonitions, relating to the labours,—the difficulties,—the oppositions, attending the station of life on which you are entered,—and the solemn account in which it is to terminate.

Of these indeed you have just now been reminded by my dear and honoured brother, in so judicious and in so pathetical a manner, that it is the less necessary for me to enlarge upon them. Yet were they to be wholly omitted by me in this discourse, it could hardly be called a charge; and, I fear, it is a subject, on which we all need line upon line, and precept upon precept. Let me therefore solemnly, though briefly, remind you,

1. Of the labours that attend this situation in life.

These indeed are such, as will demand an almost uninterrupted attention of mind, and vigour of diligence. Labours await you at home and abroad; labours on your own days, and on the sabbath, a day of rest to others, but to you of the most strenuous, though most delightful, service:—labours in the study; that knowledge may be increased; that provision may be made for public ministrations, with solidity, with perspicuity, with propriety, with energy, with tenderness: labours in the pulpit; that public devotions may be suitably and fervently poured out before God; and sermons so delivered, as, if possible, to command the attention of the auditory, and to communicate, in a natural and effectual manner, those good affections to others which you feel in your own breast.—Not to mention the labours to be gone through in visiting your friends, and in the exercise of that prudent personal and domestic inspection, which you must necessarily attend to, if you would approve yourself a skilful, yea I will add, if you would approve yourself a faithful, shepherd.—What a combination on the whole! Labours of the head, labours of the voice; but oh, above all, labours of the heart! For this is indeed the labour: to fix on our own inconstant spirits a becoming habitual sense of God; to feel always in our own breast those pious affections, which it is our business to endeavour to raise in others; in a word, to keep the sacred flame of love to God, to Christ, and to the souls of men, ever burning, yea, ever glowing, with an intenseness of heat proportionable to the number and nature of those sacrifices, which are daily, which are hourly, to be presented!—Help, Lord, or it will soon be extinguished! Feed it continually by thy celestial stream; or, who is sufficient for these things?—You will surely say so, when you consider,

2. The difficulties attending your work, of which I am next to admonish you.

But here, as indeed under the former head, your own experience must already have done it in the most convincing manner. You find the ministry a work that requires not only patient industry but wise conduct and happy address. Difficulties meet us in the closet, even when our own minds are competently furnished with divine knowledge, so as to adjust the composition of our discourses, as that the understanding of our hearers may be enlightened, their conscience convinced, and their affections impressed; that the ignorant may be instructed, that the careless may be awakened, that the hypocrite may be detected, that the mourner may be comforted, the dejected revived, the backslider restored, the confirmed Christian yet more established; in a word, that every one may have his portion of meat in due season, and every one, so far as may be, according to his own taste too; at least, that what we say, while it is intelligible to the meanest, may not be justly contemptible to the more refined, but that things and words may be sought out, so far as faithfulness will permit, acceptable to both. And how hard is it to unite all these views, especially amidst such a diversity of sentiments, as well as circumstances! And this, not only where those are in question, who have apparently made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and whom in some respects it might be unsafe to please, but even where, among the best of men, different apprehensions of things, conscientiously received and

* The Reverend Mr. Thomas Scott, senior.

retained, will lead one to diserlish what another most wishes to hear, and possibly in some instances, one to censure even because another applauds.

It may on all these accounts, and many others, be difficult to instruct, and it will be still more difficult to reprove. General hints given in public will by guilty consciences be interpreted as personal reflections, and perhaps aggravated into open abuse, and occasions of declared enmity; and private applications will be evaded, discouraged, and very probably resented. The corruptions of the heart will rise against the most friendly efforts of cure; and those wounds which most absolutely require a deep search, will be least patient even under the gentlest touch. Your solicitude to please God will, in many instances, displease men. Your heart will be grieved by many unsuccessful labours. And to close the melancholy scene, you will probably see some, of whom you had very agreeable hopes, falling away from all regard to serious religion; and perhaps may find yourself obliged, though with a reluctant heart, to bear your part in separating some from your communion, whom you gathered into it with the greatest joy, and in whom you blessed yourself as the seals of your ministry.

These are the difficulties which may arise from within; and besides these, the prejudices of the world will lie strongly against you from without. Many eyes will be upon you, to observe your conduct. By some your slips will be magnified into crimes; and if you walk so cautiously, (though who can promise himself that he shall?) as to escape any just blame, malice will create occasions of censure, perhaps in some instances even from your solicitude to avoid it. Your zeal will be called bigotry, and your candour hypocrisy; your humility affectation; and your activity will be imputed, either to a high opinion of your own abilities, or to a vain desire of outshining others, or to a low pursuit of popularity from arrogant or interested principles. Such treatment have the best of men found; and such must you expect, unless Satan lose his influence over the world by much swifter degrees than we have any warrant to hope that he will. But this naturally leads me to warn you,

3. Of the oppositions which you may meet with in your ministry.

These may indeed in different circumstances, be more or less extreme; but something of this kind is at all events to be expected, and it will be our wisdom to provide against the worst. Gird up therefore the loins of your mind. Remember, that you are putting on your harness; and God only knows to what combats you may be called.

We have long enjoyed halcyon days, through the favour of Providence, and the equity of our civil governors; to whom, I hope, we are grateful for it, as we ought. But He that rules in the heavens can only say, how soon clouds may gather, and how soon tempests of thunder and lightning may burst upon us. Sometimes, you know, a storm arises on a sudden, and the deadness of the preceding calm increases both its terror and its strength. So sinful a people as we must confess ourselves to be, can never have reason to wonder at any public and national calamity, which may break in upon us in a moment. But should circumstances more gradually change, you, Sir, and our younger brethren, may live to see an enemy in the sanctuary of the Lord; may live to see our religious liberties trampled under foot, and with them undoubtedly our civil, for they are twins that will live and die together. You may perhaps be called to resist unto blood, to glorify God in the flames, and to teach your flock Christian courage and fidelity, not by words, but by martyrdom. Such things you may suffer, as a protestant, as a Christian.

And more peaceful times have their trials too, though perhaps not equally severe. I do indeed hope, that mutual love is growing, among the various denominations of Christians, and particularly between us, and our brethren of the establishment. And may the blessings of the God of peace rest on the men who cultivate it, on both sides!—But we cannot hope to see the time, when all shall be so moderate and so equitable, as not to think and judge with some severity of those, whose conscience obliges them, though in the modestest manner, to maintain different forms of worship and discipline, even where the great articles of faith are the same. And a different judgment relating to the articles of faith may draw down yet severer censures and opposition, from those whose judgment in worship and discipline agrees ever so well. And I must faithfully warn you, Sir, that if you go on to assert (as I hope you always will) those great doctrines of the gospel to which you have now borne a public testimony, (I particularly mean the deity and atonement of Christ, the ruin of our nature by the original apostasy, and our restoration by the agency of the blessed Spirit,) you are not to imagine, that any moderation of temper, or any other personal virtue, or all your zeal for the service of the common cause of Christians, protestants, or dissenters, will atone for what some will imagine so great a crime; or shelter you from the affected contempt and severe reproaches of some angry people, who amidst all their professions of the most unbounded charity will think yours an excepted case, or will rather choose to be injurious to you than consistent with themselves.—But it is after all a very small matter to be judged of man's judgment: he that judgeth us is the Lord: and that is the most solemn thought of all, concerning which I am lastly to admonish you, even,

4. The awful account which you are shortly to

give up to him, from whom you have received your ministry.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; and if he account with the meanest of his servants, we may assure ourselves, he will do it with his stewards. And let us remember, that when the books are opened, it will not only be found upon record there, that such a congregation was at such a time committed to this or that minister; but a particular register will in effect be produced of every soul consigned to our care: "So many heads of families, together with such children, and such servants." And then our conduct will be reviewed, and examination made, "how far we have answered our trust." Should it be found, that we have neglected and abused it, the displeasure of our great Lord and Master will rise in proportion to its importance, and to the opportunities we have had of doing good in it: opportunities which, though we may not perhaps so thoroughly examine, as to conceive of their full extent, he most circumstantially knows. And surely, if it be then found, as it undoubtedly will, a fatal thing to have betrayed the bodies or the estates of men, when committed to our care; much more will it be so, to have betrayed, and by betraying to have destroyed, so far as in us lay, immortal souls. This is a matter of such weight, that when we seriously think of it, and compare it with those criminal neglects, which conscience will charge even on the best of us, there is just reason for us with one voice to cry out, Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord; for in thy sight can none of us be justified. And when you, my brother, think of it, in such a moment as this, you may find your heart ready to fail, and even may be tempted to draw back, and say, Who shall stand to minister before this holy Lord God! lest he break forth upon us, and we die. But I would not leave you under the distress of such a view, and therefore conclude,

III. With a few hints addressed to you by way of encouragement, to animate you to go forth with courage and cheerfulness, notwithstanding these awful views which I have been giving you of your office.

And, through the goodness of our divine Master, I have many considerations of great importance to urge here. As,

1. That you have an unerring rule in the word of God, from whence your instructions, admonitions, and directions, are to be drawn.

You well know, that Scripture was given for this end, that the man of God, that is, the Christian minister, might be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work, various as the good works of his office are. The best of human writings have their defects and their blemishes; but in this respect, as well as others, it is true, that, as for God, his way is perfect, and the word of the Lord is tried. When we read the most excellent moral and religious writings of the heathens, we find a great deal of error and superstition, which mingles compassion with our admiration. When we read the merely human writings of the most celebrated ancient and modern divines, there is much to exercise our caution and our candour. As for any new theological hypothesis, we generally find, on a more accurate examination, the proofs of its falsehood, proportionable to the confidence with which it is advanced, and the importance to which it pretends. And where men write with the greatest caution and modesty, though such generally err the least, yet there is something defective, or something redundant; something ungarnished, or something over-strained: so that, though they may be useful companions in our journey, we dare not commit ourselves to any one of them as our guide; and they often differ so much among themselves as to increase our perplexity, and indeed to give us painful apprehensions as to our safety, or theirs; did we not recollect, that various paths, after having divided a while, may so run into each other, as to lead to the same place, though some may be more direct than others. But of Scripture it may be said, as of its great Original, that in it there is perfect light, and no darkness at all. O how happy are you that have, in so small a bulk, the oracles of eternal truth, and particularly the volume of the New Testament, which may so easily be carried about with you, to entertain you abroad as well as at home; to talk with you when you lie down and when you rise up; to be the man of your counsel when you are preparing to instruct your flock in public, and more privately to guide and advise them in the most intricate circumstances! This is like the pillar of fire, to direct your way amidst the darkest night; and like the pillar of cloud, to refresh your soul amidst the most painful labours and most scorching heats. Let it be followed faithfully; and you, and that part of the Israel of God over which you preside, will be happily conducted through all the windings, through all the fatigues, of the wilderness, till your feet and theirs stand upon Mount Zion. Consult it, my dear brother, and reverence it as you ought; and you will be safe, not only under the shelter and guard of aged wisdom, but in every change that can be apprehended or imagined.

2. You have also for your encouragement the daily prayers of many, whom you have reason to think not destitute of an interest at the throne they address.

You have your share, I trust, in all the prayers which are daily put up by the church, under its various forms, for all the faithful ministers of Christ, but you may assure yourself that you are

more particularly and distinctly remembered by your Christian friends, to whom you are related in ministerial bonds. You need that remembrance; and they consider that you need it. In their families, in their closets, they see not a day in which they do not supplicate earnestly for the blessing of God on your person, your studies, and your labours. When you come to them in the house of God, you may consider yourself (if you will pardon the expression) as raised on the wing of their prayers; and may hope to experience, in answer to them, some new unction from above. How great an encouragement, amidst the daily consciousness of our own unworthiness! whether we consider it as testifying their love, and so securing in a great measure their candour to us; or as effectual to obtain those fresh supplies of divine assistance, which they have sought. Nor can I conclude this head without saying, that it is happy when the minister, amidst all his various cares, is as constant, as earnest, and as affectionate, in praying for the whole people committed to his care, as many a pious, and, it may be, obscure Christian, in each of our assemblies is, in striving with God for a blessing on his minister.

3. You may also expect the countenance, esteem, and friendship, of all good men that thoroughly know you.

I put in this limitation, because the misrepresentations of character which ignorance and malice may draw, often alienate the minds of very deserving people from each other; so that they turn away with some distaste from they know not whom, or what. But where a valuable character is known, (and that of a faithful minister will always be such,) it must command esteem and affection; and prejudices which had been conceived against it, will melt away before the radiancy of it, like snow before the sun. Be diligent and resolute in the execution of your office, and you will find favour, and good acceptance, in the eyes of God, and of worthy men; and perhaps, should your reputation be aspersed by the ignorant and the malicious, you may find that Providence will exert itself to bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your honour, as well as your salvation, as a lamp that burneth. You will be sure of a peculiar share in the affection and veneration of the flock over which you preside. They will look upon you, as the gift of God to the society: they will consider you, as, in some measure, the representative of our Lord Jesus Christ himself; of whom every faithful minister is indeed a living image. They will therefore esteem you very highly in love for your work's sake. The maintenance they give you, will be cheerfully offered in proportion to their respective abilities, as the tribute of gratitude, and the pledge of endearment. Your affliction will be the common grief, and your prosperity their joy; and each of them will look upon himself as obliged in duty to approve himself the guardian of your character, and of your peace. Their hearts, as well as their houses, will be open to you: their countenances will tell you, better than any words can do it, how welcome you are to them; and every proper token of respect will be cordial, in proportion to the degree in which it is unconstrained. And where this is the case, you will have no cause to envy any dignities or revenues, which mere power may command, but which no superior splendour and abundance can render equally sweet. Above all must it encourage you, to reflect,

4. That you have the promise of your Master's presence, and may trust in him for the communication of his Spirit.

He that told his ministers, he will be with them always, even unto the end of the world: and you may rest on the veracity of a word, that shall continue, though heaven and earth shall pass away. Christ will meet you; Christ will strengthen you. He will feed and cheer your soul; that you may be enabled to feed and to cheer those that he has committed to your care. It is not a mere empty sound: your brethren, and your fathers, among whom you stand this day, can from their own experience attest the truth of the promise. He has softened our fatigues; he has sweetened our afflictions; and carried us with songs in our mouths through scenes, at the very distant prospect of which we should have trembled. Having obtained help from him, we continue even to this day, the living, the cheerful witnesses of his power, his goodness, and his faithfulness. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And remember,

5. That in consequence of this, you may expect such considerable improvements in personal religion, as shall be a rich equivalent for all your labours, and for all you can resign for the ministry, or suffer in it.

It must be nourishing to the soul, if it be spiritually alive, to be so continually conversant with spiritual and divine things. Your meditations, your prayers, your public discourses, your private converses on religious subjects and occasions, together with the administration of both the sacraments, will all have a great tendency, under a divine blessing, to make good impressions on your own heart, and to advance you in a holy and devout temper. While you are thus daily watering others, you will be watered yourself; as I doubt not but you will remember, that while you teach others, you teach yourself also. While the daily cares of others in their secular callings, have an apparent tendency to divert their minds from God, yours will tend directly to him, and give you advantages, beyond what can easily be imagined, by being continually

with him: such advantages indeed, that, were the nature and the value of them sufficiently known, men would be ready to contend for the ministry, as for a sacred prize. They would esteem it among the greatest privileges of a plentiful estate, that it might give them opportunities of being educated for it, and of being independent in it; while that independency was considered as some additional security for their fidelity. And the zeal, with which persons of the highest rank among us would then press forward to this work, would bring us into a necessity of directing into some other channel that provision which the wise charity of some public benefactors, the living and the dead, has made for the support of poor students for the ministry: a charity which, in the low ebb to which religion is fallen amongst us, may almost, under God, be called the hope of our churches, even for the very next generation. Especially would the richest and greatest esteem it their honour and their happiness, did they consider what I am in the last place to mention to you, my dear brother, viz.

6. The glorious expectation and hope, which closes the whole prospect.

What if every other hope, but that of religious improvement, were in a moment to vanish! What if nothing should remain, between this and the grave, but the view of labours, of reproaches, of tribulations, of persecutions? What if you were to conflict, through the whole of your course, with the malice of enemies, the coldness and ingratitude of friends, the incorrigible obstinacy of sinners, the perverseness and imperfections of those whom, if any are such, we must hope to be Christians? Here is enough to balance all. Death is approaching: death, that stripped Aaron of his garments and of his burthens together, and ended all his painful pilgrimage. Be faithful unto death, says our divine Master, and I will give thee a crown of life. O think every day of the ecstasy with which you shall receive that crown, and of the high everlasting exultation with which you shall wear it. Think of the joy with which, after a life of persevering fidelity to him, your separate spirit shall ascend into his presence, ere yet this body, the instrument of his service, shall be laid in the grave. Think of the congratulations, with which your venerable predecessors, your eminently pious parents, and those of your flock who have fled upwards before you, will then meet you, and hail your arrival. And think how Jesus will, by one smile and embrace, overpay all the labours and sufferings of a long protracted life. Think of the complacency and delight, with which you will look down on the field which you have cultivated, and on the growing harvest you have left behind; while perhaps some of the blessed fruits of your labours may be running on from age to age, so as to be the means of propagating Christianity to the last rounds of time. And O think, above all, of the great day of the Lord, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, that he may confer on you, and on all those who have faithfully discharged their ministry, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Then, when every Christian of the lowest station and character shall receive his proper share of honour and reward, what may you expect, if you faithfully improve your ten talents, when those of your people whom you have converted or edified, appear with you as your joy and your crown in the presence of the Lord, and are honoured with the public applause and remunerations of the eternal and universal Judge in the face of the whole assembled world? All the pageantry of human greatness passes away like a dream; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood: but human souls are durable and immortal; and they that have turned many of them to righteousness, shall have, in each, an everlasting ornament, and, decked with a new lustre from each, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

May that God whom we serve, through the riches of his grace, give us all a portion in the triumph of that day! And may he add to all the joy, which the most unworthy of his servants is humbly bold to expect in it, that of seeing you, my dear brother, giving up an account of a faithful and happily successful ministry! To encourage and assist you in the discharge of which, may these plain hints conduce, through the blessing of him, who knows how, from the least and most inconsiderable seeds, to call up a rich and plentiful harvest! Amen

AN APPENDIX,

Relating to the usual methods of Ordination among the Protestant Dissenters.

As in the beginning of the Charge I have touched upon the decent solemnities attending the methods of Ordination generally used among the protestant dissenters, it may not be improper to give a brief account of them; especially as I have been earnestly desired to do it by a pious and learned clergyman of the established church; who apprehends it may obviate some mistakes, and promote that mutual candour among Christians of different denominations, which both of us concur to wish, and labour to promote. There is indeed a little variety in the usages of different places: but that which I have generally seen, does, I believe, prevail in most of our churches, with the exception, and sometimes no more than the transposition, of a few circumstances.

It very rarely happens, that a minister among us is admitted to the pastoral office, till he hath spent some years as a kind of candidate for it; and, so far as I can recollect, more undertake it after, than before, their twenty-sixth year is completed. But as our theological students generally employ either four or five years in preparatory studies, after they have quitted the grammar-schools, so they are examined by three or four elder ministers before they begin to preach.* A strict inquiry is made into their character, and into their furniture; both with respect to the learned languages, especially the sacred, and also as to the various parts of natural and moral philosophy; but above all, into their acquaintance with divinity; and some specimen of their abilities for prayer and preaching is generally expected.

An unordained minister is seldom chosen to the pastoral office in any of our churches, (for in the members of each of these societies the whole right of election lies,) till he has resided among them some months, or perhaps some years; preaching statedly to them, and performing most other ministerial offices, excepting the administration of the sacraments.

When the society, which generally proceeds with entire unanimity in this great affair, has received what it judges competent satisfaction, the several members of it join in giving him a solemn and express *call* to take upon him the pastoral inspection over them: and if he be disposed to accept it, he generally signifies that intention to neighbouring pastors; whose concurrence he desires in solemnly setting him apart to that office.

Previous to the assembly for this sacred purpose, his credentials and testimonials are produced, if it be required by any who are to be concerned; and satisfaction as to his principles is also given to those who are to carry on the public work, generally by his communicating to them the confession of his faith which he has drawn up; in which it is expected, that the great doctrines of Christianity should be touched upon in a proper order, and his persuasion of them plainly and seriously expressed, in such words as he judges most convenient. And we generally think this a proper and happy medium, between the indolence of acquiescing in a general declaration of believing the Christian religion, without declaring what it is apprehended to be, and the severity of demanding a subscription to any set of articles, where if an honest man, who believes all the rest, scruples any one article, phrase, or word, he is as effectually excluded, as if he rejected the whole.

The pastors, who are to bear their part in the public work, having been thus in their consciences satisfied, that the person offering himself to ordination is duly qualified for the Christian ministry, and regularly called to the full exercise of it; they proceed, at the appointed time and place, to consecrate him to it, and to recommend him to the grace and blessing of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, by fasting and prayer, generally accompanied with the imposition of hands; and the public work of the day is usually, so far as I have been witness, carried on in the following order, or something very near it.

It commonly opens with a short prayer, and the reading some select portions of Scripture which seem most proper to the occasion; then a prayer is offered of greater length and compass than the former, in which most of our common concerns as Christians are included; which is sometimes, though less frequently, succeeded by another of the same kind. Then follows a sermon, on some suitable subject, such as the institution, importance, difficulty, and excellency of the ministerial work, the character and conduct of the first ministers of the gospel, or the like.

After this introduction of a more general nature, another minister (usually one of the eldest present, who is a kind of moderator for the day,) gives the assembly a more particular account of the occasion of its being convened. The call of the church to the candidate is then recognized, either in word, or writing, or by lifting up the hand; and his acceptance is also declared. He is then desired, for the satisfaction and edification of the assembly, to pronounce the confession of faith; (which his brethren have already heard and approved;) and pertinent questions are put to him, relating to the views and purposes with which he undertakes the solemn charge, that he may be brought under the most awful engagements to a suitable behaviour in it; and an express renunciation of the errors and superstitions of the Romish church generally makes a part of these answers, as well as a declaration of his resolution, by divine grace, never to forsake the ministry, whatever inconveniences and sufferings it may draw after it.

This being despatched, the presiding minister comes down from the pulpit, and prays over the person to be set apart. There is no particular form of prayer on this occasion, or on any other among us; but I have observed, that the person who officiates is generally led in such a circumstance, to adore the divine wisdom and grace, in the constitution and revelation of the gospel, in the appointment of an evangelical ministry, and in supporting the succession of it throughout all ages of the Christian church, as well as in vindicating it from popish corruption and bondage. Some notice is often taken of what may have seemed most remarkable in Providence, with regard to the parti-

* See the Advertisement to my Sermon on the Evil and Danger of neglecting Means of Spiritual Life.

cular circumstances of the society then to be settled, and the person to be set apart to the ministerial office in it; who is then solemnly offered up to the service of God, and recommended to his blessing, in all the several parts of his work, which are distinctly enumerated. And this prayer seldom concludes without fervent intercession with God, for the Christian church in general, and all its faithful ministers of every denomination: and as those rising up to succeed in the work are often mentioned here, so I have had the pleasure frequently to hear the universities of our island, as well as more private seminaries of learned and pious education, affectionately recommended to the divine protection and favour on such occasions, with all the genuine appearances of a truly Christian and catholic spirit. When that part of this prayer begins, which immediately relates to the person then to be consecrated to the service of the sanctuary, it is usual for the speaker to lay his hand on his head; and the other pastors conveniently within reach, (frequently to the number of six, eight, or ten,) lay on their hands also, at the same time: by which we do not pretend to convey any spiritual gifts, but only use it as a solemn, and expedient, though not absolutely necessary, designation of the person then to be set apart.

When this prayer is over, (which often engages a very profound attention, and seems to make a very deep impression both on ministers and people,) the Charge is given to the newly ordained pastor, who generally receives it standing (as much as may be) in the sight of the whole assembly: and an exhortation to the people is sometimes joined with the charge, or sometimes follows it as a distinct service, unless (which is frequently the case) it is superseded by the sermon, or some other previous address. Another prayer follows; and singing having been intermingled, so as properly to diversify a service necessarily so long, the whole is concluded with a solemn benediction.

I know no method of proceeding on such occasions, more rational, edifying, and Scriptural than this; and I hope, few who believe any thing of Christianity, can be so ignorant or abandoned, as to make light of such solemnities. But however any of our fellow-servants may judge, I have a calm, steady, and joyful assurance, that transactions like these are registered in heaven with approbation, and receive the sanction and blessing of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

Northampton, September 18, 1745

POSTSCRIPT.

As the want of psalms or hymns [illegible] Christian worship, [illegible] I have often been requested by the Congregation where I have [illegible] to compose something for that end: I have therefore [illegible] and I would gladly do it with my whole heart, [illegible] and every [illegible] to a blessed and devout preparation [illegible] And if any one of these hymns [illegible] the use of [illegible] of Scripture subjects.

A HYMN

I.

FATHER of mercies, in thine house,
Shine on our homage and our vows!
While with a grateful heart we share
These pledges of our Saviour's care.

II.

Blest Saviour! when to heaven he rose
In splendid triumph o'er his foes,
What royal gifts he scatter'd down;
How large, how permanent the boon!

III.

Hence sprung th' apostle's honoured name,
Sacred, beyond heroic fame:
Hence dictates the prophetic sage;
And hence the evangelic page.

IV.

In lowlier forms, to bless our eyes,
Pastors from hence and teachers rise;
Who, though with feebler rays they shine,
Still gild a long-extended line.

V.

From Christ their varied gifts derive,
And fed by Christ their graces live;
While guarded by his potent hand,
Midst all the rage of hell they stand.

VI.

So shall the bright succession run
Through the last courses of the sun;
While unborn churches by their care
Shall rise and flourish, fresh and fair.

VII.

Jesus our Lord their hearts shall know,
The spring whence all these blessings flow,
Pastors and people shout his praise
Through the long round of endless days!

SERMON XII.

CHRISTIAN CANDOUR AND UNANIMITY STATED, ILLUSTRATED, AND URGED.*

To the Right Honourable the Countess of Huntingdon.

That eminent example of the Christian Candour here recommended, and of every other virtue and grace, which can inspire, support, and adorn it, the author, finding himself (after repeated attempts) incapable of writing any dedication, under the restraints which her humility amidst its utmost indulgence has prescribed him; or to mention any excellence which would not seem an encomium on her, has chosen thus most respectfully to inscribe this Discourse: entreating that his further silence, in this connexion, may be interpreted by her Ladyship, and by every reader, as the most sensible and painful proof he can give of the deference, veneration, and grateful affection with which he is,

Her Ladyship's

much obliged and obedient humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

PHIL. ii. 1, 2.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

IF it indeed be, as it certainly is, a test of true eloquence that it is suited to strike powerfully upon the minds of all, however different in genius, education, or rank, I cannot but conclude that every one here present, must already acknowledge these words to be a remarkable specimen of it, even before we proceed particularly to illustrate them; and, having felt something of their pleasing energy while we have been reading them, is ready to confess that the sentiment they contain is finely conceived and pathetically expressed. But ill shall we answer the great design of the apostle, if we rest in the mere acknowledgment of this. His views were much more worthy of him whose minister he was: he laboured to diffuse, through the breasts of his fellow-christians, that spirit of love, which was in his own, as a constant spring of living water. And what more convincing proof can be given of the deplorable disorder of men's minds, than that such addresses, proceeding from such a man, yea, I will add, the yet more forcible address of his Divine Master, and ours, should have produced so little effect: that such discord and animosity should so early, so long, I had almost said so universally, prevail in the Christian church, amidst all the incentives, amidst all the entreaties, amidst all the tender adjurations, as well as the godlike examples, which the sacred oracles exhibit to charm us into the most endeared affection. But alas, these incentives, and entreaties, these adjurations, and examples, are overlooked, as not having lustre enough to detain our attention; for we too generally seem to study our Bibles (if we study them at all) for amusement or ostentation, rather than practical instruction. We fix on some curious incident or high speculation, and are first ingenious to explain it where it cannot be explained, and then impassioned to defend it, as if it were fundamental truth till we beat out the sacred gold so thin, that every breath of air carries it away: whilst the plain things which tend to inspire a heavenly temper, and lead us on to the most exalted goodness, are slightly passed over; as too obvious, and too vulgar, to engage our attention or excite our emulation. Thus we feed our pride by what was intended to humble it, and make that the prize of mutual contention, which was designed to be the band of love.

What wise man has not observed this! What good man has not lamented it! Yet, alas, who so wise as in all instances to have avoided it? Who so

* Preached at a meeting of Ministers at Creaton in Northamptonshire, January the 12th, 1749-50.

good as to have exerted himself to the utmost to cure it? A cordial, however feeble, attempt of this kind will now be made, and so powerful are the arguments, so alluring the motives, suggested in the text, that if the spirit of wisdom and of love so often, and I trust so sincerely, invoked, may guide our meditations upon them, we may cheerfully hope for some valuable effects.

And happy will it indeed be, if he may teach us to enter into these words with a temper like that which the holy apostle St. Paul felt, when in his bonds for the sake of the gospel, and particularly for his zeal in asserting the calling and the liberty of the Gentiles to whom he wrote, he addressed them with this tender and pathetic entreaty: If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy; that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.—It may be here proper to inquire,

I. To what the apostle is endeavouring to persuade the Philippians.

II. To consider in how tender a manner he addresses them, and what a variety of affecting arguments he pleads with them; and then,

III. To conclude with some advices for maintaining and cultivating the temper he so pathetically recommends.

I attempt it, my reverend and dear brethren, with the greater cheerfulness, as from long experience I am persuaded, that all your hearts are one with mine, in every effort to spread Christian love; and as that uninterrupted peace, and unalienated affection, which has so long reigned among ourselves will not only dispose you to receive what I shall say with unprejudiced minds, but will render it as agreeable to you as it is in general needful to the Christian world. Long have we beheld, and blessed be God, long have we felt, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: long has the odour of this precious ointment filled our little tabernacles with its perfume. May the dew descend on all the mountains of Sion, and the Lord more abundantly command the blessing, even life for evermore! that life of which fervent Christian love is the earnest, the foretaste, the beginning!

I. We are to inquire, to what it is that the apostle endeavours so affectionately to persuade the Philippians. And here I might observe, it is in the general *to fulfil his joy*, and more particularly to do it by cultivating unanimity and love.

1. He urges them in the general to fulfil his joy, that is, to conduct themselves in such a manner as might cause him greatly to rejoice. This was in the general to be done by remembering their Christian character, and walking worthy of it, or, as he expresses it in a few verses below, by working out their salvation with fear and trembling, and by keeping themselves blameless and harmless, and acting as the children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, that so they might shine as lights in the world, and hold forth with advantage the word of life. Paul, like the beloved disciple St. John, had no greater pleasure than to see his children walking in the truth, and therefore elsewhere says, We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

Now before we proceed to what is more peculiar to our subject, let us pause for a few moments on this edifying, this animating consideration. Let us as it were, in our devout meditations, pay a visit to this illustrious confessor in his chains at Rome, for he was now a prisoner there, that we may learn how his mind was employed in the midst of his confinement, his straits, and his sorrows,—to inquire what would have afforded him the most sensible joy, so far as others could be instruments of affording it? Not that his eloquence should be admired, or his necessities relieved, or his liberty restored, or his patience and magnanimity applauded, but that his Christian converts might behave in character; that the honour of their profession, and their own happiness, might be most effectually secured. "Only let your conversation be as becomes the gospel, and then if bonds and imprisonments await me, yea, if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all; and I call upon you also to congratulate me: for none of these things move me, neither count I (in a cause like this) even my life dear unto me." But it is evident that, whatever may be comprehended in fulfilling the apostle's joy, the phrase has a peculiar reference to the method he prescribes, wherein they might effect it, which we are next to consider.

2. He urges them to do it, by cultivating unanimity and love.

As we render the second verse, this must be the sense of the whole: Be like-minded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind. A limitation for the present this version, which I think may be considerably improved, common sense will not allow us to understand it as an exhortation, to be all entirely of the same opinion in every religious sentiment about which they might exercise their inquiries. For considering the diversity of men's capacities, and opportunities of improvement, that is absolutely impossible. Had Paul condescended to enter into the minutest detail of doctrines and principles that can be imagined, had his form of words been as artificial and elaborate, as that of any scholastic divine, and his decrees as large as those of the most voluminous councils and synods of succeeding ages; yet still, while the apprehensions and understandings of men had continued of a different size, different interpretations might have

been put upon his words, even by good and honest, much more by designing and prevaricating, men, when interest on the one hand, and resentment on the other, had given an edge to their invention. Least of all could such an unanimity as we are now speaking of, be effected by mere entreaties; and it is very observable, we here meet with no arguments or decisions, by which one doctrine is established rather than another, about which there could be any supposed difference, or one speculative sentiment or disputed practice pointed out, in which they are so earnestly exhorted to agree; not now to insist upon it, that where there was such a perfect uniformity, a peaceful disposition would have been matter of very little praise, and might seem only self-love diversified and reflected.

We are necessitated therefore, by the absurdity of such an interpretation, especially in this connexion, to seek out for another; and we shall more easily attain it in its greatest perspicuity, by a little varying our version of the original words. Ἵνα το αυτο φρονητε την αυτην αγαπην εχοντες, that ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love, συμψυχοι το ἑν φρονουντες, having your souls joined together in attending to the one thing. On this interpretation, it will be as if he had said "Be unanimous in affection, if you cannot be so in opinion, agree on cultivating the same love, however your judgments, yea, and in some instances your practices, may be divided. And that you may be so cemented, let all the ardour of your souls be combined in attending more and more to the one great thing, which ought to be the leading concern of every Christian, the advancement of vital, practical holiness." This might well be understood, though it was not particularly expressed and described, it being so obvious to all that knew any thing of the gospel, that it was the great design in which it centred; and having been spoken of by our Lord, in a very celebrated oracle, under the title of the one thing needful.

And in this view we may consider the apostle as addressing himself, not only to his friends at Philippi, but to all Christians of every nation and age: and thus supported by his authority, I may address you, my brethren, that hear me this day, whether in the ministry or in private life.

To agree in our sentiments as to every point of doctrine or discipline, or as to the authority or expediency of every rite of worship that may be in question, is absolutely impossible. The best of men differ; their understandings differ; various associations have been accidentally formed, and different principles have been innocently, and perhaps devoutly, admitted, which, even in a course of just and sensible reasoning, must necessarily lead to different conclusions. Accordingly we find that in this age, enlightened as it is, (and so far as the age of literature can go, I am persuaded no age was ever more enlightened,) the wisest and the best of men at home and abroad have pleaded the cause on either side of various questions, which to both have seemed important, without being able to produce conviction. The event of many a voluminous controversy has been this; that men of contrary parties have sat down more attached to their own opinions than they were at the beginning, and much more estranged in their affections: the champions something sore with the rough usage they have mutually received in the combat, and the partisans of each so heinously displeased, at the obstinacy of their brethren, in refusing to yield to such unanswerable arguments, that they can hardly now condescend to own them for brethren. And when this is the case, what is further to be done? The laws of human nature, the laws of Christ, will not permit of force on either side; and blessed be God, the laws of our country forbid it too, which if they did not, I much fear that neither the voice of nature or Scripture would be heard by many. Since then after all that has been said, or that can be said, we must live together, let us, by every consideration of prudence and of tenderness, be entreated to live not only in peace but in love, in a free intercourse of all the good offices in our power, as well as with a strict care not to injure and afflict each other by unkind treatment, or censures unnecessarily harsh. Truth is indeed too sacred a thing ever to be denied on any consideration; and so far as we are in our own consciences persuaded that any particular truth is important, neither honour nor charity will allow us to give it up, as a point of mere indifferent speculation. Let us therefore ever be ready, when properly called out to the service, to plead its cause in the name of the God of truth; but let it be in a manner worthy of him, a manner which may not offend him as the God of love. And let us be greatly upon our guard that we do not condemn our brethren, as having forfeited all title to the name of Christians, because their creeds or confessions of faith do not come up to the standard of our own. Yea, if it were in a matter which seemed of so great importance as to give us some room to suspect that the mistake were fatal, (which surely nothing can be that does not greatly affect men's temper and conduct towards God and each other,) even that consideration should engage us to gentleness and tenderness, rather than severity to them; if peradventure our friendly and respectful carriage may gain such a happy ascendant over their minds, as to remove their prejudices against our reasons: for the reasons in such important matters must surely be so forcible, that nothing but very strong prejudices could obstruct their efficacy; prejudices too, which on our own principles, we may endanger their souls by increasing.

But where we and our brethren agree in attending to the one thing which Christianity was designed to teach us; surely an agreement in that should unite our minds, more than any difference, consistent with that agreement, should divide them. To reverence with filial duty and love the God of heaven, and to adore him with integrity of heart; to honour Jesus his Son, as the brightest image, subscribing to the truth of all he is known to have revealed, and the authority of all he is apprehended to command; conscientiously to abstain from every known evil, and to practise, so far as human infirmity will permit, the comprehensive precepts of living soberly, righteously, and godly; still looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, assuredly expecting a future judgment, and an eternal world, carefully endeavouring to prepare for both, by setting the affections on those great objects, which the gospel opens to our view; and finally being habitually ready to sacrifice life and all its enjoyments, to that blessed hope;—this, this, my brethren, is the essential character of every Christian, and where we see this, should we esteem it a difficult thing to live peaceably with him in whom we discern it? Should we arrogate it to ourselves as any high praise, that we do not censure, that we do not grieve, that we do not injure him, because he follows not us? Is this the man to be hated or suspected, I will add, can we refuse to esteem and embrace him, merely because he worships in another assembly, or according to a different form, because he expresses his apprehensions about some of these doctrines in different words, because he cannot see all that we think we discern in some passages of Scripture, or because he imagines he sees something which we discern not? Is it after all so great a matter, to love a character, which, amidst all its imperfections, is in the general so justly amiable! Nay, instead of thinking much of any acts of kindness, which it is in our power to perform for such a fellow-disciple, ought we not rather to lament that we can do no more for his service! Ought we not to endeavour rather to supply in our fervent prayers to God the lack of that further service, which Christian benevolence dictates, but which the narrow limits of our condition and our nature will not allow us to perform?

Methinks the matter might safely be rested here, and that the very description of Christian charity, and its proper objects, might engage every heart to cultivate it. Nor is it easy to expatiate beyond the just boundary of such an argument. But I should be inexcusable, if while I have this text before me, I should deprive you of the pleasure which every benevolent mind must undoubtedly feel, in contemplating, what we are to consider.

II. In how tender a manner the apostle addresses himself to these Christians, and conjures them to cultivate the temper he had been recommending. And no words but his own will so properly represent this. He pleads the consolation of Christ, the comfort of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, the bowels of mercy. Considerations, which if I can but illustrate, there will be little occasion to enforce them by any arguments of my own.

1. He pleads with them the consolation of Christ.

This most strongly implies, that many important consolations arise from him, and that they will all, properly regarded, conspire in disposing us to mutual love.

That numberless consolations do indeed flow to the true believer from the Lord Jesus Christ, is too obvious to need being proved at large. Yet, O how delightful would it be, to attempt a little to illustrate the point, if my time would permit! How delightful to speak of the genuine and strong consolation to be derived from the offices he bears, from the benefits he imparts,—and from the figures under which he is represented in Scripture!

How delightful would it be to me to speak, and to you to hear, of this faithful and infallible Prophet, who brings us so complete a revelation of the divine will, in so plain and so condescending a manner! Of this great High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, who made his own life our sacrifice; who is now, in virtue of it, interceding in our favour before the throne of God, and lives for ever to attend this friendly important office! Of our most gracious Sovereign, who rules with consummate wisdom and proportionable goodness; and is ever ready to exert the power with which he is invested at the right hand of God, to defend us from every evil, and to make us more than conquerors over his enemies and our own! Of that kind Surety who has undertaken our cause, and paid off our dreadful debt, that he might rescue us from that prison from whence there is no redemption! Of that compassionate Shepherd, who having generously given his life for the sheep, folds the weakest of the flock in his gracious arms, and carries the lambs in his bosom!

And where should I bound my discourse, if I were to speak of those consolations, which flow from the benefits that Christ bestows! from the pardon he proclaims, the complete pardon of the most aggravated sins! from the peace which he restores to our troubled consciences! from the cures he performs on the diseased powers of our natures! from the strength he diffuses through the enfeebled soul! from the joys which his cheering Spirit gives, and the delightful prospect which his gospel opens; which it opens not merely with respect to the happy spirit, when it has shaken off this burthen of flesh and blood, and springs to its blessed associates in the intermediate state, but especially after the resurrection, when inhabiting a glorious, a spiritual, a vigorous, and incorruptible

body, fashioned after the model of his blessed Redeemer, the complete man shall be for ever with the Lord.'

These views, Sirs, will justify all the liveliest and most beautiful figures, under which so glorious and adorable a Saviour is described in Scripture: As the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys; as the bread of life that comes down from heaven; as the true vine; as the pearl of great price; as the cleansing fountain; as the shady rock; as the morning star; as the sun of righteousness. Nay, must I not add, these views will teach us as it were to call for a new creation to open upon us; to call for something fairer than roses and lilies, richer than pearls, sweeter than manna, more generous than the richest productions of the vine, more refreshing than shades or streams, yea, brighter than stars, or the sun itself, to set forth the glory of Jesus, and describe the consolations which flow to our souls from him.

But you recollect to what purpose these consolations are here mentioned; that by them we might be entreated to mutual love. And O how forcible is the conclusion! The consciousness of happiness sweetens and exalts the soul, it makes it capable of nobler and more generous sentiments, especially when happiness, like this of ours, is conferred on those that were once the children of misery; and conferred, not by merit, but by rich compassionate bounty, by overflowing grace and mercy. That must be a mean and stubborn soul indeed, which is not melted with such goodness, and which is not full of a desire to impart what it has so freely received.

Especially may these consolations operate here, when we consider those who are recommended to our benevolent affections, as sharing in them with ourselves. Where, the full communication to all leaving no room for envy, the thoughts of being joint-proprietors must naturally be a source of love: for every one who is admitted to a share in these blessings is honoured and adorned by them; is not only exhibited to us as the object of our Redeemer's love, which surely should greatly recommend him to ours, but is made lovely in consequence of it, and that with this further important and endearing circumstance, that he is destined by our glorious Master to dwell with us and with him, in a world of final and everlasting felicity. Let our souls enter into the attractive thought. However we now be divided, if we are indeed the members of Christ, one temple shall at length contain us, one anthem shall at length unite our voices, one object of supreme love for ever fill, and by filling cement, our hearts. Such consolations have we in Christ, such are the engagements in love which result from them, uniting to display what we are secondly to consider.

2. The comfort of love, which the apostle urges as a distinct argument. And certainly there is great comfort in it, comfort too great and too sweet to be displayed in one single branch of a discourse, and which I rather wish you may all learn by experience than by report, which at the best must be very imperfect. But it is most obvious these comforts are powerful and divine. Love not only guards the mind from the furious and diabolical passions of rage, envy, malice, and revenge, which tear it like a whirlwind, which corrode it like a cancer, which consume it like rottenness in the bones, but fills it with a thousand gentle and pleasing sensations. Love distils a fragrant balm into the soul, that, while it heals the wound which contrary passions have made, diffuses a most grateful and reviving perfume, most justly compared, in the passage I referred to above, to the ointment poured on Aaron's head, or the refreshing dew descending on Hermon and Sion, and making all the country between them to share in its copious blessings.

Who can enjoy himself even in the greatest plenty, while his heart is full of unkind passions to any, especially to his brethren? Who could rest in a palace amidst such disturbers, far more intolerable than the swarms of flies that infested Pharaoh's gilded roof, or the frogs that came up to the very chambers of the king? But a benevolent and generous heart will make the plainest accommodations delightful, and as Solomon, who was so exquisitely acquainted with human nature, testifies, will render a dinner of herbs where love is, better than a stalled ox, and hatred, rancour, and malice with it. Hatred has torment, more sensible than fear; torment sufficient to turn heaven itself into hell, as it in a manner did, before those wretched spirits, who first entertained it, were by God's righteous judgment driven out from thence. But love, joined with that fervent devotion which so well agrees with it, and indeed is inspired by it, will turn the meanest and most incommodious dwelling on earth into a paradise, yea, into the delightful anticipations of heaven itself. And therefore has a gracious God, though his own felicity is perfectly independent on the greatest height of our love, or the most total deficiency of it, required us to love himself, and to love one another, that we might continually feel the noblest pleasure, a pleasure like that which he feels in the consciousness of his own most perfect goodness, and in the survey of his creatures as made happy by it; and I hope I offend not in adding, a pleasure, which, as our natures are constituted, Omnipotence itself could not communicate to us in any other vehicle but that of love. But we must not forget the third topic of argument which the apostle pleads.

3. The fellowship of the Spirit. Now, it is implied as the foundation of this argument, that all

Christians do indeed partake of one spirit. As the apostle expresses it, By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit; and this is pleaded as an endearing consideration, not only here, but elsewhere, Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,—there is one Spirit. And it is indeed so. Hereby we become members one of another, we are one body, as animated by one spirit. It is also the gift of Christ as our common head, and given that it may adorn us, and by so adorning may unite us: as indeed what can render the soul more amiable than to be animated, to be impregnated with the Spirit, whose fruits are so celestial and divine! Hear how the apostle, in whom it so eminently reigned, represents its effects, The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and surely these fruits, fair as they appear when considered in themselves, must render those who possess them so much the more amiable, when considered as proceeding from this sacred principle: for thus they render the persons who possess them venerable; and we the more easily love where we greatly esteem. Does not the Holy Spirit himself disdain to descend and dwell in such souls, and there to plant these noble and glorious fruits, and shall I disdain them? Shall all the rich treasure that he has lodged there, go for nothing with me, because he has not added this or that circumstance? because he has not taught them to judge exactly with me, and inclined them to worship with me? Surely, to argue thus would be to grieve and affront this Spirit of goodness. And let us not think to secure ourselves by saying they have it not. On men apparently sensual, cruel, and wicked, we may indeed pass this censure, whatever their religious profession may be: but where appearances are fair, we should be cautious of drawing such a conclusion; should rather be ready to suspect ourselves, and say, "Have I indeed the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom, of candour, of love, when I thus judge my brethren, when in honour I prefer myself to them? When I say, let me take the mote out of thine eye, and consider not the beam that is in mine own?" Let us not thus grieve the Holy Spirit of God, if we desire to preserve any hope of being sealed by it to the day of redemption. The sense and the force of this argument is apparent; though it may perhaps be a little difficult precisely to fix that of the next, to which we must now proceed.

4. He pleads the bowels of mercies; for bowels and mercies are not to be understood as signifying different things, but, by a usual Hebraism, bowels of mercy, that is, the tenderest compassion, by which the bowels are struck and caused to yearn: and the general meaning to be sure is, if we have learned the compassion of Christians. This implies, that it was intended that Christians should be compassionate. If there are bowels in human nature, how much more tenderly must they move when instructed by the holy discipline of the gospel! This the genius of our religion very evidently shows; as it gives us so many precepts of compassion, and as it gives us so bright an example of it, in him whose whole history is the history of compassion and love. And need I name him to you? O Sirs, from whom can we learn this lesson, if not from Jesus the Son of God, whose pity for us, for our otherwise hopeless ruin, brought him down from his exalted glory, clothed him in these mean garments of mortal flesh, which we wear, and when it had made him a man, made him a sacrifice too, and triumphed over all the agony, and all the infamy, of the cross, that it might raise us to life and glory! O let us study this generous compassionate love in its various circumstances, till every stern and stubborn passion be subdued in our hearts, till we feel our souls melted into streams of love, and disposed to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; for greater love has no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend, and yet when we were enemies Christ died for us.

But it is possible St. Paul might mean particularly to apply to their Christian compassion for him, as if he had said; "If on the whole you pity the load of affliction under which I am lying, for the gospel, and would not grieve me yet more than all my enemies can distress me; if you would rather comfort and support me under what I suffer for them, show it thus. Let Paul amidst all his labours and sorrows have this joy, that you love one another; that you are ready to every kind and friendly action, and show a true Christian magnanimity, as well as gentleness of mind, in looking higher than those things which are so often the causes of discord, to the great consideration which have so strong a tendency to unite us."

Such, my dear brethren and friends, such are the arguments which St. Paul urges, and let us endeavour to retain a sense of them upon our hearts. Let me, as it were, adjure as many of you as hear me this day, by the consolations of Christ, if they are sweet to you, by his offices, by his benefits, by all the representations which the Scripture makes of him, by the endearing tenderness and delight of this most noble godlike affection of the human mind, by the love of that Holy Spirit which unites us into one body, and is, as it were, the common soul of it, by all the compassions which as Christians you ought to feel for each other, and we the ministers of Christ would add, (if that may avail any thing, as surely it may,) by all your compassions to us, if we may indeed pretend to any merit with you, for all that we do, or for all that we

resign, upon your account, for all our most affectionate care for your education, working frequently by night as well as by day, attending us into every place, and every service public or private; an affection which I hope, and I trust in the Lord, would bear us cheerfully to bonds and imprisonments, or to death itself for your establishment in our common faith. If any of these considerations, if all of them united, can have any weight, be unanimous, having your minds joined in the same love, and attending to the one thing: thus fulfil ye our joy, which is herein the joy of our common Lord too, and which will be your joy, amidst the various inconveniences inseparable from mortal life. Cultivate more and more that lovely principle, which having ennobled as well as delighted your spirits, having rendered you the ornament of religion, and dear in the eyes of men and of God, will prepare you for, and through the grace of the Redeemer transmit you to, the regions of everlasting love, and will there continue for ever to delight and adorn you, when faith and hope shall cease, and all our present causes of contention shall be long forgot. But I would hope you feel the force of these motives, and begin to be impatient for those advices for maintaining and promoting this blessed temper, which I gave you reason,

5. To expect at the conclusion of this Discourse. And here, as I intend rather to suggest some useful and comprehensive hints, than to expatiate upon them, I shall not range them under distinct heads, but offer them briefly as they rose in my mind.

It will be one step towards attaining this excellent temper, "earnestly to desire to attain it." And that we may, let us often reflect with ourselves how amiable and how excellent it is! What an ornament, and indeed, with all its meekness and tenderness, what a defence, to true Christianity! Let us accustom ourselves to think, so far as our best information reaches, what the face of the Christian church has in fact been, amidst all the mutual animosities that have reigned among its members; and, on the other hand, let us try to imagine what it would have been, if that pacific, gentle, beneficent temper which the gospel recommends had constantly, had generally, been prevalent, and every angry, turbulent, malignant thought and passion, had been brought into sweet subjection to the laws of Christ. But who can make the computation, whether we consider its aspect on present or on future happiness? Who can calculate how widely Christianity would have been spread, while the admiring world had been charmed by so bright a light, had been melted by so celestial a flame! Who can imagine what delights had sprung up in every breast, and how they had been multiplied by reflection from each! Above all, who can conceive how large a colony the regions of perfect love and blessedness would have received from the peopled earth, a colony increased by how many thousands and millions of those, who, filled with rancour and hatred, are now alas gone down to final destruction, and feel an hell of malignant passions within, which will be matter of everlasting torment to themselves, and all their wretched companions.

"Let us often think of the meekness and gentleness of Christ and of his apostles," particularly of St. Paul, and render familiar to our minds the many candid maxims, and principles, with which his writings abound. Let us remember, as he has admonished us, that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. That as for some particular ritual observances, though the imposition of them must indeed be displeasing to God, yet the practice or the omission does not affect our share in his favour, if conscience be not violated. Neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse. Let us remember the very same principle, and that a very good one, indeed the very best of all principles, the desire of pleasing God, may, to persons under different apprehensions, produce a quite different conduct. He that regards a day may regard it to the Lord, and as for him that regards not a day, it may be out of a conscientious regard to the Lord that he does not regard it. When we are tempted to make our own taste and relish the standard to which all our brethren should bow, let us remember that Christ pleased not himself; and, when we are ready on the one hand to judge our brethren, or on the other hand to despise them, let us call up to our assistance that awful tribunal before which we are all in a little time to appear, that the account we have to give of ourselves to Christ may awe our spirits, and restrain us from that severity on our part, which might seem to challenge a severity on his, which the best of us could never be able to support under.

"If unkind thoughts against our brethren arise in our minds, let us suppress them," for by being vented they gain strength, and one injury is apt to beget another. If therefore we are obliged, as we sometimes may be, to plead the cause of truth and of liberty, though our antagonists may possibly give us great personal advantages against them, yet let us not be too ready to take or even to observe them, but let us rather show a noble superiority to injurious usage, and learn to answer confidence and petulance, censoriousness and severity, with calmness and gentleness, with reasonings indeed as strong as possible, but with a resolute guard upon our tempers; lest we become like those whom we blame, and condemn, in what is their folly, and will upon the whole be the disadvantage of their cause! for whatever little turn it may for the present serve, it will of course recoil upon them at last, and the

more strongly when it seems to do it by its own natural spring, while we are too generous to urge it to the last extremity.

"Let those of us who appear under public characters, be very careful that we do not on any occasion passionately inveigh against our brethren, and especially in religious assemblies." Thus to abuse the sacred and important moments, which we spend immediately in the divine presence, thus to pervert the great design of Christian ordinances, and make them the vehicle of such malignant passions, is equally affronting to God and pernicious to men. It is calling the sheep of Christ together to be poisoned under a pretence of feeding them. Alas, too inflammable are the passions of men in this degenerate state of nature, and too many are the unavoidable occasions of offence. It is not necessary that the ministers of Christ should abet their fury, and if I may be indulged in the expression, tear out some of the most important leaves of the book of God, to give fire to the fatal train.

It is always proper to be upon our guard here, and "it is never more necessary than when the petulance and bigotry of others has given the example and begun the attack." Nature will be roused on such provocation, and is ready to spring forward, and enter into the contention with a fierce delight: but it will be our surest wisdom in all such cases, "to leave it off before it be meddled with," remembering our relation to him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and being reviled, reviled not again, but in calm silence committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

Permit me to add, that "in proportion to the degree in which God has distinguished any from their brethren by peculiar abilities, or more eminent services, they should be so much the more careful to distinguish themselves by meekness and candour." As James expresses it, whoso is a wise man, and endowed with distinguishing knowledge among you, let him especially illustrate his meekness of wisdom. The lowest understanding, the meanest education, the most contemptible abilities, may suffice to give hard names, and to pronounce severe censures. A harsh anathema may be learnt by heart, and furiously repeated by one that could scarce read it, and, as was in truth the case in some ancient councils, may be signed by those that cannot write their names. But true catholicism of temper is a more liberal thing, it proceeds from more enlarged views, it argues a superior greatness of mind, and a riper knowledge of men and things. And the man who is blessed with such advantages should be so much the more solicitous, that he does not on any provocation add the weight of his example to so bad a cause as that of uncharitableness always is. He owes it to God and to the world that such an influence be employed to the happy purposes of healing the wounds of the Christian church, and of conciliating the affections of good and worthy men towards each other, till their united counsels can regulate its disorders, and restore to it a form more worthy of itself.

"All these precautions will be more easy to us, in proportion to the degree in which we labour with our own hearts, to subdue the inward workings of pride and vain-glory." And for this purpose let us often review the too voluminous history of our own miscarriages in conduct, and mistakes in judgment; and it will make us less confident in ourselves, less severe and overbearing in our treatment or censures of others. On the other hand, let us look upon the excellences of our brethren rather than their defects, and let it always be the joy of our hearts to dwell in our thoughts upon what is beautiful, rather than what is exceptionable; and to trace, especially in those whose advantages for them may seem to have been inferior to our own, the evidences of wisdom and humanity, of benevolence, and piety. For this purpose, it is much to be desired that Christians of different sects, while this diversity must subsist among us, should be ready as Providence gives them opportunity to form acquaintance with each other, and also that their reading should not be confined merely to authors of their own sentiments, which often feeds bigotry, and shuts out candour at its first entrance. An enlarged acquaintance will infallibly convince us that all truth and goodness is not confined to one denomination of Christians, nor among the patrons of any of those opinions, for which we have been inclined most eagerly to contend. Now when we are persuaded of another, that God has received him, we shall be more cautious how we presume either to judge or despise him, and when we see excellency in so many respects superior to our own, we shall not exalt ourselves highly on the advantage we enjoy in being, as we must indeed suppose we are, right, in that particular in which we are obliged to differ from persons we so highly esteem. Perhaps, said one of the greatest and most excellent men our country has ever produced, I mean Mr. Howe; "Perhaps the reason why, in some disputable points, I have seen further than some of my brethren, is, because their more elevated minds have been employed on greater and nobler objects, which has prevented their looking so minutely into these particular questions."*

By such means as these I hope something may be done towards mending the appearance of things among us, and reconciling the hearts of contending Christians to each other, especially if we do not insist too rigorously on the history of former wrongs and injuries, for which we have all too

* N B I [illegible] marked the [illegible]

much reason to blush, nor unwarrantably charge the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.

There is great reason to hope that the endeavour of every single person in his station to promote mutual union and love by methods like these, will in some degree be effectual; nor let us be discouraged, though it be not immediately successful, to the full extent of our wishes.

It may too justly be said, with regard to the evils with which we are to contend, in such a case, that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. Too many have from their tenderest years been taught to place a part of their religion in the severity with which they censure their brethren, and a peevant humour, so early wrought into the constitution, will not easily be subdued by the most sovereign medicines. That very reflection, however, should teach us "to take great heed that we do not convey unkind prejudices into the minds of the rising generation," but that youth be educated among us in more open and generous sentiments, that they be taught to reverence true Christianity wheresoever they see it, and to judge of it by essentials rather than circumstantials. Let this be our care, and it is more than probable, that our children may rejoice in the shade and fruit of these trees of righteousness, which our hands have planted, and I hope it is not a vain presage that it will be so; for, blessed be God, the present season is mild and favourable to such an attempt, and I am persuaded none living have seen a crisis, which seemed more encouraging and inviting to these labours of love.

But here, as in every other respect, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. "Him therefore let us humbly and earnestly invoke, for the benign influences of his Holy Spirit;" whose great office it is to heal and sweeten, to purify and elevate, the mind, and in every sense, to take away the stony, and to produce and cherish the tender, heart. And O may the God of the spirits of all flesh, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the author of peace, and lover of concord, hear the prayers in which our hearts would unite with all our brethren; humbly interceding for the prosperity of the universal church: "That it may be so guided and governed by his good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith once delivered to the saints in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life, through Jesus Christ." Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE EVIL AND DANGER OF NEGLECTING MEN'S SOULS.*

DEDICATION.

To the Associated Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, particularly those with whom the author had an interview at Denton, June 30th, 1741.

GENTLEMEN,

My Reverend Fathers and Brethren, and much esteemed Friends,

THE condescending respect, and endeared affection, with which you were pleased to receive me, in my late visit to your parts, and the very great satisfaction which I found in your company at Denton, and elsewhere, have left a very delightful memorial on my heart, and have impressed those unfeigned sentiments of gratitude and esteem, which it would be painful to suppress. Most gladly therefore do I take this method, in a few words, publicly to avow them: and I sincerely congratulate the happy societies, respectively under your care, who gratefully enjoy the benefit of those valuable labours, a little taste of which gave me an exquisite pleasure, beyond what it is possible for me fully to express.

Nevertheless, desirous as I am of erecting some little monument of thankful friendship, I should not

* Preached at a meeting of ministers at Kettering, in Northamptonshire, October the 15th, 1740.

have attempted it by inscribing this plain Sermon to you, unless the subject of it had been such, as peculiarly suited your perusal, and, if I may be permitted to say it, amidst all its imperfections, your patronage too.

No doubt, many of you, Gentlemen, remember, that after the public worship at Denton was over, on that memorable day, which I shall always number among the most delightful of my whole life, you were pleased, toward the evening, to indulge me in the liberty of a private conference, in which I laid before you some hints of a scheme, which I was then forming for the revival of religion in our parts; a scheme, which you were pleased, in the general, to approve, and, in several particulars, to ripen, by your prudent and valuable counsels.

Greatly encouraged by the sanction which your concurrence gave to the plan, and also by that which it received from the approbation of some of the most eminent London ministers, of different denominations, to whom I had an opportunity of communicating it on my return home, I proposed it in general to my reverend and worthy brethren in these parts, at a meeting of ministers, which was held here at Northampton, about the middle of August. The proposals were, in the general, very well received, and it was agreed to take them into a more particular consideration in a conference, at our next assembly, to be held at Kettering, on Thursday, the 13th of October.

To that conference, Gentlemen, the Sermon with which I now present you, was introductory, and the result of it was, that the heads of the scheme I had concerted with you at Denton, with a few other particulars which had not then occurred to my thoughts, were unanimously approved; and we are taking proper measures for carrying them into execution. And, as this Discourse may fall into the hands of some, who may be curious to know what the particulars were; and as I hope them so frequently in my thoughts, though many passages of my Sermon, I shall take the freedom here to give an account of them, though, I doubt not, but the most material of them are fresh in your memories.

It seemed most agreeable to the deference due to the reverend assembly, to propose the scheme in the form of queries; on which the following resolutions were formed, *nemine contradicente*:

I. That it may tend to the advancement of religion, that the ministers of this association, if they have not very lately done it, should agree to preach one Lord's day on family religion, and another on secret prayer; and that the time should be fixed, in humble hope that concurrent labours, connected with concurrent petitions to the throne of grace, might produce some happy effect.

II. That it is proper, that pastoral visiting should be more solemnly attended to, and that greater care should be taken in personal inspection, than has generally been used. And that it may conduce to this good end, that each minister should take an exact survey of his flock, and note down the names of the heads of families, the children, the servants, and other single persons in his auditory, in order to keep proper memorandums concerning each, that he may judge the better of the particulars of his duty with regard to every one, and may observe how his visits, exhortations, and admonitions, correspond to their respective characters and circumstances.

III. That consequent on this survey, it will be proper as soon as possible, and henceforward at least once a year, to visit, if it be practicable, every head of a family under our ministerial care, with a solemn charge to attend to the business of religion, in their hearts, and houses, watching over their domestics in the fear of the Lord, we, at the same time, professing our readiness to give them all proper assistances for this purpose.

IV. That it will be highly expedient, immediately, or as soon as may be, to set up the work of catechising, in one form or another, and to keep to it statedly for one half of the year at least: and that it is probable, future counsels may ripen some scheme for carrying on this work, in a manner which may tend greatly to the propagation of real, vital, catholic Christianity in the rising generation.

V. That there is reason to apprehend there are, in all our congregations, some pious and valuable persons, who live in a culpable neglect of the Lord's supper, and that it is our duty, particularly to inform ourselves who they are, and to endeavour, by our prayers to God, and our serious address to them, to introduce them into communion; (to which, I question not, we shall all willingly add, cautiously guarding against any thing in the methods of admission, which may justly discourage sincere Christians of a tender and timorous temper.

VI. That it is to be feared, there are some, in several of our communions at least, who behave in such a manner as to give just offence, and that we may be in great danger of making ourselves partakers of other men's sins, if we do not animadvert upon them: and that if they will not reform, or if the case be notorious, we ought, in duty to God, and to them, and to all around us, solemnly to cut them off from our sacramental communion, as a reproach to the church of Christ.

VII. That it may, on many accounts, be proper to advise our people, to enter into little bands, or societies, for religious discourse and prayer, each consisting of six or eight, to meet for these good purposes once in a week, or a fortnight, as may best suit with their other engagements and affairs.

VIII. That it might be advisable, if it can be done, to select out of each congregation under our care, a small number of persons, remarkable for experienced prudence, seriousness, humility, and zeal, to act as a stated council for promoting religion in the said society: and that it would be proper they should have some certain times of meeting with each other and with the minister, to join their counsels and their prayers for the public good.

IX. That so far as we can judge, it might, by the divine blessing, conduce to the advancement of these valuable ends, that neighbouring ministers, in one part of our land and another, (especially in this county,) should enter into associations, to strengthen the hands of each other by united consultations and prayer; and that meetings of ministers might, by some obvious regulations, be made more extensively useful than they often are: in which view it was further proposed, with unanimous approbation, That these meetings should be held at certain periodical times: That each member of the association should

endeavour (if possible) to be present, studying to order his affairs so, as to guard against unnecessary hinderances:—That public worship should begin and end sooner, than it commonly has done on these occasions:—That each pastor preach at these assemblies in his turn:—That the minister of the place determine who shall be employed in prayer:—That after a moderate repast, to be managed with as little trouble and expense as may be, an hour or two in the afternoon be spent in religious conference and prayer, and in taking into consideration (merely as a friendly counsel, and without the least pretence to any right of authoritative decision) the concerns of any brother, or any society, which may be brought before us for our advice:—And finally, that every member of this association shall consider it as an additional obligation upon him, to endeavour to be, so far as he justly and honourably can, a friend and guardian to the reputation, comfort, and usefulness of all his brethren in the Christian ministry, near or remote, of whatever party and denomination.

X. That it may be proper to enter into some further measures, to regulate the admission of young persons into the ministry. The particulars here were referred to further consideration; but, so far as I can judge, the plan proposed will be pretty nearly this:—That if any student, within the compass of this association, desires to be admitted as a preacher, he apply to the ministers at one of their periodical meetings; when, if they be in the general satisfied, that he is a person of a fair character, in sacramental communion with Christian society, and one who has gone through a regular course of preparatory studies, they will appoint three of their number, to examine more particularly into his acquaintance with, and sense of, the great doctrines of Christianity, as delivered in the Scripture, and into the progress he has made in literature, the views with which he professes to undertake the ministry, and in general, his aptness to teach; in order to judging of which, it may be proper, that a theological thesis be exhibited in Latin, and a popular sermon, composed by the candidate, be submitted to the perusal of the examiners: that if they in their consciences believe he is fit to be employed in the Christian ministry, they give him a certificate of that approbation, which he may be desired to produce at the next general meeting, that his testimonial may be signed by all the associated ministers present, and he solemnly recommended to God by prayer.

Thus, Gentlemen, you have a view of the scheme, as it now lies before us, and as every article, except the last, (not yet considered among us,) was approved at Kettering, at the time above mentioned. I will take leave to add one particular more, which has since occurred to my thoughts, and which I here submit to your consideration, and to that of my other reverend brethren, into whose hands this may fall, especially those of our own association.

XI. Qu. Whether something might not be done, in most of our congregations, towards assisting in the propagation of Christianity abroad, and spreading it in some of the darker parts of our own land? In pursuance of which it is further proposed, that we endeavour to engage as many pious people of our respective congregations as we can, to enter themselves into a society, in which the members may engage themselves to some peculiar cares, assemblies, and contributions, with a regard to this great end. I will not swell this Dedication with the particulars of that scheme, which has been formed to this purpose, but rather choose to insert at the bottom of the page a copy of such an association, which I am endeavouring to introduce among my own people, and which several have already signed. It is a feeble essay; and the effects of it in one congregation can be but very small: but if it were generally to be followed, who can tell what a harvest such a little grain might at length produce? May God multiply it a thousand-fold![*]

Excuse me, my reverend and dear brethren, that I have detained you so long with these various particulars: and permit me to conclude this address, with beseeching you to join with me in humble prayer to him, who knows the sincere regard to the temporal and eternal happiness of his creatures, by which the plain things of this Dedication and Sermon are dictated, that he may honour both with his blessing. If any parts of the scheme here laid before you, have not indeed that subserviency to the great end proposed,

* We whose names are subscribed, being moved, as we hope and trust, by a real concern for the propagation of the kingdom of Christ in the world, have determined to form ourselves into a society for that end, on the following terms:—

I. That we purpose, in our stated assemblies, to be duly putting up some earnest petitions to the throne of grace, for the encouragement of the gospel in the world, and for the success of all the faithful servants of Christ, who are engaged in the work of it, especially among the heathen and Jews.

II. That we will assemble, at least four times a year, in our place of public worship, at such seasons as shall by mutual consent be appointed, to spend some time in solemn prayer together on this important account; and we hereby engage, that we will endeavour so to order our affairs, as to attend at such meetings, unless such circumstances happen, as to lead us in our own consciences to determine, that it will be more acceptable to God the night at least, that we should be employed in some other business elsewhere.

III. We do hereby express our desire, that some of us may go, as God gives us opportunity, every year, those progresses of Scripture, which relate to the revival and enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world; that our hands may be supported, and our prayers quickened, by the continual intelligence of them.

IV. It is also our desire, that whatever unpublished accounts may relating to the progress of the gospel be received by the various parts of this kingdom, or from foreign lands by any members of the society, they may be communicated to one of our quarterly meetings; and the end of the charter if any required by our ministers, that he will endeavour to do it. Concerning such correspondences, that we may be the more capable of judging, how far God answers our prayers and those of his other servants, in this regard.

V. We further engage, that on those days of general fasting, which we shall as God shall be pleased to prosper us enable to keep, (which, be it ever so little, towards the carrying on the pious designs, in the hands of a Commissioner, to be chosen at the first meeting, to be disposed of by him, and four elders' trustees, that may be appointed, on such a manner as they shall judge most convenient, towards supporting the aforesaid designs, as abroad, printing Bibles, or other useful books in foreign languages, establishing schools for the instruction of the ignorant, &c. &c. &c.

VI. That the pastor for the time being, of one of the society, be always one of these trustees, and that four more be annually nominated by the society at the first meeting after New-year's-day, with a power of choosing their successors out of their own number, and that the accounts of the former year be then laid before the society, or before a committee appointed to examine them.

VII. That members after the first meeting, be admitted by the consent of the majority of the society present, at some stated meeting, and that any member there to be at liberty to propose to the society, as he sees fit.

VIII. That fines if needful be taken at every meeting, of the business transacted, the persons admitted, the contributions made at it, &c.

To these rules we subscribe our hands, earnestly praying, that God may open to us, and many others by our means, a greater door in this, and in every good work that we seek: and that pursuing the good wealth of those who in one place or another, are devoting their lives to the advancement of the gospel, we may another day partake of their joy.

which they are imagined to have, it would be a peculiar pleasure to me to be better informed; yet I must take the liberty to say, those must be strong arguments, which will prevail against the experience of the happy effects, which have for some time, in my own congregation, attended those, alas, too imperfect attempts, which I have made to carry them into execution. But if they are, as I assuredly believe, calculated to revive the languishing interest of real religion, may your advice, my honoured friends, in concurrence with that of my worthy brethren in these parts, and with the serious expostulations contained in the ensuing Discourse, prevail on others to make the trial of them, which surely they will not repent in the nearest views of eternity.

I persuade myself, gentlemen, that in the midst of those various cares and labours for the public service, to which, weak as I am, Divine Providence has called me, you will sometimes be repeating for me those suitable and pathetic petitions, which you were pleased, at Denton, and elsewhere, during my late interviews with you, to offer on my account; petitions, which I never recollect without a most sensible pleasure, and by the very remembrance of which I find myself animated to this very day. On my part, dear brethren, be assured of all the most affectionate good wishes, which sincere esteem and grateful friendship can inspire. May that Spirit of grace and supplication, the happy effects of which I so delightfully observed in those of you, on whom I had then an opportunity of attending, be in a still richer abundance poured forth upon you all! May you open your mouths boldly to declare the mysteries of God, as faithful witnesses to the truth and purity of his gospel, in the midst of a degenerate and backsliding age! May you teach, not only publicly, but from house to house! May a truly primitive and Scriptural discipline, which it is our privilege, that amidst all our discouragements we are able, not only to pray for, but to exercise, be impartially maintained! And in consequence of all this, may you have the pleasure to see your assemblies flourishing! May you feel your hearts daily cheered and animated, by the visible success of your labours! and may there be no contention among you, unless it be who shall exert himself with the most exemplary prudence, zeal, and love, in the prosecution of so good a work! May each of you, in the sphere which Providence has assigned him, be a burning and a shining light! And may the lustre of your fervent and active piety awaken (if any of them slumber) our brethren of the established clergy, to guard against that growth of the dissenting interest, which must otherwise be the probable consequence of such measures! May they all emulate the most faithful and zealous among us, in the purity of their doctrine, in the seriousness and spirituality of their address, in the vigilance of their pastoral inspection, in their tender care to train up the rising generation for God, and above all, in the distinguished sanctity of their lives! This will unite our hearts in such mutual esteem and affection, that even while in different communions, we shall treat each other like brethren and friends, and follow labourers in the vineyard of Christ; far more endeared by our common love to our divine Master, and the souls he has redeemed, than alienated by our different apprehensions as to the particular mode by which that interest is to be promoted. The question between us will not then be, "How much may we lawfully impose?" and "How much may we lawfully dispute?" But on the one side, it will be inquired, "What may we wave?" and on the other, "What may we acquiesce in, from a principle of mutual tenderness and respect; without displeasing our common Lord, and injuring that great cause of original Christianity, which he has appointed us to guard?" Thus may the flames of undissembled love purge away our dross, and cement us into one mass; where the union will be the closer, in proportion to the degree in which the metal is the nobler, and the more refined! And thus may it cause those letters to fall off, under the weight and the straitness of which, however they may have been gilded over, the worthiest persons that wear them must secretly groan! We are praying and waiting for that happy day, which, whenever it appears, will be the glorious earnest of the revival of the protestant and of the Christian cause. In the mean time, may each of us have a pleasing consciousness, that we are labouring to promote it; or at least that while we are waiting for the appearance of the great Physician among us, we do not, by our own rashness, exasperate those distempers, which in his absence we cannot heal! A wish, and a care, in which, I am sure, you will concur with,

Gentlemen,

Your most affectionate brother,
and faithful and obliged humble servant.

Northampton, February 1, 1741-2. P. DODDRIDGE.

PROV. XXIV. 11, 12.

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

THE interviews of the ministers of Christ will always be pleasant, in proportion to the degree in which they are animated, by divine grace, to think and act worthy of their honourable relation to him, and to each other. We, in these parts, have great reason for thankfulness, that we have so long known, by happy experience, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; and it is with peculiar joy that I reflect, we are met this day, not only to express and cultivate our mutual affection; but also, by our united counsels, to strengthen each other's hands in the work of our God, and to concert measures for the

more effectual revival of religion, in the several places where Providence has especially assigned it to our stated care. As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man often sharpens the countenance of his friend. Most gladly would I this day, since I am called to address you on so solemn and important an occasion, contribute my utmost to whet your spirits and my own; and to awaken us all to that zeal for the service of our common Master, which will render the various duties of our office abundantly delightful, and our reward in heaven proportionably great. O that what I have now to say might be like goads, to penetrate all our minds; and like nails, securely fastened in our memories and our hearts, given forth from the one great Shepherd! May all the instruments with which he is furnishing us in our pastoral work, be wisely and faithfully employed; and may the Master of assemblies this day be excited to use them with greater skill and diligence in his service!

And as for you, my brethren, in more private stations of life, I persuade myself you will hear me patiently and candidly: for though but little of my discourse will be immediately addressed to you, it is your cause I shall be pleading in the whole of it. You will, therefore, I hope, be often lifting up your hearts to God for the success of it; and will also be considering what intimations of your own duty you may collect, from what I am to address to those of a more public character. For though the words of my text may, with peculiar propriety, be applied to the ministers of the gospel, they were at first spoken with a much more general view: nor is there one soul in the assembly who may not consider them as directed by God to him, as truly as if his own name were prefixed to them. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, or (as it might be rendered) though thou mayest say,* Behold, we knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and will not he render to every man according to his works?

For the explication of which words, with all becoming deference to the superior judgment of some before whom I speak, I would offer these three plain and obvious remarks.

1. That the omission, which is here charged as so displeasing to God, though immediately referring to men's natural lives, must surely imply, that the neglect of their souls is much more criminal.

The text strongly implies, that we shall be exposed to guilt and condemnation before God, by forbearing to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain. This must directly refer to innocent persons, brought into visible and extreme danger by some oppressive enemy, either by the sudden assault of a private person, or by some unjust prosecution under forms of law; and may particularly extend to cases, where we have reason to believe, a capital sentence has been passed in consequence of false witness, detected before execution is done:† when cases of one sort or the other occur, we may consider Solomon as requiring, just as his father David had done, that we should by such interpositions, as suit the case in question, and that station in which Providence has fixed us, defend the poor and the fatherless, or those who are oppressed, as orphans often are; that we should do justice to the afflicted and the needy; and should endeavour to deliver the poor and the needy, and to rid them out of the hand of the wicked. And though this may expose us to popular clamours, we should adopt the heroic resolution of Job, not fearing a great multitude, nor permitting the reproach of families to terrify us, so as to keep silence, and not go out of the door. One would hope, such attacks as these seldom happened under the peaceful and equitable reign of Solomon: but as violence and fraud are in some degree the product of all climates and ages, he had, no doubt, in some instances observed them;‡ and had remarked a culpable negligence in those, who ought to have interposed to have delivered the victims from such an undeserved stroke; on which account, he judged it necessary to enter his solemn protest against an indolence and cowardice, so detrimental to society, and so offensive to God, the great guardian of it.

Now you will please to observe, that delivering persons reduced to such extreme danger in the circumstance I have described, would generally be an act of charity attended with great danger, or with great trouble. And if the neglect of that be (as you see it is) represented as highly criminal, it must be a much greater offence to suffer any to perish, for want of either food, shelter, or harbour, in circumstances where a person is able, by a little trouble, expense, or care, to preserve their lives. And we may argue, by a consequence yet stronger than this, that it must be a much more heinous crime than either, by any neglect of ours, to permit the ruin of men's souls, without endeavouring their recovery,

* It is well known, that the particle כי [illegible]

† [illegible]

‡ [illegible]

when they are, as it were, drawn away to the extremest danger of eternal death, and are ready to be slain by the sword of divine justice. For if temporal life should be thus tenderly regarded, and expense or danger should be cheerfully met in the defence of it, judge you, Sirs, as in the sight of God, how much more precious the redemption of the soul is, which will soon cease, even for ever.

Nay, I might go yet further, and draw an inference, if it were necessary, from that humane and charitable precept of the Jewish legislator: If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again: if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burthen, wilt thou forbear, or, (as it might be rendered,) wouldst thou refrain, to help him? or couldst thou be so cruel as to harbour a thought of it? No, thou shalt surely help with him; *i. e.* thou shalt go, if it be necessary, and join thy strength with that of thine enemy, to raise the beast from the ground. Now if God not only regards the natural life of a man, but if he thus appears to care for oxen, and for asses, how much more must he require us to reduce wandering souls, and to do what we can to raise them, when pressed under the burthen of sin, and in danger of being crushed into eternal misery?

2. The text seems to suppose that men would be ready to excuse themselves for this neglect.

It is true indeed, that at the first sight of a miserable object we naturally find a strong impulse to endeavour to relieve it. Our hearts do, as it were, spring in our bosoms, and urge us forward to exert ourselves on such an occasion; which seems to be intimated by that word, which we render forbear, which often signifies to check, restrain, and hold back a person from what he is eager on doing.* But the wise man intimates, there may be danger of suppressing these generous sallies of the soul on the first view of the object; of suffering our charity to cool, and then of searching out apologies for our inactivity. You may be ready to say, Behold, we knew it not. "I did not particularly see the danger; I did not, however, apprehend it to be so extreme: or, I did not know the innocence of the person in danger: or, if I did believe it, I knew not how to deliver him. I did not think the interposition of such a person as I could be of any importance in such an affair. I was sorry to see innocence overborne, and weakness oppressed; but I was myself too weak to contend with the mightier oppressor; too poor, too ignorant, or too busy, to meddle in an affair, where those who were much my superiors were concerned, and had determined the case. I had no obligations to the person in danger; I had no concern with him, nor any thing to do to embarrass myself with his affairs."

If these excuses be just, it is well. God requires impossibilities from no man; nor does he expect that persons should rashly throw themselves upon difficulties and dangers, when there is no such rational prospect of doing good, as may balance the hazard. Nevertheless the text supposes,

3. That these excuses might often be overruled, by an appeal to men's consciences as in the sight of God.

Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? As if he should have said, "It is an easy thing to excuse omissions, so that a fellow-creature shall have nothing to reply; but whoever thou art that readest these words, I charge thee to remember, that it is comparatively a very little matter to be judged of man's judgment; he that judgeth thee is the Lord: and he pondereth the heart; he weighs, in a most accurate balance, all its most secret sentiments. I therefore cut off all chicane and trifling debate at once, by placing thee in his presence, and laying open thy conscience there. Thou canst answer me; but canst thou answer the heart-searching God? Does not he, the great Father of spirits, see, in every instance, how inferior spirits conduct themselves? Does he not precisely know the situation, in which thy heart was at the very moment in question? Thou sayest, thou knewest it not; but he is witness, whether thou indeed didst or didst not know it. And he also sees all the opportunities and advantages, which thou hadst for knowing it; all the hints, which might have been traced out to open a more explicit and particular knowledge; every glimpse which thou hadst, when thou wast (like the priest, when he spied at a distance the wounded traveller) passing by on the other side, and perhaps affecting to look the contrary way."

Nor was it in vain, that the wise man renewed his expostulation in a different form. He that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? As if he had said, "Consider God, as keeping thine own soul; as holding it in life; as preserving thy spirit by his continued visitation: and then say, O thou, that neglectest the life of thy brother, whether he must not be highly displeased with that neglect? May he not reasonably expect, that while he, the Lord of heaven and earth, condescends to become thy guardian, thou shouldst learn of him, and be according to thine ability, and in thy sphere, a guardian to the whole human race, and shouldst endeavour, in every instance, to ward off danger from the life, from the soul, of thy brother?"

And that these thoughts may enter into the mind with all their weight, it is added once more, in this pointed form of interrogation, Will not he render to every man according to his works? I appeal to

* It is in the original חשך, and the same word is used for even the restraint put on the passion of Abimelech by Sarah, Gen. xx. 6; the revenge of David, when mollified by Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 39; and on the martial fury of David's party when pursuing the rebels under Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 16. Compare Job xvi. 6. Prov. xxi. 26.

thine own heart, is he not a Being of infinite moral, as well as natural, perfections, and will he not, as the judge of all the earth, do right? Would he not have remembered, and rewarded, thy generous care for the preservation of the miserable creature in question? And, on the other hand, will he not reckon with thee for such a failure? Human laws, indeed, cannot punish such neglects; but the supreme legislature can, and will do it. Think of these things, and guard against such fatal negligence in every future instance: think of them, and humble thyself deeply before God, for every past instance in which such guilt has been incurred."

You easily perceive, from this explication of my text, that (as I hinted above) I might very properly make it the foundation of a discourse "on the care of souls in general," addressed to persons of all ranks and professions in life; especially to parents,* and masters, and heads of families: and they will indeed have an evident share in what I am to say, and therefore I would bespeak their particular attention to it. But considering the occasion of our present assembly, and also considering how much of their fidelity, in the performance of their duty, will probably, under God, depend upon the exhortations, instructions, and assistances, they receive from us, I shall chiefly address these things to you, my reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry; and entreat your patient and candid attendance, while I speak to you with all possible plainness and seriousness, as in the name and presence of our common Master.

God is my witness, that I mean not to insinuate the least disrespectful thought with regard to any one of you. Indeed I have not the least temptation to it, for I can say, with equal integrity and pleasure, that I believe few of your profession in the Christian world (glorious as that profession is, and happy as it is in many that adorn it) are more constant, more upright, or more zealous, in the course of their public ministry. I repeat it with great cheerfulness, that I am inwardly persuaded, few of the servants of Christ are, or in any modern age have been, more faithfully solicitous to declare to their people the whole counsel of God; or to enforce their public exhortations, by the silent but powerful eloquence of a blameless, a holy, an exemplary life. And of this, I assuredly believe, you have a testimony in the consciences of all around you, and even of multitudes who are not stated attendants on your labours; and who perhaps, in such a case, are under some temptations to err on the severe, rather than on the candid, extreme. So that in this respect, I could cheerfully say, Would to God, that all your brethren in the Christian ministry, throughout the nation, and the world, were even as you! Nevertheless, permit me to say it without offence, (for I say it in the fear of God, and with the sincerest deference and friendship to you,) I am afraid, the extensive and important obligations of the ministerial office are not generally considered, and remembered among us, as they ought. I apprehend, much more might be done for the honour of God, and the good of souls, than is commonly done, I will not say, by those careless and profane wretches, who undertake the tremendous charge merely for the sake of worldly emoluments; by those whom the plainness of prophetic language calls dumb dogs, that cannot bark, and greedy dogs, that can never have enough; but even by those, who in the main have a principle of true religion in their hearts; by those, who keep up the exercise of public worship in a regular and honourable manner, and appear not only irreproachable in their conversation, but, if considered as in private life, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. The learned, the wise, the virtuous, the pious minister, is, I fear, often negligent of a considerable part of his trust and charge; and thereby fails to deliver, as he might, those that are drawn unto death, and perhaps are just ready to be slain. To awaken our spirits therefore from that insensibility in this respect, into which they are so ready to fall, and so to improve the present opportunity, that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work which our office requires, I shall take the liberty,

I. Briefly to consider, what excuses we may be most ready to offer, for neglecting the souls of men.

II. Seriously to represent the great evil of that neglect in the sight of God, notwithstanding all those excuses. After which,

III. I shall add a few hints by way of reflection, as the time may admit.

And if a consciousness of my own past neglects, and an ignorance of circumstances in the congregations of my brethren, lead me to suppose some deficiencies greater than they really are, and to give any cautions, which their diligence and zeal render necessary, with regard to some that hear me, they will, I hope, forgive me this involuntary wrong. I am far from the thought of charging any particular person, and ground most of the remarks I now present, on what is obvious in the temper of mankind, and on those infirmities of human nature, to which the best of men are obnoxious, however by divine grace they may be conquered in a few of the most eminent for fidelity and zeal.

I. I am to consider, what excuses we may be ready to make, for neglecting to do our utmost for the salvation of men's souls.

Now I imagine one of the first thoughts, which may present itself to our view upon such an occasion, may be this:

* I have treated the matter at large with them in my Sermons on Education.

1. That we do something considerable for that purpose:

And particularly, that we take care for their instruction in public; reading the word of God to them, when they are assembled together in his house; explaining and enforcing it in our expositions and sermons; presenting prayers and praises to God, in their name; and, at proper seasons administering the sacraments, in such a manner as we judge most agreeable to the institution of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so far, indeed, it is well: and a most wise and gracious constitution of our blessed Redeemer it is, that such ordinances should be administered, on solemn stated days, and by men appropriated to that employment; in consequence of which, such knowledge is dispersed, as may be, and undoubtedly is, through the divine blessing, effectual for the salvation of many souls. So that ministers cannot go through the external and public services of their function, without giving their hearers some great and valuable advantages, far beyond what the professors of any other religion can find in the rites of their various, and generally absurd and superstitious, worship. And I am not afraid to say, that this would make the Christian ministry, even in the hands of ignorant, careless, and vicious men, a blessing to the nation where it is settled, so long as reading the Scriptures, and almost any kind of prayers, in an intelligible language, make a part of divine service in their assemblies. Much more then will it be so in the hands of wise, sober, and religious men, though, through human frailty, they are much less zealous and active, than it were to be wished they were, or than they ought to be.

But while we are thus pleading our diligence and care in the administration of public ordinances, it will be kindness to ourselves seriously to ask our own hearts, at least, how they are administered. It is (as I have elsewhere hinted) a very important trust, to have the management of men's religious hours committed to us; their seasons of social worship being comparatively so short, and so infinitely momentous. Methinks we do almost, as it were, put our own lives in our hand while we undertake it, and may justly tremble on the view of that awful account which we are to give for it.

I hope, Sirs, we have the testimony of our own consciences before God, that we do not, on these solemn occasions, content ourselves with cold essays on mere moral subjects, however acute, philosophical, or polite; nor make it our main business, in our sermons, to seek the ornament and elegance of words, the refinements of criticism, or the nice arrangement of various complex and abstruse argumentations. When we speak, in the name and presence of God, to immortal creatures on the borders of eternity, I hope we entertain our hearers with plain, serious, and lively discourses, on the most important doctrines of Christianity, in their due connexion, and their relation to each other, in such a manner, as we, on mature consideration, do verily believe may have the most effectual tendency to bring them to God through Christ, and to produce and promote in their hearts, through the divine blessing, the great work of regeneration and holiness. I hope and trust, that God is our witness, and that the people of our charge are witnesses, that not one of those that diligently attend on our ministry, though but for a few succeeding sabbaths, can fail to learn the way of salvation, as exhibited in the gospel; and that we speak of it as those that are in earnest, and do from our very souls desire to answer the great ends of our ministry, in the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the eternal happiness of those invaluable souls whom he has committed to our care. Otherwise we may incur great and fatal guilt, though public worship be constantly and decently carried on, and though a reasonable proportion of time be employed in it, with numerous and attentive auditories; to whom we may be as the lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, while in the ears of God, for want of that fervent charity which should dictate and animate all, we are but as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal.

But granting, as I would willingly suppose, and as with relation to you, my brethren, I do firmly believe, all these reflections can be answered to satisfaction; here is indeed a part of your duty honourably performed, and an important part of it too.

But is that part, though ever so important, to be substituted for the whole? The diligent inspection of our flock, pastoral visits, the observation of the religious state of families, personal exhortations, admonitions, and cautions, by word or letter, as prudence shall direct, the catechising children, the promoting religious associations among the younger and the elder people of our charge, and the strict and resolute exercise of discipline in the several churches over which we preside; are these no parts of our office? Will we say it with our dying breath, will we maintain it before the tribunal of Christ, that they did not belong to the Christian ministry? And if not, will our care in other parts of it be allowed as a sufficient excuse before him, for our total omission of these? We have preached, and prayed, and administered the sacraments. These things we should indeed have done; and when we had taken the care of congregations upon us, we could hardly avoid it; but surely our own consciences will now, or hereafter, tell us, that we ought not to have left the others undone. But we may perhaps for a while elude the conviction, by pleading,

2. That the care of particular persons more properly belongs to others; and especially, to heads of

families, who have more opportunities of being serviceable to those under their charge, and indeed have the most immediate concern in them.

It certainly does. But does it belong to them alone? Or if it did, do not they belong to us, and to our care? And is it not the part of every superior officer of a society to see to it, that the subaltern officers be careful and diligent in the discharge of their duty? And in this case, are we to take it for granted, that in our respective congregations heads of families are of course so? That they pray in their families; that they read the Scriptures, and other good books there, especially on the evening of the Lord's day; that they catechise their children, and solemnly press upon them, and their servants, the serious care of practical religion? Are we roundly to conclude, without any further inquiry, that all this is done; and done in so diligent and so prudent a manner? And that there is no need of any particular exhortations, instructions, or admonitions from us? Would to God there were any one congregation in the whole kingdom, of which this might reasonably be presumed to be the case! But if it were indeed so, would not our concurrence with these wise and pious heads of families, in so good, but so difficult, a work, encourage and strengthen them to prosecute it with greater cheerfulness and vigour? Would it not quicken both their cares and their endeavours? And might it not, by the divine blessing, promote the success of them? Might it not gain on the minds of children and servants, to see that we did not think it beneath us, tenderly to care for their souls? And might not our tender and condescending regards to them in private, while it convinced them how well we meant them, render our public labours more acceptable and useful to them? Now we well know, that the children and servants of the present generation are the hopes of the next; as they are probably those, that in their turns will be parents and governors of families; whose children and servants, when they arise, will one way or another feel the happy, or unhappy, consequences, of our fidelity or neglect? And when such affairs are in question, shall we allow ourselves to plead,

3. That we have so much other business, and such various engagements of a different kind, that we cannot possibly attend to these things.

But give me leave, my brethren, to observe, that the question here is not, whether we can find out other agreeable ways of filling up our time? but whether those other ways are more important, and whether that different manner of employing it, be most acceptable in the sight of God, and will turn to a better account in that great day, when our conduct is to be finally reviewed by him? We must indeed have our seasons of recreation and our seasons of study, but it will easily appear that no regards to either of these will vindicate, or excuse, our neglect of the private duties we owe to our flock, in giving diligence to know their state, and being careful to teach them, not only publicly, but from house to house.

Recreation, to be sure, can afford no just apology for neglecting it; since to follow this employment prudently, might be made a kind of recreation from the labours of a sedentary and studious life. A grave and severe recreation! you will perhaps say. Grave indeed I will acknowledge it to be; but not therefore to a serious mind less delightful. So much of those two noblest and sweetest exercises of the soul, devotion and benevolence, would naturally mingle with these pious cares and tender addresses, as would renew the strength which had been exhausted in our studious hours, and the manly, shall I say, or rather the godlike, joy it would administer, would quite discountenance that which we find in the gay indulgences of a humorous and facetious conversation; though I see no necessity of forbidding that, at proper intervals, so far as its cheerfulness is consistent with wisdom and religion. And I am sure, that if we can turn our seasons of recess from study to so profitable an account, as would be answered by the duties which you know I have now in view, it will be a most happy art, well becoming one who is truly prudent, and would therefore husband his time to the best purposes for eternity; in which view it is evident, that the smallest fragments of it, like the dust of gold, or jewels, are too valuable to be lost.

The great proportion of time to be given to our studies, will, no doubt, be urged, as a yet more material excuse. But here it is obvious to reply, that a prudent care in the duties I am now recommending, is very consistent with our employing a great deal of time in study; and particularly, with our giving it, what I hope we shall always learn to value and redeem, our morning hours, to which some of the evening may also be added. And if these will not generally suffice, give me leave to ask, what are those important studies, that would thus engross the whole of our time, excepting what is given to devotion, and to what is generally called recreation?

I have had some little taste of the pleasures of literature myself, and have some reason to hope, I shall not be suspected of any prejudice against it; nor am I at all inclined to pass those contemptuous censures on the various branches of it, in which ignorance and sloth are often, with strange stupidity, or with yet stranger assurance, seeking, and it may be finding, a refuge. But on such an occasion I must freely say, I fear many things, which employ a very large portion of our retired time, are studied rather as polite amusements to our own minds, than as things which seem to have any apparent sub-

serviency to the glory of God, and the edification of our flock; and consequently, I fear, they will stand as articles of abatement, if I may so express it, in our final account; and when they come to be made manifest, will be found works that shall be burnt, as being no better, in the divine esteem, than wood, hay, and stubble, how beautifully soever they may have been varnished, or gilded over.

Let me here, in particular, address myself to my younger brethren, with a frankness which may be to them more excusable, while I urge them to a Christian self-denial upon this head, where perhaps it may be, of all others, the most difficult. I do not apprehend persons of your approved character to be in danger of any other kind of luxury and intemperance; but there is, if you will permit me so to call it, a sort of refined intellectual luxury, with regard to which I am jealous over you, lest you should be seduced into it, or rather lest some of you be already insnared by its specious charms.

I would not, my young friends, be so severe and cruel, as to desire you should be confined from that high and elegant entertainment, which a person of genius and taste will find in the masterly writings of the ancient orators, historians, and poets; or in those polite and elegant pieces, which our own and other modern languages, may afford; from which the wise man, and the Christian, will learn many things of solid use, as well as matters of most delightful amusement. Neither would I pretend to forbid some mathematical and philosophical researches, into which you are initiated in your academical course, and with which you will do well to retain and improve your acquaintance in the progress of life, both to strengthen your rational faculties by that strenuous exercise, and to improve your knowledge of the works of God, which will appear great, wonderful, and delightful, in proportion to the degree of sagacity and diligence with which they may be searched out. But it is one thing to *taste* of these poignant and luscious fruits, and another to *feed* and *live* upon them:—one thing to make the most noble and substantial parts of them our entertainment and refreshment; and quite another to make their circumstantial curiosities the chief business of our study, and the favourite subjects of our most attentive inquiry. That true greatness and elevation of mind, which the gospel is so admirably calculated to produce, would teach us a much sublimer science: and if, for the sake of these little things, we neglect to pray for those whom God hath committed to our care, to inquire into their religious state, to pursue them with suitable applications and addresses, the time will come when we shall assuredly own, that we dearly purchased the most refined pleasures they could possibly give us; not to say, how much greater and nobler pleasure we even now resign, while our duty is neglected. O, my brethren, let us consider how fast we are, as it were, posting through this dying life which God has assigned us, in which we are to manage concerns of infinite moment, how fast we are passing on to the immediate presence of our Lord, to give up our account to him. You must judge for yourselves; but permit me to say, that for my own part, I would not for ten thousand worlds be that man, who when God shall ask him at last, how he has employed most of his time, while he continued a minister in his church, and had the care of souls, should be obliged to reply, "Lord, I have restored many corrupted passages in the ancient classics, and illustrated many which were before obscure; I have cleared up many intricacies in chronology, or geography; I have solved many perplexed cases in algebra; I have refined on astronomical calculations; and left behind me many sheets on these curious and difficult subjects, where the figures and characters are ranged with the greatest exactness and truth: and these are the employments in which my life has been worn out, while preparations for the pulpit, or ministrations in it, did not demand my immediate attendance." O, Sirs, as for the waters which are drawn from these springs, how sweetly soever they may taste to a curious mind that thirsts for them, or to an ambitious mind which thirsts for the applause they sometimes procure, I fear, there is often reason to pour them out before the Lord, with rivers of penitential tears, as the blood of souls which have been forgotten, while these trifles have been remembered and pursued.*

Nor am I without my fears, that a great deal of studious time is lost, in an over-artful composition of sermons, and in giving them such polish and ornament, as does not conduce to their usefulness,

* [illegible]

not any way balance the labour employed in the work. If we do not diligently watch over our hearts, this will be an incense, offered to our own vanity, which will render our sacrifice less acceptable to God, however we and our hearers may be delighted with the perfume. Greater plainness and simplicity of speech might be more useful to the bulk of our auditory, and perhaps more acceptable too; and on the whole, it might be at least equally beautiful. For all that are not children in understanding know, that there is a natural and manly kind of eloquence, arising from a deep sense of the subject, and an ardent love to the souls of our hearers, which is, of all others, the most to be desired and esteemed. And though such discourses may be attended with some little inaccuracies, and may want something of the varnish which exacter preparation might set on; yet surely, where a habit of speaking is formed, by proper application, and the materials of a sermon are well digested in the mind, it will rise above a reasonable contempt. And if where exacter preparation is made, a care to preserve those niceties of composition deaden the manner of the delivery, and take off either its solemnity, its vigour, or its tenderness, I cannot but apprehend it as injurious to the character of the orator as to that of the Christian. The most celebrated speakers in judicial courts, and in senates, have, in all nations and ages, pursued the method I now recommend; and the most acceptable preachers have successfully attempted it. On the whole, permit me to say, it would be a fatal thing, to barter away the souls of our people, for the highest and justest reputation of speaking well; yet I fear there are many, who in this view do it for nought, and have not in any sense increased their wealth by the price. But perhaps, after all, the most plausible excuse may be that, which I have reserved for the last I shall now mention, viz.

4. That the attempts I am proposing might displease those that attend upon our ministry; upon which account it may seem, both with respect to them and ourselves, a necessary precaution of prudence to decline them.

This is the lion in the street; which, slothful as we too naturally are, we often plead for staying within doors, when our duty calls us abroad on these charitable errands: but I hope, on a nearer approach, it will not be found so fierce or so invincible, as a timorous imagination paints it.

Methinks, brethren, we make a very unfavourable representation of the temper and character, not to say of the breeding and understanding, of our people, when we so readily take it for granted, they will be displeased with us for addressing those exhortations to them in private, which they seem so desirous of receiving from us in public. Let us ask our own consciences, would they *all* be displeased? If not, the displeasure it might give to *some*, can be no excuse for neglecting it with regard to others. And are we indeed so miserable, as to be situated among whole congregations, in whom ignorance, pride, and profaneness, prevail to such a degree, that a minister, who would be welcome among them if he came only as a common visitant, should be looked upon with contempt or indignation, when he came expressly as a friend to their eternal interests, and would step a little out of the common way for their salvation? If this were really our case, who would not say with the prophet, O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, though it were but such a wretched cave as travellers find in a desert, that I might leave my people, and go from them; for they be all an assembly of treacherous men!—of treacherous men indeed, if, while they call themselves Christians and protestants, yea, and profess to separate from their brethren on religious principles, they should think themselves injured and affronted by the exhortations of their ministers, while they would warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they might present them perfect in Christ. But blessed be God, bad as the world is, there is no room to imagine this to be the case, or any thing like it. Perhaps while we are delaying, and coldly deliberating about it, many lively Christians under our care are earnestly praying, that God may put such a thing into our hearts; and should we attempt it, I doubt not but they would receive us as an angel of God, or even as Christ himself; their love to us would be more abundantly confirmed, and their heart cemented in closer bonds than they have yet known. And many others would at least own, that we acted in character, and maintained a more apparent consistency of behaviour, if the affair were properly conducted.

Did we indeed pretend to control them in the management of their temporal affairs, or to exercise a lordly dominion over their faith and their conscience, they might justly be displeased; or did we craftily demand that they should lay open to us the secrets of their breasts in confession, their suspicions were pardonable, and their resentments reasonable. But it must be great malice or folly to suspect any design of that infamous nature, from our visiting them as pastors, with pious exhortations and affectionate prayers, as those who are concerned for them, and their children, and servants, that their souls may prosper and be in health. A solicitude for the health of their bodies is esteemed friendship and gratitude, and inquiries concerning it seem but common decency, and can it offend them to find we are solicitous about that welfare which is infinitely more important, and, by virtue of our office, our peculiar charge?

Yes, you will say, in one instance it will dis-

please; for when we are obliged to blame any thing which we see amiss in them, their pride will naturally take fire on such an occasion: and perhaps those whom we have thought our best friends, will become our enemies, if we will venture to tell them such disagreeable truths as fidelity may extort in some circumstances. This is, after all, the main difficulty; and as I cannot wonder if it impress our minds, I pray God to forgive the perverseness of those that make it so great. Yet surely, it is possible to manage reproof so, as that, in most instances, it shall oblige, rather than provoke. If we tell our hearers of their faults privately; and if we do it with tenderness and respect: if we show by our manner of speaking, that what we say proceeds from a humble fear lest we should displease God, betray our trust, and injure their souls by the neglect: if, at the same time, our behaviour to them be, as it surely should be, constantly obliging: if we do our utmost, so far as truth and justice will permit, to guard and shelter their character in the world; and bring our complaints of them to none but themselves: bad as the world is, I believe few will quarrel with us upon this account; but we shall see, as Solomon observed, that he who rebuketh a man will afterwards find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.

But supposing the worst that can happen, that folly and wickedness should prevail so far, over all the tender and prudent address of the friend and the pastor, as to render us evil for so great a good, and hatred for so generous and so self-denying an instance of love, how could that hatred be expressed? Seldom in any more formidable manner, than by withdrawing from our ministry, and discontinuing what they have done for our support; for the revilings of persons of such a character can seldom hurt any but themselves. Now I hope, brethren, we shall always retain so much of a manly, not to say a Christian, spirit, as to choose to retrench some of our expenses, to forego some of the entertainments of life, to cast ourselves and families on Providence; or even, if it were necessary, to subsist in an honest and creditable poverty by the daily labour of our own hands; much rather than meanly to crouch to such haughty sinners, and sacrifice duty, honour, and conscience, to the arrogance of their petulant temper. Let us fear God as we ought, and we shall find nothing to fear from them; but should be willing to imitate the fidelity and courage of the Baptist, though the wrath of a king might be provoked by it, and imprisonment or martyrdom might be its reward.

I hope such considerations as these may effectually obviate the excuses which indolence or cowardice may be ready to form, from our neglect of men's souls: especially when we go on,

II. To consider the great evil of that neglect, as it appears in the sight of God, notwithstanding all these excuses, or any of the like kind, with which we may endeavour to palliate it.

But who can fully represent it, as it appears to his capacious and all-penetrating view? What human mind can conceive the infinite evil? It is not, Sirs, a subject on which to display the wantonness of wit, or the colourings of artificial harangue: a terrible kind of solemnity attends it, and I attempt the display of it with fear and trembling. If it seems a light matter to us to forbear to deliver those that in this sense are drawn unto death, and them that are thus ready to perish, consider, my brethren, and oh, may my own conscience always consider,—what the death of the soul is;—how many wretched souls are continually dying around us;—what gracious provision God has made to prevent it;—and what peculiar obligations we are under to labour to the utmost for the preservation of their lives.

1. Let us think, "what the death of the soul is."

The apostle James intimates, that it is a thought of great importance, when he says, He that shall turn a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death: as if he had said, Do but reflect what that is, and you will find your success is its own reward. We well know, that to save a soul from death, is not merely to prevent the extinction of its being, though even that were much; but to prevent its positive, its lasting, its eternal misery. It is to prevent its being slain by the pointed and flaming sword of the divine justice.

It is a tragical spectacle to behold a criminal dying by human laws, even where the methods of execution are gentle; as, through the lenity of ours, they generally are amongst us: and I doubt not, but it would grieve us to the heart, to see any who had been under our ministerial care in that deplorable circumstance. But oh, how much more deeply must it pierce our very souls, to see them led forth to that last dreadful execution, with those of whom Christ shall say, As for these mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before me! Oh how will it wound us, to hear the beginning of those cries and wailings, which must never end! How shall we endure the reflection, "These wretches are perishing for ever, in part because I would not take any pains to attempt their salvation!" And is this so strange a supposition, that some once under our ministry may then perish in our sight! Would to God, that it were less probable! But, on the contrary, let us,

2. Consider, "how many souls, precious and immortal as they are, seem to be continually dying around us."

Are there but few that miscarry! Let Peter inform us, when he says, That the righteous scarcely are saved. Yea, let our Lord himself inform us,

when he says, Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; whereas wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. We grieve to see epidemical distempers prevailing around us; we are ready, as Providence calls us, to visit the sick and the dying, and could take little pleasure in our own health, if we did not endeavour to succour them, as we have opportunity. But let us look round, and see, whether that distemper, which threatens the death of souls, be not epidemical indeed. With all the allowances which that charity can make, which believeth all things, and hopeth all things, which it can with any shadow of reason hope and believe; must we not own, there are marks of eternal death on many? and that there are many more, in whom we can see nothing which looks like a token of spiritual life? So that the best we can say of them is, that possibly there may be some latent sparks of it concealed in the heart, which as yet produce no effect to the honour of their profession, or the benefit of the world. In the mean time, sinners are spreading their infidelity, and their vices, far and wide; as if, like some illustrious wretches that have been miscalled heroes, they accounted the destruction of numbers their glory. Can we behold such a contagion spreading itself even in the Christian church, which ought to be healthful as the regions of paradise, and not bitterly lament it before God? Or can we seriously lament it, and not endeavour its redress? Especially when we consider,

3. "What gracious provision God hath made to prevent their death."

Is there not indeed balm in Gilead? Is there not a physician there? even this glorious gospel of the blessed God, whose efficacy we have so often heard of, and seen? And shall they yet perish? Adored be the riches of divine grace, we know (and it is infinitely the most important part of our knowledge) that there is a rich and free pardon proclaimed, to all that will sue it out, and accept the benefit in a proper, that is, a grateful, manner; for cordial acceptance, and real gratitude, is all it demands. One would expect, the tidings should be as life to the dead: but we see how coldly they are received; how shamefully they are slighted; how generally, yea, how obstinately, they are rejected. And what is the consequence? Refusing to believe on the Son of God, they shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them, with an additional weight of vengeance, as it well may. Now is not this enough to make our very hearts bleed, to think, that immortal souls should die under the gospel; die under aggravated guilt and ruin? So that instead of being any thing the better for this delightful message of peace and grace, they should be for ever the worse for it; and have reason to wish, throughout all eternity, they had never seen the faces, nor heard the voices, of those that brought it, but had been numbered among the sinners of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah.

If we do not, on the express authority of our Lord, believe this to be the case with regard to impenitent sinners under the gospel, we are not Christians of the lowest class. But if we do believe it, and are not affected with it, so far as to endeavour their recovery, I see not how any regard to our own temporal interest, or that of others, can entitle us to the character, either of prudence, or humanity; even though we had not been distinguished by a public office in the church, but had passed through life in the station of the obscurest among our hearers. But it is impossible I should do justice to my argument, if I do not urge,

4. The consideration of "the peculiar obligations we are under, to endeavour the preservation of souls, not only in virtue of our experience as Christians, but of our office as ministers."

If we were only to consider our experiences, as we are Christians, if we have any thing more than the empty name, that consideration might certainly afford us a very tender argument, to awaken our compassion to the souls of others. We know what it is ourselves, to be upon the brink of destruction, and in that sad circumstance to obtain mercy; and shall we not extend mercy to others? We have looked to Jesus, that we might live; and shall we not point him out to them? We have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and shall we not desire to communicate the same happy relish of his grace to all about us? He has magnified the riches of his pardoning love to us; and shall we not, with David, resolve, we will endeavour to teach transgressors his ways, and labour to promote the conversion of sinners unto him? Even now is he keeping our souls; his visitation preserves our spirits, and, as it is by his grace that we are what we are, it is by having obtained help from him, that we continue unto this day: and shall his grace, daily bestowed upon us, be in vain? And shall not we have compassion on our fellow-servants, as our Lord continually hath pity on us?

But our office, as ministers, completes the obligation, when we consider the view in which the word of God represents that office, and the view in which we ourselves have received it.

As for the former of these, we are all acquainted with those representations, and it is greatly to be wished, for our own sake, and that of our people, they may be very familiar to our minds. Let us often listen with becoming attention to the blessed God as speaking to us, in those words which he once addressed to the prophet Ezekiel, that faithful approved servant of the Lord: Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel:

therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me: when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his evil way *to save his life*; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but *his blood will I require at thine hand*. And with apparent reason may the sentinel be punished, for the desolation which the enemy makes, while instead of watching he sleeps.

We are elsewhere represented as men of God, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, as made overseers, or bishops, by the Holy Ghost, as under-shepherds in subordination to Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls: and ought not the thought, gentle as it is, to awaken us to a diligent inspection over the sheep he has committed to our care? Otherwise, we are but images of shepherds; as it is represented in those lively and awful words of God by Zechariah, which methinks might strike terror and trembling into many, who in the eye of the world may seem the happiest of their brethren: Woe to the idol shepherd, that leaveth the flock: the sword of divine vengeance, which by his negligence he has justly incurred, shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; upon that eye, which should have watched over the flock, and that arm, which should have been stretched out for its rescue; so that he shall be deprived of those capacities he abused, and be made miserable in proportion to that abuse; for his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Such we know are the pathetic views, which the Scripture gives us of our office, and of the guilt and danger attending the neglect.

I might, if my time would admit, further urge the views, with which we have ourselves received it, and engaged in it. Most of us, when we undertook the pastoral charge, solemnly recorded our vows before God; "that we would endeavour, with all diligence and zeal, to attend to the services of this holy function; that we would be instant in season, and out of season, and labour to discharge the private, as well as public, duties of the ministerial life." These vows of God are upon us; and every ordination of any of our brethren, at which we assist, adds a further and solemn obligation to them. Let us therefore take the greatest care, that we do not deal deceitfully, and unfaithfully, both with God and man. For it is most evident, that though the neglect of immortal souls is very criminal in every rational creature, it is most of all so in us, who have so deliberately, and so publicly, undertaken the charge of them.

It would indeed, in this case, not only be cruelty to them, but the basest treachery and ingratitude to our great Lord, who has lodged such a trust in our hands; a trust which evidently lies so near his heart. Having redeemed his people with his own blood, he commits them to our care; and having acquired to himself the most tender claim to our love that can be imagined, he graciously requires this evidence of it, that we should feed his sheep, yea, his lambs; so putting our office in the most amiable view, and bringing in every sentiment of grateful friendship to excite our diligence in it.

However we may regard it, I doubt not, but our blessed Redeemer considers it, as the greatest favour, and honour, he could have conferred upon us; that being returned to his throne in the heavens, he should choose us to negociate his cause and interest on earth, and should consign over to our immediate care that gospel he brought down from heaven, and those souls which he died to save; and that he should make it the delightful labour of our life, to follow him in his own profession and employment, to be, of all our fellow-creatures, his most immediate representatives, and, in humble subordination to him, saviours of men. Does not the very mention of it cause our hearts to glow with a fervent desire, and generous ambition, of answering so high a confidence? Could any one of us endure the thought of betraying it?

How could we, in that case, lift up our faces before him, when we shall, as we certainly must, see him eye to eye. Yes, my brethren, let us every hour recollect it; our Master will, ere long, come, and reckon with us: he will render to every man according to his works, as my text expresses it in exact harmony with the language of the New Testament. And which of us would not then wish to appear before him, as those that have been faithfully attached to his cause, and have distinguished themselves by a zeal for his service? Shall we then, any of us, repent of our activity in so good a work? Shall we wish, that we had given more of our time to the pursuit of secular interest, or the curiosities of literature, and less to the immediate care of souls? O my brethren, let us be wise in time. We have but one life to spend on earth; and that a very short one too: let us make our best of it; and lay it out in such kind of employments, as we do verily believe will give us most satisfaction in the closing moments of it, and when eternity is opening upon us. It is easy to form plausible excuses for a different conduct: but our own hearts and consciences would answer us, if we would seriously ask them, what that course of life in the ministerial office is, which will then afford the most comfortable review, and through the riches of divine grace, the most pleasing prospect. I should now proceed,

III. To the further application of these things, in some practical inferences from them:

But what I have already said, has been so copious, and so practical, as not to leave room to pursue such inferences at large.

You have all, I doubt not, prevented me in

reflecting on the reason we have to humble ourselves deeply in the presence of the blessed God, while we remember our faults this day. I do not, indeed, at all question, but that many of us have set before our people life and death: and have, in our public addresses, urged their return to God, by the various considerations of terror, and of love, which the thunders of mount Sinai, and the grace of mount Zion, have taught us. We have, on great occasions, visited them, and entered into some serious discourse with them; and have often, and I would hope, more or less daily, borne them on our hearts before God, in our seasons of devout retirement. Blessed be God, that in these instances we have, in any degree, approved ourselves faithful! It must give us pleasure in the review. But O, why have not our prayers been more frequently presented, and more importunately enforced? Why have we not been more serious, and more pressing, in our private addresses to them, and more attentive in our contrivances, if I may so express it, to catch them in the net of the gospel? Let us ask our own consciences, this day, as in the presence of God, if there be not reason to apprehend, that some, who were once our hearers, and it may be our dear friends too, have perished through our neglect; and are gone to eternal destruction, for want of our more prudent, more affectionate, and more zealous care for their deliverance? In these instances, my brethren, though it is dreadful to say it, and to think it, yet it is most certain, that we have been, in part, accessary to their ruin; and have reason to say, with trembling hearts, and with weeping eyes, Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, from the blood of these unhappy souls, O God, thou God of our salvation! And we have need, with all possible earnestness, to renew our application to the blood and righteousness of a Redeemer; not daring to mention any services of our own, as matter of confidence in his presence; how highly soever others may have esteemed them, who candidly look on the little we do, and perhaps make more charitable excuses for our neglect, than we ourselves can dare to urge before God. Let the remembrance of these things be for a lamentation: and while they are so,

Let us seriously consider, what methods are to be taken to prevent such things for the time to come.

They that have perished, have perished for ever, and are far beyond the reach of our labours and our prayers. But multitudes to this day surround us, who stand exposed to the same danger, and on the very brink of the same ruin. And besides these dying sinners, who are the most compassionable objects which the eye of man, or of God, beholds on this earth of ours, how many languishing Christians demand our assistance! Or, if they do not expressly demand it, appear so much the more to need it! Let us look round, my brethren: I will not say, upon the nation in general, but on the churches under our immediate care, and say, whether the face of them is such, as becomes the societies of those, whom the Son of God has redeemed with his own blood, and of those, that call themselves the disciples, and members, of a once crucified, and now glorified, Jesus! Is their whole temper and conduct formed upon the model of his gospel? Are they such, as we would desire to present them before the presence of his glory? What is wanting cannot be numbered; and, perhaps, we may be ready, too rashly, to conclude, that what is crooked cannot be made straight. Nevertheless, let us remember, it is our duty to attempt it, as prudently, as immediately, and as resolutely as we can. Many admirable advices for that purpose our fathers and brethren have given us; particularly Dr. Watts, in the first part of his Humble Attempt for the Revival of Religion, and Mr. Some, in his Sermon on the same subject: excellent treatises, which reduced into practice would soon produce the noblest effects.

That those important instructions may be revived, and accommodated to present circumstances, with such additions as those circumstances require, we are, this day, having united our prayers, to unite our counsels. I will not anticipate what I have to offer to your consideration in the more private conference, on which we are quickly to enter. To form proper measures will be comparatively easy; to carry them strenuously into execution will be the great exercise of our wisdom and piety: may proportionable grace be given to animate us, and to dispose them that are committed to our care, to fall in with us in all our attempts, for the honour of God, and for their edification and comfort!

We shall esteem it, my friends, a very happy omen, if your hearts be with ours on this occasion; and if you help forward so good and so necessary a design, by your prayers to God for us. If you are sincere and affectionate in them, we may humbly hope, that he, of whom we ask wisdom, will graciously impart it to us; and may assure ourselves, that you will not only bear with us in the plainest addresses to you, which fidelity may oblige us to make; but will add all the weight of your countenance and interest, to support us in our applications to others, whether public or private. And I have a cheerful confidence, that all will not be in vain; but that he, who thus powerfully awakens our minds, will so succeed our labours, that many, whom we find under a sentence of condemnation, and ready to perish by it, will receive the forgiveness of their sins, will be recovered to a spiritual and divine life, and, as the happy consequence of all, will at length be fixed with us, and with you, in the regions of everlasting security and glory. Amen.

OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

SERMON XIV.

ON ACCOUNT OF THE FIRE AT WELLINGBOROUGH *

DEDICATION.

To those Inhabitants of Wellingborough, at whose request this Sermon is published.

My dear friends,

The composition of laboured and polished discourses on occasions of solemn humiliation before God, seems to me to have an absurdity yet greater than an exact elegance of dress at the funeral of a friend. When therefore I appeared among you, on your late fast day, I was solicitous about little other preparation, than what arose from a view of human nature, a deep feeling of the several circumstances of your affliction, and a serious concern to deliver what might be approved of God, as suited to the great purpose of your assembling, and subservient to your edification by the awful providence which occasioned it.

With these sentiments I spoke to you out of the fulness of my heart, and the countenances of many of you testified, that you heard me in the fulness of yours. When you surprised me with your unexpected request, that the Sermon might be printed, (which some of my reverend brethren that heard it had before intimated as their desire,) I knew not how to deny it you, though I had excused myself to them lest I should seem wanting in a due concern to keep alive upon your minds any good impressions which might have been made by it: and on further consideration I was the more willing to comply, as such melancholy accidents (though blessed be God, not in an equal degree) frequently happen, especially in populous cities, and I do not recollect many single sermons which so directly lead to the religious improvement of them. I therefore set myself, as well as I could, to recollect what I had said, and have endeavoured to preserve the same freedom in writing which I used in speaking. I have laboured, as much as possible, to write from the life. The ruins of your town, the distress of your families, and the mixture of hope and fear attending the present situation of your affairs, have been as it were before my eyes and on my heart in almost every sentence: and I have frequently intermingled those meditations with earnest prayers to God, that he so would lead me in to the secret recesses of your souls, that what you before heard, and will now read, may be like a nail fastened in a sure place.

The trouble of writing this Discourse in short hand, and afterwards correcting the transcript, is so little a matter as hardly to deserve your thanks. Would my other engagements have allowed of more, I should have submitted to it with pleasure. I only beg that you, and others in your circumstances, into whose hands it may fall, will read it attentively, and that each of you will consider what conscience hath to say to the plain admonitions it contains: and if you feel your hearts warmed anew, endeavour immediately to improve those good affections, that they may produce holy resolutions, and yield the peaceable and substantial fruits of righteousness: that it may appear you have not suffered so many things in vain.

These are my most hearty prayers for you. I hope you will in return excuse the defects of a Sermon, which might have been more accurate, had it been less sincere: and will also pray, that I may be animated and cheered under the various and almost incessant labours, to which Providence calls me, by seeing the world around me growing the wiser and better by them, and may finally be accepted of Him, whom it is my highest ambition to serve and please: for whose sake I am

Your very affectionate friend,
and faithful humble servant,

Northampton, December 30, 1734. P. DODDRIDGE.

* Preached at Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, November 8, 1738.

Amos iv. 11.

I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

We are assembled this day (I hope many of us with sensible and penitent hearts) to lament the burning which the Lord hath kindled. You have wisely set apart this portion of time as a season of solemn fasting and prayer, that you may humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, as those that hope he will exalt you in due time. But what is that humiliation which he requires, and will accept? Is it merely for a few hours to bow down your heads like a bulrush? Is it merely to give us your bodily presence in this place of worship, and hear the words that are spoken in God's name to you, or in yours to him? Nay, I will add, is it merely to feel some transient emotions of the mind, in the reflection of a providence which has left behind it such deep memorials, as nature itself may teach those to retain, whom grace doth not teach to improve them? Sirs, if your assembling this day be indeed a rational and a religious action, you come to inquire wherefore it is that God hath called to contend by fire, as Amos expresses it: you come that the voice of the rod may be more distinctly explained, in the name of him who has appointed it; and, in one word, agreeable to the language of my text, that you may be engaged to return to the Lord that smiteth you.

I could wish you had among you such an interpreter, as might be one among a thousand, to declare to you his righteousness and his will, in such a manner as might most effectually lead you to comport with it. But since the office of addressing you on this occasion is devolved upon me, I shall endeavour to show, that you have at least consigned it to one who is tenderly concerned for you, and therefore will not, and indeed cannot, have the heart, to amuse you with a studied form of words; but will endeavour, in the plainest and most faithful manner, to advance some important instructions and useful reflections, suited to the said occasion that calls us together. And though some of those hints, like the providence that introduced them, may seem not to be joyous, but grievous, I hope they may afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

It is a great instance both of the wisdom and goodness of God, that he has chosen to teach us, not only by precept, but example; in which respect it may properly be said, as well as in the other, that he has set before us life and death. The hearts of men in all ages are fashioned in a great measure alike, and from observing the temper and conduct of the Israelites in particular, in those various and remarkable circumstances in which they are represented, we may learn more of the corruption of our nature, and draw more obvious lessons of religious instruction, than perhaps from the history of any other nation whatsoever. One can hardly imagine a circumstance, either of prosperity or distress, to which there is not something in their case, which has an apparent correspondence: and it is evidently so in particular, with reference to the event spoken of in the words of my text. God had been exercising them with a variety of judgments and at length, as that was one of the greatest he gives a commission to the devouring flames to break out, and spread ruin and desolation in their dreadful march. Thus far their condition and yours agree; and would to God that it might rest there, and that with respect to you, who are as brands plucked out of the burning, there might be no room to add, "yet have ye not returned unto me."

In handling the words, I shall,

First, Consider their contents; and,

Secondly, Attempt the practical improvement of them, with a proper regard to your present circumstances. Yet affecting as they are, and suitable as the tenor of the Discourse may be, I am sensible it entirely depends on the divine blessing and grace, to make it successful; to that, therefore, I humbly recommend what I am about to say, and entreat you to lift up your hearts to God, that he may give you the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart.

I. I shall first, as plainly and briefly as I can, consider the original meaning and contents of these words: I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord: in which words you will naturally observe,

1. They are reminded, that it was the hand of God which had lately kindled a fire among them.

I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. I doubt not but these words are to be understood, in a proper and literal sense, of fire, and of fire kindled in the common methods of Divine Providence.

They are to be understood of fire properly so called. It is true, sometimes any of God's judgments are compared to fire, that being, as you too well know, a most dreadful and irresistible calamity, when it breaks out among the dwellings and possessions of men. Thus does the wrath of God, whenever it is kindled, rage and flame: thus does it bear down all before it, and turn the most pleasant objects into heaps of ruin, desolation, and horror. But here, I apprehend, it is to be taken for proper fire, because it stands distinguished from several other kinds of judgments, as [illegible]

from drought, blasting, and mildew, from the palmer-worm, and the pestilence; and it is very remarkable, that it brings up the rear, as one of the most terrible of all.

I scruple not to add, that Amos speaks of fire kindled by the common method of Divine Providence. It is indeed said, he overthrew them, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, which, you know, was by fire and brimstone, rained down upon them in a miraculous manner; but there is no reason to take the words thus strictly, or to suppose that such a terrible tempest of fire and brimstone had actually fallen upon the cities of Israel. That had been an event of so great moment and importance, that probably the sacred history would have been full of it, and succeeding prophets would often have referred to it, as more memorable than even the calamity of Sodom, as such a visitation on God's people would certainly have been; whereas there is an entire silence elsewhere, with relation to any such judgment. And I am sure it is impossible to infer it from hence, because the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah was proverbially used for any very dreadful calamity, and might with peculiar propriety express any devastation that was made by fire, though kindled in a common manner.

As for the fires here mentioned, it is possible some of them might have been kindled, by what men in their common forms of speech call some unhappy accident; and drought, and winds, and other circumstances, might concur, to spread that conflagration, which at first arose from a little spark, or some trifling instance of negligence. Others of these fires might be kindled by a cruel enemy: for though Jonah, the father of Jeroboam the second, in whose days Amos prophesied, was in the main a prosperous and successful monarch, yet being engaged in frequent wars with his neighbours, it is not improbable that the frontiers of his country might sometimes suffer by them. And we are particularly informed of a Syrian war, which had happened some years before; for we are told, that in the days of Jehoahaz, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of Hazael king of Syria, and Benhadad his son, all their days, and he oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. And since this Hazael carried his inhumanity so far, as to dash even their children in pieces, and to rip up their women with child, it is no wonder also, that he should set their strong holds on fire, as we are expressly assured that he did.

But whatever was the occasion of the conflagration, whether the cruelty of enemies, or negligence, or accidents, you plainly see, that God claims it to himself, as his own deed, that he had overthrown them; agreeable to the general principle which is laid down in this very prophecy, as what every man's conscience must bear testimony to, that there is no evil in the city that the Lord hath not done. And it is a most evident and important truth, discovered and attested even by natural religion, that all the efficacy of second causes is owing to the continual operation of the Supreme. He appointed fire and water to be, in their various natures, useful to mankind; and when he pleases, he can turn both into a scourge. Thus when the rains descend, and the floods beat down the fruits of the field, and overwhelm houses, with their inhabitants, it is he that breaks up the fountains of the deep, and opens the windows of heaven. And when the flames break out with impetuosity, and the fiery deluge spreads itself abroad, it is the breath of the Lord that kindles it and keeps it up; nor does one single spark rise or fall without his providential interposition and guidance. An observation to be applied to all the other events of human life, and which the sacred Scriptures every where inculcate, with a plainness and spirit suited to its importance, for the conviction of those ignorant wretched creatures, who live without God in the world.

2. The prophet further leads them to reflect on their own preservation from the flames, as an instance of divine mercy.

Ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: this plainly intimates, how narrow an escape they had from the extremity of danger to which they were exposed; and so the expression is elsewhere used, Zech. iii. 2. where Jerusalem is represented by the same similitude: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? It implies, that they were just ready to be consumed; that the flames were beginning to take hold of them; that the smell of fire had, as it were, passed upon them, and they were scorched and blackened with it; but yet they were saved, and their lives at least given them for a prey. There may perhaps be some remote reference to the case of Lot, who when God was about to overthrow Sodom, and he loitered in it, was thus delivered; for the Lord, being merciful unto him, the men laid hold of his hand, and brought him out of Sodom.

Again, as the prophet argues from their preservation, as well as their calamity, to enforce their obligations to return to God, we may infer, that he intended to represent that preservation likewise as his work. Whatever accidental engagements, whatever prudential conduct, might have been the means of it, still it was to be acknowledged, that there was the gracious hand of God in it, which prevented their being destroyed with their habitations. And we lose more than half of the sweetness and advantage of all our deliverances, if we do not see and adore the gracious providence of God in them, and are not thereby engaged in his service. Which leads me to add,

3. It is also intimated in the text, that [illegible]n

of this afflictive providence, was to bring them to thorough repentance and reformation.

Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord; plainly implying, that this was what might, humanly speaking, have been expected, and what was by God intended in the dispensation. This gives us a most edifying and important view of the nature of true repentance; it is a return to God. All sin is an alienation of the heart from the service of God, to which we are under ten thousand natural obligations, all highly increased by the revelation God has made of himself to us. Now the very essence of true repentance consists in a return to God; in a deep acknowledgment of our guilt in going astray from him, and casting off the easy yoke of his commands; and in renewed resolutions of devoting ourselves, for the future, more entirely to his service. That external reformation, which arises from other inferior motives, is by no means worthy of the name of religion. It may indeed be human prudence; it may be compassion to others, who might suffer by our irregularities; but till God is regarded, yea, supremely regarded in it, we cannot reasonably suppose that God will regard us; which he intimates, when he complains concerning the Israelites, that they returned, but not to the Most High.

Again, the text further implies, that this overthrow by fire had, in its own nature, a tendency to promote such penitent and religious sentiments, and that it was their duty to consider it in this view. And indeed, whatever awakening judgments befall men, it is their wisdom and duty thus to regard them. The Lord crieth, and the wise man will hear his voice: Hear ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it. And thus God is represented as sending very terrible calamities on the Israelites in this very view: "In their affliction they will seek me early, saying, Come, let us return unto the Lord; for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up." And it is a most important truth, that he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men: which abundantly justifies the goodness of God in all those penal evils with which our world abounds. Life is to be considered as a state of discipline, and our heavenly Father has recourse to the rod, that it may give wisdom to those, who are too giddy, or too stubborn, to learn it by gentler methods. Thus did God call to the Israelites; thus is he calling to you, and may his grace prevent the necessity of joining with the prophet, when,

4. He complains that they had not fallen in with the design of those awful providences, but still continued an unreformed and impenitent people.

Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord, notwithstanding this judgment, and all the others with which it was introduced. And this charge is advanced no less than five times within six verses. "Though I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; though I have withheld the rain from you, though I have smitten you with blasting and mildew; yea, though I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt; your young men have been slain with the sword, and the stench of their camps hath come up into your nostrils; and though, to complete all, I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." Thus the awful Majesty of heaven complains, that they had been chastised, and delivered, in vain. And, indeed, when we come to examine into their history, we find the complaint but too just. Could it be said they returned to God, when they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; when they trod down the head of the poor in the dust of the earth; when they added whoredom and incest to all their other iniquities; and with mingled rapine and impiety lay down before their idolatrous altars, on clothes which (expressly against the law) they had taken for pledges, and drank in the house of their false gods the wine of those whom they had unjustly condemned. Yet this is the account that God himself gives of the state of things among them, in the preceding chapter; even he who had been witness to their sins, and had sworn by himself, that he would not forget any of their works. So evidently does it appear, that the human heart may harden itself against the most dreadful dispensations of Divine Providence, and, like that of king Ahaz, even in its distresses may trespass yet more against the Lord; unless the secret influence of his grace be joined with the stroke of his rod, and while he is chastening them thereby, he teaches them out of his law. There is a reprobate kind of silver, which will not be purged even by fire: when the bellows are burned, and the lead consumed, the founder will yet have laboured in vain.

Thus I have laid before you those particulars in the text that appear to me most remarkable and instructive. And though I doubt not but you have anticipated me in your own reflections, yet I hope you will now permit me,

II. To attempt the more particular application of these things to you, of whom it may with such evident propriety be said, God has overthrown some of you, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning.

And here let me solemnly entreat and charge you,—that you acknowledge the righteous hand of God in what has befallen you,—that you reflect on the mixture of mercy, that has attended this awful providence,—that you make it your earnest prayer, that the dross of sin may be purged away by it,—

and that you long retain upon your hearts a permanent sense of these important lessons, which you have seen in so strong and so affecting a light.

1. Let me entreat you to acknowledge the righteous hand of God in this calamity which has befallen you.

Let me address you in those words of the Psalmist, Be still, and know that he is God. Be affected with the sense of his interposition, and confess the righteousness of it. Assure yourselves, Sirs, that it is not only a general truth, that, as we before observed, all second causes (and fires among the rest) operate only by the divine concurrence and efficacy, but that it is applicable to the present occasion. It was the hand of the Lord that kindled your fire, and his breath that fanned it into such a terrible blaze. The wind, you say, drove it upon some of the most considerable parts of your town; but under whose command is the wind? and why did it not blow towards an opposite quarter, so as to bear it the contrary way, where it would soon have died for want of fuel? Or why did it not sleep in an entire calm, which might have given you an opportunity of extinguishing the burning with little trouble and damage?

It was his hand; and let it also be remembered, it was a very righteous hand. Know, that God is just in all that he has brought upon you, nay, in all this he has punished you less than your iniquities deserved. I mean not to insinuate by this, that you of this town are greater sinners than those that are round about you; or that any inference is to be drawn, as to the character of particular persons, or families, from their share of this calamity, whether more or less. I would not by any such partial and uncharitable censure, add grief to your sorrow. Nor would it be reasonable to do it; for in such providences as these, all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and the wicked. But this I confidently say, that all the sufferers that hear me this day, how clear soever they may have been from scandalous crimes, nay, however worthy in their character, or however useful in their station, have reason to acknowledge, that there are with them, even with them, sins against the Lord their God, sufficient to justify this, and more than this: yea, such will be most ready to say, It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed: justly might he have delivered us over to indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to the rage of everlasting burnings, and the darkness of perpetual despair: we lay our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust, and cry out guilty before thee. And while you are thus owning God's justice, let me exhort you,

2. To attend to the mixture of mercy, which has appeared in this memorable providence.

Let me call you this day to see it, and own it, and to mingle songs of praise with your tears. Think not, I beseech you, your case worse than it really is; but acknowledge the goodness of God in every mitigating circumstance that attends it. Most certain it is, most evident to every one that is but a stranger among you, to every wayfaring man that passes by your dwellings, that in the midst of judgment God has remembered mercy. Why else is not your whole town consumed? why are some of your houses standing, in which to receive your suffering brethren, and stores remaining, out of which to relieve them? Let me address myself to those of you in particular, who were in the neighbourhood of desolation? to you who were in a literal sense like a brand plucked out of the burning, freed from the flames, that were raging near you, perhaps I may add, that were devouring all around you; to you, whose houses stand in the midst of the ruins, as monuments of God's peculiar and distinguishing goodness: now does he demand your sacrifice of praise; and see to it that you retain an abiding sense of the mercy, and of that consequent claim which he has to distinguished services from you.

But let me address myself to those, who, though perhaps their houses were reached, had opportunities (as I know very many of you had) of saving some considerable part of your goods; or to those who had estates and substance elsewhere, out of the reach of those flames, perhaps sufficient for the comfortable and honourable support of your families; perhaps, after all this diminution, far more than you were possessed of some years ago. Permit me, Sirs, to tell you, that it would be very criminal ingratitude, to think so much of what you have lost, as to forget your remaining mercies: permit me to say, that you have reason, as it were, to weep over those floods of tears, which you have so profusely shed: to faint thus in the day of adversity, argues your spiritual strength to be small; and perhaps may discover such an attachment to the enjoyments of this present life, as may awaken a serious mind to more afflictive doubts, lest your portion is here, or your gods are taken away.

But what shall I say to those of you, who have lost your all; your houses, your goods, your furniture, your clothing; and are turned out naked and destitute, to seek your bread you hardly know where! I do from my heart condole with such of you; I have felt your affliction myself, and, as I have had an opportunity, recommended it to the consideration of others; but you must give me leave to remind you, that even in your case there is a mixture of mercy. Why else are you living among us this day? Is it not something, that your lives have been given you as a prey? Is it not to be acknowledged as a gracious circumstance in providence, that the fire did not break out in the night, and surround you while you were sleeping in your beds, so as to cut off, perhaps, the possibility of

your own escape; or at least to oblige you, in your first surprise, to fly for your own lives, incapable of assisting those that were dearest to you? What if when you had a little recovered yourselves from your consternation, and come to examine the ruins, you had found among them the bones of a beloved child, or of a friend, who had been to you as your own soul? There had been a wound indeed, the scar and the pain of which you must probably have carried to your graves. But your present losses are much less deplorable: for, not to say how much the spirit of a man may sustain these afflictions; not to plead, what good sense, and much more religion, may do, towards reconciling men to some of the inconveniences of poverty; it is to be remembered, that God may change the scene: hope at least is remaining, and that not an improbable hope. God has supported you thus far, and already carried you through the most helpless and destitute days of life, that you ever saw, or probably will see. Your brethren, your neighbours, your friends, and benefactors, whether nearer or more remote, have pitied you: and pity alone, much more with those substantial expressions of it, is some balm to our sorrows. Let me call you this day thankfully to acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of the great Author of our beings, who has thus made man the guardian of man; who has implanted this tender feeling in the human mind; so that on the sight of any remarkable distresses of our fellow-creatures, we are moved by a most powerful, but amiable, kind of instinct, to open our hands, yea, to draw out our souls to them. Happy provision of the God of nature and of grace, which makes the possessions of the wealthy and prosperous a perpetual bank for the support of the distressed, and opens, as it were, amidst heaps of desolation, the sweet fountains of benevolence on the one hand, and of gratitude on the other! These things call for your acknowledgment; and you are to remember, that all those supplies are ultimately derived from God, which, from his additional goodness, he chooses to send you by the hands of your fellow-creatures. And I would hope, he will go on to do you good, and will so turn your captivity, like that of Job, that your present suffering may serve to add a greater relish to succeeding and growing prosperity. At least with regard to the true Christian, there remains another more secure, as well as more important, hope; that the soul may be enriched by what impoverishes the body, and that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: which if you desire, then,

3. Make it your serious concern and earnest prayer, that the dross of sin may be purged away by this burning.

By this, said Isaiah the prophet (speaking of very terrible judgments, which God sent among the Israelites,) by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin. Surely then it is meet to say unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I know not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. So may it be with you, and you will be unspeakable gainers by this loss; gainers in the true comfort and happiness of the remainder of life, and much more in the future state.

In pursuit of this blessed end, let me, my friends, this day solemnly call you to search and try your ways, and to examine what is that accursed thing, which may have occasioned this trouble and distress. I cannot do you a kinder office, than to assist you in the inquiry. Give me leave therefore to suggest a few reflections, by which I would not be understood to mean any thing personal, for indeed I cannot intend it; most of you are strangers to me, nor have I reason to suspect peculiar evil of any; but an acquaintance with human nature in general, will very naturally lead me, in the present circumstance, to turn your thoughts inward, that you may accomplish a diligent search. Wherefore has God visited you? Wherefore has he written these bitter things against you?

It may be some of you have indulged yourselves in a luxurious way of living; and therefore God has stripped you of those things which have been the instruments of it. You have, perhaps, taken a secret pleasure and pride in gay dress, or affected a magnificence of furniture, beyond your rank; and therefore God has consumed your ornaments, and turned you out almost naked and bare. Or you have, perhaps, been addicted to riot and intemperance, squandering away your substance, and destroying your health, and it may be, your reason, with the abundance of good things God had given you. Just is he then in taking them away; for it is a thousand times better, that intoxicating liquors should be employed (as they have been here) even to quench the flames, or that the choicest dainties should be burnt up, and your money perish with them, than that your reason should be impaired, your health destroyed, and your families reduced, by continued extravagance.

Perhaps there are some of you that have been accustomed to make a kind of by-word of hell and damnation, to scatter about in rage, or mere wantonness, oaths and imprecations; which in a professed Christian is blasphemous impiety, and which even an atheist must own to be at best but boisterous and unmannerly nonsense. And if so, justly has God executed upon you that denunciation against him that sweareth, justly has he caused his curse to enter and remain in the midst of your house, and consumed it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.

Or possibly, in other of your houses, the fire of contention has before been kindled; contention between members of the same family, or between neighbour and neighbour; while a clashing of secular interests with some, or the diversity of religious persuasions and practices with others, have led you to forget the common ties of brotherhood and human kind, and to burn with mutual animosity and wrath. Justly has God written your sin in your punishment, and joined you as companions in suffering and distress; which must surely teach you a better temper, if you are not quite incorrigible.

But among those of a more peaceable disposition, are there none that are conscious to themselves of dishonest gain? no merchant, or trader, that has held the balances of deceit in his hand, and has allowed himself to keep (as the Scripture expresses it) a weight and a weight, a measure and a measure, to buy by the one, and to sell by the other? none, that have gone beyond and defrauded their brethren, and practised arts by which they would have thought themselves to have been greatly injured, if they had met with them from others? If such there be, that (as the prophet expresses it) have coveted an evil covetousness to their house, let them not wonder, if God has verified the words of his servant, so that the stone has cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber has answered it. And so will it be with those, who may attempt to found their rising houses in falsehood, and to cement them with perjury. And if any have already done it, by giving in, even upon oath, unjust accounts of their losses, let them be sure, their sin will find them out, and their unrighteous gain, the plunder of their fellow-sufferers, will be bitterness in the latter end.

But to insist no longer upon this head, it is very probable there are some, whose conscience would not allow them in such methods as these, who yet may accuse themselves of having been formerly, in their most prosperous days, backward to actions of bounty and charity; some, in whom the words of Solomon are fulfilled, They have withheld more than is meet, and it has tended only to poverty. It may be, when compassionate objects have presented themselves, or been recommended to you, your hearts, instead of being opened and warmed, have rather been contracted; and you have been ingenious in finding out excuses for not bearing your part in such expenses. And now, all that you have spared and saved by such a mean and unworthy temper is gone, and perhaps, through the righteous judgment of God, has carried away with it a great deal more: while the generous and compassionate Christian has at least had this satisfaction, that a part of his substance is laid up in the bank of heaven, and secured far beyond the reach of any unhappy accident; for nothing is indeed so truly and so surely our own, as what we have laid out on such charitable occasions. And I shall have reason to congratulate you upon your present loss, if having felt affliction yourselves, and experienced the compassionate assistance of others, you melt into more humane sentiments, and knowing the heart of sufferers, be for the future more ready to relieve them, and more abundant in every good word and work: and happy for you will it be, if the Lord purge away your dross, by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning, so that you come forth from this furnace as silver seven times purified, and take the divine image in brighter and fairer characters. It has been often observed, that places which have suffered by a kind of general conflagration, rise more beautiful out of their ashes. But there will be much greater reason to congratulate you, if by this means your tempers are refined; if the vain become grave, the luxurious temperate, the profane religious, the contentious meek, the fraudulent upright, and the sordid liberal. And sure I am, that with such an alteration, you would be happier in a cottage of clay, than you could have been before in a house of marble and cedar. And that this happy end may be answered, let me exhort you, once more,

1. That you endeavour to retain upon your hearts a lively sense of those important lessons, which you might, as it were, read by the light of these flames.

There are many very instructive truths, which God has often spoken to you from his word, and by his ordinances, which yet might, with some more sensible demonstration, be learned from such a scene of providence. And I doubt not but those that are truly wise, and who have set themselves with strict attention to reflect on what has passed, have prevented me in some of these meditations. Let me for a few moments, however, recall them to your minds, and suggest them to those who have been either too indolent, or too perplexed, to form them for themselves.

I shall only mention two, which comprehend a great many more.—How vain are worldly possessions, when compared with spiritual and eternal blessings!—And how unutterably dreadful is the divine displeasure, by which fires will be kindled so much more terrible than these!

You have seen here the vanity of worldly possessions, and the superior value of spiritual and eternal blessings; and therefore labour to preserve a sense of it.

You had often before read that expostulation, Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven. But perhaps you never saw those wings spreading so wide, and

rising in so rapid a flight. You never saw so many families undone in an hour, the wrath of so many hundreds and thousands of pounds dissipated in the air, and borne away by the wind in blazing and smoking columns. You could not, when you came to look over the ruins, distinguish between the ashes of the most precious of your goods, and the poorest refuse of them; but they were mingled together, like the dust of the dead. So vain is wealth, and so uncertain is our confidence in riches! Thus all our goods and our houses may perish. And though our lands may seem a more lasting possession, yet, as you have seen, flames may devour the product of them, either before or after it is gathered in: and our lives themselves, yet frailer than almost any thing else, may fail us in a moment. This you have seen with your eyes; and forget it not; but charge it on your conscience, to observe the infinite difference between these transient enjoyments, and spiritual and eternal blessings. Those treasures are not liable to such accidents; as neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal them, so neither can fire break out and consume them. It is a known story of Bias the philosopher, that, when in danger of shipwreck, he saw others concerned about their goods, which were like to be lost, even if they escaped with their lives, he said, in consciousness of superior worth, and therefore superior happiness, I carry all my treasure with me. And so can the Christian say. The most valuable treasure is that, which by divine grace is laid up in the heart, or, to speak with more strict propriety, in the soul itself; so that should devouring flames surround the house, even the tabernacle of clay, or any other overwhelming calamity demolish it, the heaven-born inhabitant would escape with all its riches, and borrow wings from the tempest itself, to bear it on to eternal blessedness.

Once more, reflect how unutterably dreadful the wrath of God is, by which fires will be kindled much fiercer than these.

Our God, says the apostle, is a consuming fire; and it is a representation which God himself has made, when describing his displeasure against sin: Who, says he, would set briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. You have seen a burning town, and have found it, perhaps, an object of terror beyond all your imagination. But remember, Sirs, the day is approaching, when you must see a burning world: for the day of the Lord will come, and that as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. And though, long before that time, the grave will have received you, and you will have no portion any more in all that is done under the sun, yet you yourselves must be called forth, and shall arise, to be spectators of that august solemnity: and you shall all behold the day, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers thereof shall be shaken; when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree; when the streams shall be turned into pitch, and the dust into brimstone, and all the beauties of nature and art shall be sunk into rubbish and chaos. Happy men, who shall then be able to lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their complete redemption draweth nigh; and who, according to the promise of that God, who amidst all the convulsions and revolutions of nature is still the same, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But let it be remembered, that all this pomp is to usher in that day of judgment, which shall be a day of perdition to ungodly men: for a fire shall then be kindled in God's anger, which shall burn even to the lowest hell, when it has consumed the earth with its increase, and calcined the very foundation of the mountains. And in this view, let the sinners in Zion be afraid, and let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites; for who can dwell with the devouring fire? who can lie down in everlasting burnings! Yet this, you well know, is the doom of every impenitent sinner; a doom, to be pronounced by the lips of Christ himself, in words which he has already uttered and recorded, that, by weighing their terror, we may be roused from our security, and be alarmed to escape it: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Nor can you imagine the sentence shall be pronounced in vain, or that all the confederate nations of the condemned shall be able to ward it off. But who can sustain the terror of its execution? What, if, while your habitations were in flames, and you were endeavouring to escape for your lives, a host of armed enemies had cut off your retreat, and forcibly driven you back to the fire? You cannot bear the thought; the horror of it strikes you to the heart, and nature shudders at it. But will it not be infinitely more terrible, when legions of angels with irresistible power urge you on, and the wrath of God like an overflowing torrent sweeps you away, into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone? Wretched creatures, that are yet obnoxious to such a destruction! Weep not, Sirs, if this be the case, for your houses and goods consumed. Weep not for your substance wasted, and your families undone. You have a far juster cause for deep lamentation. Mourn over your perishing souls. Say not, we will recover our affairs as fast

as we can, by renewed application to worldly business; and much less presume arrogantly to say, in the pride and stoutness of your hearts, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars! Remember, that pride goes before destruction; and amidst all the most pressing cares and hurries of life, let it be still considered by you, there is one great concern, that even now demands a more attentive regard; that you may flee from the wrath to come, to Jesus, who is appointed to deliver from it. Think not of repairing your losses, and of settling your affairs here; but let me rather say to each of you, as the angel to Lot, while he lingered in Sodom, (perhaps from too great a regard for the goods he was to leave there,) Escape for thy life; look not behind thee; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. I must be insensible of the worth of souls, and most regardless of the great end of my office, if I were not willing to digress much further than I have now done, to give so necessary a caution. May divine grace make it effectual to awaken those, who, if their present stupidity continue a while longer, must feel those flames, which they will not see!

But I trust, my brethren, there are those of you, whom God has plucked as brands out of the burning, in the noblest and most important sense of these words, and who have sought and found your shelter from this most terrifying prospect, in the grace of the gospel covenant. Whatever your other circumstances are, be thankful for this most gracious interposition; let your losses and sorrows sit light on your hearts, while God has appointed salvation itself for walls and bulwarks. But still be sure that you maintain that active zeal and continued watchfulness, which suits your obligations to God, and your expectations from him; and seeing that you look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace. In the mean time, encourage yourselves in the Lord your God, well knowing, that if the foundations of the earth were to shake, and the arches of heaven to burst asunder, it becomes the soul that is supported by its God, to stand the shock with intrepid courage; as being assured, that nothing can finally crush and overwhelm him, who is covered by the shield of the Almighty; and that the trial of the good man's faith, which is far more precious than that of gold which perishes, though tried in the fire, will certainly be found to honour and joy at last.

Such may the event of all your trials be! So may divine grace animate every heart that hears me! So may it visit all who have been sufferers by the loss, or shared in the alarm, though they share not with us in the devotions, of this day! May the compassionate eye of God regard you and your habitations! May his providence cement, strengthen, and adorn them; for except the Lord build the city, they labour in vain that build it! May the candle of the Lord shine on your tabernacle, and his Spirit enlighten and renew your souls! May peace and prosperity, friendship and religion, always flourish in this town and neighbourhood! And, in a word, may God so compass-round your calamity, as to give you joy for mourning, and beauty for ashes; that those who have lamented over you may rejoice with you, and that at length you may share the security and joy of the city of God, even the heavenly Jerusalem, where no flames shall be felt, but those of love, and no sound heard, but the accents of everlasting triumph and praise! Amen.

POSTSCRIPT

The following Hymn, though not originally designed for the occasion, was judged so suitable by the congregation that many of them desired to have it sung. And it might be proper to add, that Sermon, after which it was sung. I was the more willing [illegible] [illegible] publication, either of this, or of the Discourse itself.

THE HYMN

I.

Eternal God! our humbled souls
Low in thy presence bow:
With all thy magazines of wrath,
How terrible art thou!

II.

Fanned by thy breath, huge sheets of flame
Do like a deluge pour!
And all our confidence of wealth
Lies mouldered in an hour.

III.

Led on by thee, in horrid pomp,
Destruction rears its head;
And black'ned walls, and smoking heaps,
Through all our streets are spread.

IV.

Deep in our dust we lay us down,
And mourn thy righteous ire;
Yet bless that hand of guardian love
Which snatched us from the fire.

V.

O that the hateful dregs of sin,
Like dross, were perished there;
That in fair lines our purer souls
Might thy bright image bear!

VI.

So might we view with dauntless eyes
That last tremendous day,
When earth, and seas, and stars, and skies
In flames shall melt away!

SERMON XV.

COMPASSION TO THE SICK, RECOMMENDED AND URGED.*

DEDICATION.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Halifax

My Lord,

The generous and active zeal with which you have espoused the charity this Sermon is intended to recommend, and the assiduity with which you have vouchsafed to preside in the committee appointed for ripening the general scheme, and bringing it into effect, might justly have entitled your Lordship to this application: had your various abilities been much less conspicuous, and the other parts of your character (incomparably more valuable than any abilities) been less known to the author, or less to be exceed by him. Yet I am very sensible, that the plain and hasty Discourse, which I have now the honour of presenting to your Lordship, might fear the review of an eye so accustomed to all that is eloquent, beautiful, and finished, in antiquity, did it not trust to that kind prejudice, which your attachment to its general design will naturally give you in its favour.

I am sensible, how impertinent it would be in me on this occasion, to give myself a liberty of saying all the respectful things, which from my heart I think of the Earl of Halifax, or to imagine, that his general permission of inscribing this Sermon to him would authorize the doing it. But it would be overrigorous in your Lordship to prohibit my intimating that pleasure I have shared with so many more discerning persons than myself, in observing that accurate judgment, that steady application, that impartial equity, and that engaging address, with which your Lordship, under the character of our chairman, has conducted the counsels and affairs of the committee. I know that I speak the sentiments of several of its members, and I believe I speak the sentiments of all, when I say, that in the fatigue of that close attendance which we have thought it our duty to give on this good occasion, we have often been relieved by reflecting, as it was most natural to do, on the benefit which the public must receive from such talents, when exerted in the highest assembly of our nation. There your Lordship finds a sphere of action more amply proportioned to the largeness of your heart, and suited to that high sense of liberty and benevolent concern for the general good, which is the brightest ornament of a peer, and of a Briton.

Go on, my Lord, to shine in this ornament more and more. Animated by every principle which humanity, and nobility, and (what is most humane and most noble) true Christianity, can suggest, go on to exert the distinguished capacities of usefulness with which Providence has blessed you in such services, and by exerting to increase them; and with them to increase that veneration and affection, which every worthy heart will pay you as its just tribute, and that infinitely more important and divine pleasure, which your own will find, in the consciousness of having acted well. A pleasure, indeed, worthy of the most ardent pursuit, and on which heaven sets so high a value, that it allows it not to be treated with by proxy: not will grant any thing like it, to the most illustrious birth, the most ample fortune, or the most elevated genius, unless the possessor of them all will go to the price of it by a resolute exercise of personal virtue.

I rejoice, not for myself alone, but for my country, that our civil and sacred liberty hath one such guardian among the rising nobles of our age. I hope it has many, and I pray God their number and their virtues may be increased; and that wherever they are they may be rewarded with a rich variety and a long succession of external blessings, joined with that inward satisfaction which is inseparable from such a character.

May your Lordship especially, not only have the sublime joy of beholding Great Britain distinguished among the nations by public honour and prosperity, but see every thing which can conduce to your personal and domestic happiness added in privately life! And in particular, when you condescend to turn your thoughts towards Northampton (a town under so many obligations to your Lordship's family, which I hope it will never be so ungrateful as to forget), may you soon and long have the satisfaction to see its County Hospital, which you are now so kindly cherishing in its infant weakness, grown up to full maturity, and giving more certain presages of being an extensive blessing to generations yet to come!

I sincerely congratulate your Lordship and the other illustrious nobles and worthy gentlemen who are exerting themselves in this good work on a capacity of doing greatly for its service, while my narrow sphere will allow me little more than to wish it well. Yet it is a comfort to me to think, that this Dis-

* Preached at Northampton, September 4, 1745, at a Sermon appointed to recommend a County Infirmary there for the relief of the poor sick sent thither.

course, in which (imperfect as it is) I flatter myself there will be found traces of an honest and a tender heart not easily to be counterfeited, will be some memorial of the affection with which I have endeavoured to serve it, and at the same time of the undefigned and profound respect with which I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most faithful,

most obedient, and most obliged humble servant,

Northampton, October 8, 1743 P. DODDRIDGE

PREFACE.

THE great desire which I have to promote that noble and amiable charity which is now set on foot among us, has engaged me to comply with the request of some of my friends in publishing this Sermon, which was delivered on too little notice to allow of much preparation. But indeed very little recommendation is necessary, where the arguments in its favour are so obvious, and little art can be required to plead a cause, which, as soon as it is admitted to a short hearing, speaks so loudly and so eloquently for itself.

The only plausible objections, which I remember to have heard against it, are these two. That the distant parts of the county can expect little benefit by it; and that any private house, which can be taken for the purposes of a County Hospital, can bear but little proportion to all the necessities of so large a county will require. But I hope, neither of these objections will be found unanswerable; and that every objector will do his part towards removing them. I am sure they cannot be pressed so.

I apprehend myself to have no right to speak here of the particular precautions which the committee has taken with regard to the first of these; but shall refer the reader to the state of the intended Hospital, when they shall be published, as they quickly will. But it may and ought to be taken for granted, till the contrary appear, (which I persuade myself it never will,) that the rules for the admission of patients will be so constituted among us, as shall effectually secure from any just complaint. Distant parts will have some preference given them, to those that are near home. And as none but extraordinary cases are like to offer from a distance, if due precautions be taken in writing and answering letters for the representation of cases, and in bringing patients, I cannot see any probability of frequent disappointments. If the contrary be suspected, let gentlemen and others, who are willing to set for the common good of the charity, if it be duly ordered, favour us with their presence at our next general meeting of subscribers, and there let them examine what the committee will then offer on this head, as well as on others; and if they are not satisfied with what is already adjusted, let their proposals and reasonable methods of making them easy on this head: they will no doubt be heard with all due regard, and the assistance of their counsels be thankfully acknowledged by all who have the interest of the Hospital at heart.

As for the second objection, the force of it cannot be thoroughly judged of till the house intended for the reception of patients be known, and the proposed alterations in it are executed. If after that it be still insisted upon, that we should build, then let those who are of that opinion, subscribe their respective benefactions for that purpose; and there can be no doubt but the work will be cordially undertaken, as soon as there appears any fund so considerable as to render it safe. But in the mean time it would surely be most unreasonable to clamour against any private house committee, who essay to establish, (or not attempting it, while they have no stock but a great inexperience, in any tolerable degree proportionable to it. This county, so well cultivated and improved, and celebrated for two seats of so many of the nobility and gentry, is capable of many great things if it pleases and most (like Devonshire,) without feeling any severe burthen, compared with the expectations of those to whom for this purpose in a few months; and it is unexpected pleasure to promote it. I know not what should forbid us to hope and expect it. Good examples are already given: great patrons are engaged[1]; and measures are entered into for soliciting the country in the most prudent and engaging methods that could be contrived. The effect will soon be seen; and then we still hope the managers will be able to judge what they can at first safely attempt, and will, I dare say, gladly assist to set a much greater scheme practicable, than they have allowed themselves particularly to project.

It is with great pleasure that I see persons, who have been listed in different opposite parties and who bear different denominations, cordially uniting to advance this gracious scheme, and emulating to make each other as easy as possible in the execution of it. There is very little in the following Sermon which is not matter of common concern, as we are Christians, and as we are men; and I am not aware of one word, which can reasonably give offence to any: and therefore I hope the cause of the poor will be no prevailing prejudice against its acceptance and usefulness. I cannot indeed but attempt this kind

[1] This refers to the honour which we have to say the Duke of Montagu and the Lord of Northampton have done to the cause, by offering a very handsome benefaction to the Hospital, and by their generous example and influence in the neighbourhood. The Duke of Bedford has given not a guinea, as we only name such persons and benefactions as we have received; but he has been a most active member of the committee for drawing up the constitution of the Hospital, and has favoured them with his presence at their meetings, and his assistance in effecting several considerable points, which otherwise would have been attended with great difficulty. The Lord of Northampton has also been a most active member of the committee, and has favoured them with his presence at their meetings, and his assistance in effecting several considerable points, which otherwise would have been attended with great difficulty. It is impossible to imagine how they could have done more. The committee has also received considerable benefactions from several gentlemen, who have signalized themselves on this occasion. The whole county, and indeed the whole nation, is under great obligations to the Duke of Bedford for his having represented there so here, will, no doubt, have the same good effect in other parts of the kingdom. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

out of character in present circumstances. I have peculiar obligations to love a county, where I have spent so many agreeable years, and in the various parts of which I have the pleasure of enjoying a personal friendship with so many deserving people. But had I been only an occasional resident in it for a few months or weeks, I could not have refused what little I might have had an opportunity of doing, in subserviency to a design so friendly to human nature as this. Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.

P. D.

Psalm xli. 1, 3.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

It is matter of certain observation, and of delightful reflection, that, under the administration of a wise and gracious Providence, even the distresses of human nature are so overruled, as to occasion some of its most exquisite pleasures. Our own have this effect, when generously encountered in a good cause; or when, from whatever source they arise, we bear them with a calm resignation to the great Governor of all, animated by a humble confidence in his goodness. And the calamities of others, deeply as they wound every compassionate heart, are the accidental cause of a proportionable satisfaction attending every humane attempt for their relief. This is what I am persuaded many of you, to whom I now speak, have often experienced already; and I hope, that experience will now be largely and happily renewed. I am confident it will, if what I am about to lay before you in favour of the scheme, which is now opening upon us, for a COUNTY INFIRMARY to be erected here, be regarded in such a manner, as I have great reason to hope it will; considering how noble a charity it suggests, and how ready I have ever found you to comply with every call of providence to contribute liberally for the assistance of the necessitous.

That important branch of Christian charity, which consists in giving alms to the poor and indigent, has been the subject of so many of my discourses, that almost every topic, and every argument, which I could think of to enforce it, has been warmly and frequently urged upon you; and the fairest examples of such a disposition have been particularly illustrated, that, charmed with the beauty of them, you might go and do likewise. Especially have you been often pressed by that noblest and tenderest of all arguments, which arises from the infinite compassion and benevolence of the blessed Jesus, and the distinguished genius of his religion; as having charity for its declared end, and rising above all other religions, as much in the excellence of its tendency, as it doth in the dignity of its Author. And therefore, without so much as recapitulating what I have said on such occasions, I shall make it the whole of my present work, to suggest such things, as may have a peculiar suitableness to that particular kind of charity which we have now in view: and I think myself exceedingly happy in this opportunity of offering you a set of thoughts, which would never before have been equally seasonable here. Many of them will naturally arise from the words which I at first read, as the foundation of my discourse: Blessed is he that considereth the poor, &c.—

It would perhaps be too bold a criticism, to pretend to determine the particular distemper, under which David had been labouring, just before he composed this admirable psalm. But I think it is in general abundantly evident, that it was occasioned by a violent and dangerous fit of sickness; in which he met with most inhuman treatment from some base and wicked men, who had pretended great affection to him. "Mine enemies," says he, "speak evil of me, saying, When shall he die, and his name perish? They think the distemper, terrible as it is, does its work too slowly, and would gladly, if they durst, aid its victory by murder. And as for him who is the chief of them," (by whom some suppose he meant Absalom, whose unnatural rebellion might be ripened by the concurrence of this circumstance,) "if he come to see me, as he frequently does under specious pretences of duty and affection; yet in all his most respectful condolences, he speaks vanity and falsehood, and his heart is in the mean time gathering iniquity; is making one malignant remark or another, which, when he goeth away out of my apartment, he proclaims abroad, to increase the disaffection he is endeavouring to sow among my subjects: and their mischievous counsels are quickened and imboldened hereby, while they say, an evil disease cleaveth fast unto him, as a peculiar judgment of heaven upon him; and now that he lieth disabled in his bed, he shall arise no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted to have given me the surest assistance in my pressing affairs, while I am thus rendered incapable of attending to them myself, even he who did so long eat of my bread, and had a place at my table, has, like an ungrateful

brute that strikes at his feeder, lifted up his broad heel against me," as the original imports,* "and endeavoured to do me all the mischief in his power."

This was king David's unhappy circumstance in his illness, as royal dignity can neither secure the continuance of health or the fidelity of friendship; nor fortify the heart against the sting of ingratitude, especially in such a concurrence of afflicting circumstances. On his recovery he described it in the most lively colours; and to represent how much it impressed him, he speaks of the scene, as if it were actually present: and that a proper contrast might set it off the more forcibly, he begins the psalm with an affectionate reflection on the beauty of a contrary character, and on the happiness to which the possessor of it was entitled. Blessed is he who considereth the poor. The original is yet more emphatical and extensive: O the blessedness, or the various felicities, of that man, who wisely reflects on the case and circumstances of him that is brought low.† The margin renders it, him that is weak or sick: and another translation gives it thus, Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy; which is a sense undoubtedly comprehended in the words, though I cannot think them limited to it. They speak of a person reduced and brought low, whether by poverty, or oppression, or sickness, or any other calamity, affecting mind, body, or estate:‡ from whence it will clearly follow, that where several of these causes join, as the circumstance is peculiarly worthy of compassion, the virtue, and therefore the blessedness, of him who is ready to pity and relieve it, must be proportionably great.

The word which we render considereth, is sometimes used for taking an intelligent view of a thing, and sometimes for acting in a prudent and reasonable manner, suitable to such views.§ And accordingly it well expresses the character of one who examines into the circumstances of the afflicted creature of whom David speaks, and upon that takes wise and proper measures for giving him the most convenient and effectual assistance he can. And as, on the one hand, it may be intended to recommend the use of discretion in directing and managing our charities; so, on the other, it may intimate, that where men overlook those that are brought low, it is an evidence of a narrow inattentive mind, that takes up with short and superficial views of things; whereas if men's sentiments were juster, their affections and actions would be kinder and more beneficent. They would find that nature, and duty, and interest too, if rightly considered, and justly estimated, would all dictate the same thing on such occasions.

This will especially appear, when it is considered, in how gracious and condescending a manner the blessed God, the Supreme Disposer of all events, is pleased to interest himself in the cause of the indigent and distressed, and the kind notice which he takes of the man that appears as a patron of such persons. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble, or (as it might more literally be rendered) in the day of calamity: as if it had been said, "There is a revolution in human affairs, as well as in the returning seasons of day and night, of summer and winter. Calamity will have its day, and the time will come, when they, who are now the most prosperous, will find themselves surrounded with dark and gloomy scenes. And then may the generous and charitable man hope to receive the compassion he hath extended; or, (as we elsewhere read,) with the merciful thou, Lord, wilt show thyself merciful." And indeed one cannot without astonishment, as well as delight, reflect on what is so suitably and so tenderly added in the third verse, to express the divine care of such a person. The Lord, (Jehovah himself, in whom is everlasting strength, and who bears up the pillars of heaven,) will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, or, as it might be rendered, will support him, or hold him up there.¶ Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness:** some would literally render it, thou wilt change his bed, and explain it of turning a bed of pain and distress into a couch of pleasure and delight; supposing it alludes to their custom of lying on couches in their banquets. But I think the image which our translation suggests equally suits the original, and is, on account of its tenderness, greatly to be preferred. The good man is now supposed in his turn to be brought low by illness, so exceeding low, that he is not able so much as to sit up in his bed: and God does not disdain to represent himself under the image of an affectionate

* They who can consult the original, and will give themselves the trouble of tracing the etymology from עקב, and examining the many places in which this word is used, will soon see the force of these remark. It most frequently signifies poor, and as being is often opposed to rich, as 1 Sam xxx. 15. Ruth iii. 10. Job xxxvi. 15. Prov x. 15, xix. 4, xxviii. 11. It is sometimes rendered brought low, in our version, as Psalm lxxix. 8, cxvi. 6, and cxlii. 6, in which last place the connexion shows it relates to sickness. It is sometimes applied to streams emptied and dried up, Job xxviii. 4. Isa xix. 6, and sometimes it signifies emaciated, Isa xvi. 4, and in that sense applied to Pharaoh's lean kine, Gen xli. 19, and to Amnon when pining away for Tamar, 2 Sam xiii. 4, according to some. מוקלח derived from the same root, is rendered pining sickness, Isa xxxviii. 12. And it is elsewhere used to express a weakness in the eyes and limbs, compare Isa xxxvii. 11 where כהי עיני לראות should be rendered, mine eyes are so weakened, or dy by reading, &c. so that I am not able to look up; and Prov xxiv. 7, which verse might most naturally be transcribed, As the legs of the lame sink down, so (הלוי שקים ממשל) so doth a parable in the mouth of fools. Solomon thereby beautifully expressing how feeble the sublimest discourses on moral and religious subjects are in the mouth of a vicious man. I know many critics have produced these two last texts, as instances in which הלל signifies to be lifted up, but I believe it must of the places in which the same Hebrew word is said to signify contrary things, were accurately weighed, they would be found as little to the purpose of proving that very improbable, and, in many instances, mischievous assertion, as these two.

† שכל has plainly the former signification. Neh viii. 13. Job xxxiv. 27, 35. Psalm xiv. 2. Jer iv. 22. Dan i. 4 and the latter, 1 Sam xviii. 14, 15, 30. Psal. ci. 7. Amos v. 13.

‡ אשרי משכיל אל דל | תנמוהו יי ביום רעה ימלטהו יי

§ כי עיני לראות

¶ יסעדנו

** כל משכבו הפכת בחליו

friend, or parent, who holds him up in his arms: and himself assists in turning his bed, and making it easy to him, when, being too weak to rise, he is only able to shift the sides.

Amazed and charmed with an expression of so much condescension and endearment, I set myself, with additional pleasure, as in the presence of this compassionate God, to open my mouth, and plead the cause of the poor and the afflicted, and would attempt to cultivate in your minds, and in my own, the temper which the words recommend. That I may do it in the most suitable and useful manner, I shall,

I. Represent the reasonableness of a compassionate temper, towards those in general, who are languishing on beds of sickness.

II. Show how wise and happy a method of expressing our compassion towards such, that which is now recommended to us is like to prove. And,

III. Conclude with the mention of some circumstances in the present situation of affairs, by which the design is peculiarly recommended to us at this time.

I. Let me represent in general how reasonable it is, that we should feel compassion in our hearts towards those, who languish under the burthen of bodily disorders, and particularly are confined to beds or chambers of sickness.

And this you will not only see, but feel too, if you reflect—on the calamity of their state;—on the tender sense they naturally have of the treatment they meet with in it;—and how liable we ourselves are to the same circumstances of distress.

1. Consider the calamity of their state.

Some of you know it by familiar acquaintance, by dear-bought personal experience, and must have the wormwood and the gall in a long and a painful remembrance. Go back in your thoughts to those chambers, which you were almost ready to consider as your sepulchres, and those beds, from whence perhaps you expected to rise up no more, or which seemed as racks, if not as graves, to you; and then say, whether you were not objects of compassion yourselves, and whether others, in the like circumstances, must not necessarily be so. Others of you have, no doubt, been conversant with the sick and the pained: reflect on what you then saw and heard: and let your eye and your ear affect your heart.

There are indeed some, who seem solicitous to keep as much as possible from the sight of such mournful objects; as if they were afraid, that in such a circumstance an involuntary kind of humanity should invade their hearts, and force them on a sudden, and as it were before they are well aware of it, to do something more generous than they care to allow themselves in. But no man, who hath lived any time in the world, can be such a stranger to human nature, and to human life, as not to know something of the various distempers and accidents to which we are liable in this feeble state, and of the sad symptoms of sorrow that attend them; fatal effects of the entrance of sin into this world of ours, and awful monuments of the divine displeasure against the first instance of it!

I am not indeed learned enough to run over the tenth part of those names, which physicians have given to the various maladies under which their aid is demanded. But the fever, the dropsy, the gout, the stone, the rheumatism, the cholic, the asthma, the cancer, the palsy, consumptions, and the like, are words of dreadful import; to the general signification of which few are strangers, though perhaps none, who have not themselves laboured under them, can distinctly understand how much terror they express.

Let us however think a little closely, (for the thought may have an apparent tendency to humble and to humanize our hearts,) into how sad an object the greatest, the richest, the strongest, and the fairest of mankind is reduced in a few weeks or days, when attacked by any of these, and crushed, as it were, into an early and an untimely old age. When thou, Lord, with thy rebukes dost correct man for his iniquity, how dost thou cause his beauty and his vigour to consume away like a moth, which moulders under the lightest touch! How are all the services of life obstructed, and all its choicest pleasures blasted at once, as the opening blossoms of spring by the severity of winds and frosts! According to that most natural description of Job, when a man is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, how does his life abhor bread, and his soul dainty meat; so that his flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones, which were not seen, stick out! In some distempers, what convulsive strugglings, what terrible heavings and pantings for breath! In others, what deep sighs do we observe, what piercing groans, what doleful cries! Or in persons of a more resolute temper amidst a painful silence, what earnest speaking looks, while perhaps large drops of sweat are trickling down the face, and nature seems, as it were, to be weeping its distress at every pore! And in cases less acute than these, what months of vanity are many active souls made to possess, and what wearisome nights are appointed to them! How slowly do the hours and the moments roll away, while in the evening they say, would to God it were morning; and in the morning, would to God it were evening! but find themselves equally disappointed in their expectations of relief, from the silence of the night, or the amusements of the day; till at length perhaps nature is weakened to such a degree, that it can scarce hear the voice of the dearest friend, if a little louder than a whisper, or

endure so much light as shall discover his countenance! God only knows, how many are at this moment in a condition sadder than I have described, while we are ourselves at ease in Zion, and are too little grieved for the afflictions of our brethren. Yet surely, if we have any thing of the man, and the Christian, we cannot be wholly unmoved, but must feel some tender solicitude rising in our hearts, and must be casting about in our thoughts for some proper manner of expressing it, especially when we consider,

2. The peculiar tenderness of the spirits in such circumstances as these, and that exquisite sensibility, either of regard, or neglect, which is almost inseparable from them.

Such is the vanity of human friends, that they can do much to wound, where they can do very little to heal; their negligence can greatly afflict, where their most solicitous care can administer very little comfort. And this is more especially the case in sickness. When the blood is impoverished, when the animal spirits are weakened, and when melancholy humours prevail in the body, little things impress with a very disproportionate weight. Solomon hath observed long ago, that when heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop, then a good word maketh it peculiarly glad. And by a parity of reason, then any thing that looks like unkindness in a friend pierces much deeper, than at another time, when nature is in all its vigour, and the business and amusements of life divert the mind from pausing on such things, and the imagination from dressing them up in colours of its own, which, unnatural as they often are, appear to the distempered mind inherent in the objects themselves. Sick people likewise, conscious to themselves that they cannot but be less agreeable than at other times, easily conclude, that they grow insupportably burthensome to those about them; and if great care be not taken to prevent it, they will be very ready to infer, that their friends are wearied out with them; and perhaps will secretly suspect, they wish them out of the way, that they may be eased of their burthen: while they imagine, like Job, that were their friends in such an afflicted state as themselves, they should study all opportunities of softening their sorrows, by every circumstance of the most tender address; and then they bemoan themselves, and think, surely it is enough to bear all this illness and pain, without having the unkindness of such and such a friend added to it; and so perhaps the saddest complaints of Job, David, and Heman, are thought over as applicable to their sorrowful condition.

This is indeed very often their infirmity; but we should bear it, and pity it, and study, as well as we can, to accommodate ourselves to it: for it undoubtedly makes their case much more afflicted, and therefore more compassionable. And it will especially appear so, if we reflect,

3. How liable we ourselves are, to share in these sorrows and these infirmities.

This thought is beautifully touched upon by the apostle, when he says, Remember those that suffer affliction, as being yourselves also in the body: as if he should have said, "in necessary consequence of being in the body, you yourselves are obnoxious to the like affliction; and therefore should readily impart to your afflicted brethren such assistances, as you in a change of circumstances would reasonably desire."

And is it not most evidently the case here? What are we, Sirs, better than our fathers? better than our brethren? better than those, who have drooped, and sunk, and died, under such burthens as those I have described? Is our strength the strength of stones, or is our flesh brass, that we should plead an exemption from sorrows and complaints common to our species? In all probability, they await us; and would await us, if we were nobles and princes of the earth: and God only knows, how soon we are to begin our encounter with them, or how soon they may complete their victory over us, and bring us beyond the reach of being helpful to men, or receiving help from them.

And, which is peculiarly interesting, these are probably some of our last scenes. When we have done with our merchandise, our husbandry, or our studies; when we have finished our journeys, our visits, our sports, and our feasts; we must, unless death surprise us with a very sudden blow, retire into our chambers of illness to come out no more, but languish away the remainder of our days there, till the moment of our exit from life shall come. There shall we need the compassion we are now exhorted to extend; shall need all the relief, which a generous heart may then feel, in a consciousness of having been, in its better days, an helper to the afflicted; and above all, shall need that divine consolation, which God is ready to impart to that blessed man, who has considered him that is brought low, so graciously expressed in the text, by holding him up on his bed of languishing, and by making all his bed in his sickness.

And therefore, in the conclusion of this head, let me entreat you to suffer the word of exhortation, and to bear away in your hearts a firm resolution of doing all you can to be helpful to the sick, whatever their other circumstances in life be, as Providence may give you an opportunity and call. Consider those that are brought low; reflect seriously and tenderly on their condition; for they sometimes suffer a great deal from the mere inattention of those about them, who yet could not bear on

any terms deliberately to do what they apprehended cruel or unkind. Let us, as afflicted Job expresses it, (as afflicted persons know best how to speak of afflictions,) put our souls into their souls' stead. Let us inwardly commiserate their melancholy case; and let our behaviour express that commiseration in the most natural and genuine manner. Let us be ready, where it may be useful to them, to visit them; for visiting the sick is, you know, mentioned among those acts of charity, which Christ assures us he will commemorate with peculiar honour, even upon the throne of his glory. Let us patiently bear those instances of fretfulness and peevishness, into which under such a pressure they may be ready to fall; imputing them to their distemper, and not to themselves. Let us avoid every thing rough and boisterous in our behaviour, near the apartments in which they are; and let nothing be done which might give the poor patient reason to sigh on his bed, and say, "Alas, they do not regard me! they little think what it is to be ill!" Show in all your conduct a concern for their comfort and happiness; show it, above all, by endeavouring by wise and pious discourses to lead them into the best improvement of their afflictions, and to form their minds to such sentiments and characters, that through divine grace they may be entitled to the noblest supports; those which arise from a sense of the divine favour, from pardoned guilt, and from a comfortable prospect in the invisible and eternal world; that so they may not struggle at once with the agonies of a distempered body, and a wounded spirit; but rather, as the outward man declines, may find the inward daily renewed. And to show how sincerely you are concerned for their spiritual, neglect not their temporal, interest. If they are poor, extend your alms to them, and endeavour to procure for them such medicines, food, attendance, and other accommodations, as may promote their recovery, or at least alleviate their sufferings. It is what, I question not, many of you are often doing, and you now have an opportunity of doing it with some peculiar advantages; as you will evidently perceive by what I have to offer under my second general, the business of which is,

II. To show how wise and happy a way of expressing our compassion to the sick and infirm, that which is now proposed to us is like to prove.

You apprehend, that I mean our concurrence in this scheme for establishing a County Hospital in this town, for the relief of the poor, who are sick or wounded; into which, in extreme cases, they may be freely received, and in which they may be properly assisted, without expense to themselves, or the families to which they belong.

The very mention of this design might seem sufficient to recommend it to every intelligent and generous person; and I am sure, none who have perused the printed paper in favour of it, which has been generously published and spread over the whole county, can be uninformed on this subject: nevertheless, as it may be new to some, and others may have reflected but slightly upon it, I shall say something briefly on the head, and I hope a few words may suffice; since the scheme wears so beautiful an aspect, if only viewed in its first appearances; as well as appears so fruitful of good, when attentively examined in its remoter consequences.

1. You will easily see, that the scheme wears a very beautiful aspect, if viewed only in its first appearances.

It promises, in its most obvious and direct design, relief to the poor in their sickness; and their case is attended with many circumstances to recommend it to our compassion, which have not yet been touched upon in the preceding branch of my discourse. What I have said before might be sufficient to prove, and one day's experience of our own might in a yet more convincing manner demonstrate, that sickness is of itself a burthen heavy enough, though we languish upon beds of down, and have all the relief we can derive from the skill of physicians, the attendance of servants and friends, with every other additional accommodation which the most plentiful fortune can furnish out. What then must it be to bear all this, and perhaps more than this, in the want of all things! What must it be for a person, who perhaps found it hard enough to live when he was in all the vigour of nature, and his own hands ministered to his necessities, to find himself under his languor, perhaps under his agony, destitute of medicines, destitute of attendance, and it may be, destitute of convenient food, with hardly any thing but inclination, in these cases no certain guide, to direct him what is so. Or if, pressed with a sense of urgent necessity, after long delay, he calls in such assistance, and procures it, perhaps it is at such an expense, that his spirits are broken with the thoughts of the debt he is contracting, which either prevents, or retards, or imbitters his recovery; and when it is perfected, almost tempts him to wish he had quitted the world, rather than survived under such an insupportable pressure.

But so far as the scheme now opening upon us succeeds, this additional load of misery will be taken off. The patient will be encouraged to seek for timely assistance before his illness becomes inveterate, the neglect of which is, no doubt, yearly the destruction of thousands: and when his case is so bad, as to require his being taken into the infirmary, he will be kept clean and warm, with convenient accommodations of food, physic, and lodging; he will be kept under proper regimen and government, which may shelter him, on the one hand, from becoming a prey to ignorant pretenders, whose chief merit seems to be, to sell diseases and death

at reasonable rates; and, on the other, he will be protected from imprudence, which is oftentimes more fatal than the disease; while, according to the rules of the house, it is put out of his own power to indulge himself, or to be indulged by over-fond friends, if such he have, in what would be pernicious to his health.

In consequence of this we see, that many are recovered in such houses as these, who have long languished in their own, under tedious and extremely dangerous distempers; some of them, perhaps, after having, like the poor woman in the gospel, consumed all their living on physicians, and been nothing the better, but rather the worse.

Facts impress the mind more strongly than any reasonings unsupported by them. I therefore think it proper here to tell you, that I have made the most careful observations I could on those yearly accounts of other hospitals which have come to my hands, viz. those of Winchester, Bath, Exeter, York, Bristol, and the London and Westminster infirmaries. Few of these have reached back farther than three years, and some have extended only to one; and I find, on the whole, that we have an account of seven thousand three hundred and thirty, who are known, or supposed, to be cured, and only of seven hundred and eighty-four, who have died, or been discharged as incurable: so that it should seem by this hasty and imperfect calculation, (for such I confess it to be,) that near ten patients have been relieved for one who has failed of success.

I find palsies, dropsies, consumptions, fevers, leprosies, rheumatisms, cholics, stone, as well as multitudes of ulcers, fractures, dislocations, and the like, on the list of those calamities from which these poor creatures have been relieved: and it further appears, that great numbers of these had been languishing under their distempers two years, others five, ten, twelve, fourteen, and a few twenty years; and this after some of them had been reduced to so low an ebb, that their admission was blamed as a hopeless attempt, yet a few months have turned their captivity, and they have gone out from those gates vigorous and cheerful, into which they were brought almost like corpses, borne on men's shoulders.*

What heart does not feel a secret pleasure at hearing such an article? Who would not rejoice if even large contributions could be the means of procuring so happy effects? But it ought further to be considered, in favour of this design, that there is, in proportion to the good to be expected from it, great frugality and liberality so dispensed. For it is certain, (as many have observed on such occasions,) that a small sum thus managed will go further than a much larger given to relieve the sick poor at their own houses; as the same person may attend on different patients at the same time; and as the medicines and provisions to be used in the house may be bought at the best hand; whereas it is often, and I fear too justly, said, the poor generally pay dearer than others for what they have.† What is thus given is also much securer from being misapplied, either by the persons themselves, or by others, who might be base enough to make a prey of them. Nor can I forbear mentioning it as another most agreeable circumstance attending the charity proposed, that it often shelters the person who receives the benefit of it, from the mortification of coming to a parish allowance, and perhaps of being consigned over to a work-house: which is generally a terrible sort of infirmary indeed, where we have reason to fear there is seldom sufficient care taken to secure the cleanliness, the quiet, or the morals, of those who are so unhappy as to be brought thither; though perhaps some of them have lived creditably and comfortably in families of their own, have long contributed for the support of the poor around them, and have been at last reduced by the afflictive hand of Providence, without any visible crime of theirs, or any remarkable imprudence. A state, which, when sickness is added to it, appears one of the most desolate and deplorable which can be imagined: so that it is no wonder the very prospect and apprehension of it should press, in a very painful manner, on an honest and tender spirit, and greatly increase the force of any bodily disorder, which seems to threaten so bad an event.

Reflect, Christians, on such considerations as these; and add to all, that you are the disciples of that benevolent Jesus, who went about doing good, and who particularly expressed the tenderness of his generous compassion, by healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. This was the calamity of human nature, which seems of all its temporal evils to have impressed him most; and I am sure, if we have any thing of his spirit and temper, without which we are none of his, we must necessarily wish well to a design of this kind, if it were only considered in reference to those, who receive in their own persons

* I am credibly informed, that at Exeter there have been an instance or two of persons, who, on account of their extreme weakness were brought into the hospital but in their coffins, who have gone out carrying their coffins on their backs.

† It has been spoken of in the suggestions for the erection of the Hospital, page 3, as a thing universally confessed, [illegible] may be added, attested by the [illegible] that they [illegible] others. And the truth of this observation was [illegible] whose memory will ever be dear to all good men who knew her earlier days, in the progress [illegible] Scheme in the beginning of Westminster Hospital, page 5. "I trust the memory [illegible] perverted, which I hope [illegible] would still be many good reasons [illegible] distributing to the necessities of the poor, as [illegible] would [illegible] of visiting the sick [illegible] and [illegible] Wesley's Works, page 9, 10. "It is well known, that scarce any medicines are received in those Hospitals at a less expense than can be procured for so many hundreds in any other way."

immediate relief from it. But I am to add, that as the scheme appears thus amiable in its most obvious aspect, so likewise,

2. It will appear more abundantly fruitful of future good, when attentively weighed in its remoter consequences.

The benefit extends much further than the persons thus relieved. It evidently affects others of their families, who have that time and labour to employ in the business of their respective callings, which must otherwise have been taken up in attending the sick. It extends also to all those, to whom the patients themselves may be useful when recovered from their illness; whether their near relations and friends, who have any dependence upon them; or the public, who owe much more, than we are generally aware, to the labours of the poor, and upon that account are under great obligations to them, which I fear are seldom considered. Not to say, that in many cases the very existence of those yet to be born may, under God, depend on such cures.

I shall not now insist on the advantage which others may receive in their illness, by the improved skill of physicians and surgeons, in consequence of their attendance on such hospitals; though it is evidently a very possible thing, that the lives of some very useful and valuable persons may be so preserved. It is yet more obvious and certain, that many other poor may be relieved, in the respective parishes to which they belong, by that money from the parish stock, which must otherwise have been employed upon the sick: or if, in consequence of being discharged from this burthen, the parish rates be lessened, (as perhaps in many places they sensibly may be,) the subscribers of that parish are then paid in specie; and after the honour and pleasure of bestowing their bounty, a part of it immediately flows back upon them again. And how much may so flow back, and with what large accessions of blessing, God only knows; as he only can tell, what casualties and diseases are warded off, what prosperity and success in affairs may be allotted, as the token of his favourable regard to this pious munificence.

Neither can it be improper for me to add upon this head, that what was more directly intended as a benefit to the body, may prove a blessing to the soul. For dissolute persons, by these means being brought for a while under regular discipline, may perhaps be broken and reclaimed: the good instructions they receive from ministers who attend them, especially while the rod of God is upon them, and his sword may seem to hang over them, the spectacles of mortality frequently before their eyes; together with the regularity and good order to which in such places they will be accustomed, and their being sheltered from many temptations, from which, in some kinds of sickness, the patient is not necessarily secure: may all, under the influence of divine grace, prove the means of sowing the seeds of true religion in their hearts, and of infusing into their minds that noblest of all cordials, an antidote against the servile fears of the second death.

Nor does it appear to me a contemptible effect of this charity, that as it is necessarily concerted upon a plan, in which all parties and denominations are equally concerned, it will probably be a means of promoting more candid and catholic sentiments, in consequence of repeated opportunities of mutual converse. This wears out that narrowness and bigotry of spirit, which, where it prevails, renders the Christian so unlike himself; and which is generally the effect of ignorance, and arises from viewing our brethren through false mediums, which represent, what may in itself be regular and fair, in a distorted and disagreeable form. As interviews with each other have a general tendency to rectify such mistaken apprehensions, that tendency is peculiarly evident, where this circumstance is added, that all are associated in the same good design, and have agreed on laying aside every party view in pursuing it. This may promote something of that unity of heart, under a variety of professions, which good men on all sides wish; and which, amidst such an unavoidable diversity of sentiments, is the only method of securing the honour of Christianity, and the peace of the church.

I must by all means add, that whatever good consequences this scheme may produce, which are many more than I have enumerated above, our engaging heartily in it may render them both extensive and lasting. It is probable, that neighbouring counties may quickly learn to imitate our example, when they see in fact that it is no impracticable design: an apprehension, which I suppose has hitherto been the chief obstruction, where its obvious benefits have been at all thought of. At length it may spread from county to county, till perhaps there will not a parish be found in Britain, which shall not have an interest in some such charitable foundation; to which they may send their sick in the most obstinate chronical cases, with some prospect of relief. Thus the remotest regions of our land may have reason on this account to call us blessed, and I will add, the remotest generations may also have reason to do it. Reflect how many hundreds are at this day enjoying the benefits of those wise and charitable foundations, which our nation owes to the pious and beneficent king Edward the Sixth, of truly sacred and immortal memory. So would I hope, that in this place, when our children, and our grand-children, are in their graves, their remotest descendants, which arise in their stead, (and God only knows what revolutions may bring any of them to need it,) may have cause

to reflect on this year 1743, as the happy era of an establishment, to which many around them may owe their health, their comfort, their usefulness, and possibly, under God, their Christian principles, and their immortal hopes. Whatever streams may in the mean time have flowed into it, (and God grant they may be as large as shall be needed,) the fountain will be traced up hither; and blessings will be pronounced on the memory of those, who have opened to these refreshing and healing waters so free and so pleasant a course.

These considerations I lay before you, not to extort any thing from you, as against your wills, by mere importunity; but to convince you of what I hope will be abundantly sufficient to engage your concurrence in the design; I mean, that it is eminently calculated for extensive usefulness. I wish you may heartily join in it, because I wish your present happiness, and your future comfort. It is observable, that when our blessed Redeemer sent forth his apostles, as sheep among wolves, he gave them this consolation in the midst of their poverty and affliction, that though as for silver and gold they had none, they should be able to command one of the noblest delights which riches could purchase, in being the means of healing the sick. This was, if I may be allowed the familiarity of the expression, one of the great perquisites which he permitted to these his most favourite servants; that their hearts, rendered no doubt by his grace exquisitely sensible, should have the godlike pleasure of beholding from time to time the cheerful countenances of those, who had lately been among the most lamentable spectacles of human nature, and under God owed their health, their limbs, and their lives to them; and of seeing the joy of families and neighbourhoods, made happy by the recovery of those who were dear to them. I wish you my brethren, beloved in the Lord, a pleasure something like this of the apostles; and may I not add, of their Master too, so far as a diversity of circumstances will admit. And it is not only in compassion to the afflicted, but in the overflowings of the sincerest friendship to you, that I go on, (unnecessary as it may almost seem,) in the conclusion of my discourse.

III. To touch on some circumstances peculiar to the present season, which may especially recommend this scheme to our immediate regard.

And here it is obvious to think, of the war in which we are now engaged,—of the mercies of the harvest which we have lately reaped, and of the crisis to which the scheme is now brought, which therefore must be immediately supported, or sunk beyond all probable hope of future recovery.

1. The consideration of the war, in which we are embarked, may properly be introduced as what should have some weight with us on this occasion.

This should engage us as a nation, to conduct ourselves in as virtuous and pious a manner as possible; as the most probable way of drawing down the divine blessing upon our arms: now it is very reasonable to suppose, that acts of public charity, being in their own nature so peculiarly pleasing to the gracious Father and Governor of the universe, must have a great tendency to this. An ancient Jewish writer expresses this in terms remarkably adapted to the present purpose: "Help the poor," says he, "for the commandment's sake; and shut up alms, as it were, in thy store-house;" almost as if he had said, Raise hospitals for magazines: "and it shall fight for thee against thine enemies, better than a mighty shield, or a strong spear;" that is, than any kind of defensive or offensive armour. Nay, an inspired prophet, when giving advice to him, who was then the greatest monarch upon earth, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, expresses himself thus: O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee: break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening out of thy tranquillity.

And as a view to our future interest, especially in this nice conjuncture of affairs, may require such a care; so it will be a very proper expression of our gratitude, for the assistance which God has lately given us. The victory at Dettingen was a very remarkable and seasonable appearance of Providence in our favour, which we have been solemnly acknowledging again and again in our public devotions. Let us also acknowledge it in our actions. Let us present some grateful tribute toward this good work, as a thank-offering to him, who giveth salvation to kings, for having so graciously guarded the life, the liberty, and safety of our sovereign, King George. Had the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, been taken in the snares of the enemy, and our glory in any sense been delivered into their hand, expenses of a very different nature might have been occasioned, and have fallen upon our broken spirits with a very affective weight. But I will not dwell on so melancholy a thought. We are presenting our daily prayers for his majesty's security and prosperity, while, with a generosity which I hope our nation will never forget, he is hazarding his life for us in the high places of the field: let our alms rise with our prayers, if we desire they should come up as a grateful memorial before God.

2. The mercies of the harvest may likewise properly be mentioned, as rendering the charity I have been proposing peculiarly seasonable.

God has remarkably appeared for us, to crown the year with his goodness, and to load the earth with his bounty, and he has added this to complete the favour that he has reserved to us, in as agreeable

a manner as we could ourselves have wished, the appointed weeks of the harvest. More seasonable weather on such an occasion has not, so far as I can learn, been known in the memory of man. Seasonable in this respect, that as the bottles of heaven have been so restrained that there have been no violent rains in the time of harvest, to sweep away or corrupt the fruits of the earth; so, for several of the most busy and important days, God has spread his cloud over the heavens, so as to shelter the reaper in the midst of his toil from those excessive heats, which often render autumn much more sickly than it would otherwise be. Since, then, God hath made such provision for satisfying our poor with bread, and for preserving our health too, he may seem thereby to call upon you, by the gentlest voice, to give him, in this pious work, a part of that substance with which he hath replenished you. And surely you must feel yourselves drawn, as by the cords of a man, to lay out this way some of the stores which he has with so liberal a hand poured in upon you, and which in sparing your health he has both spared and sweetened. Honour the Lord therefore with your substance, and with the first-fruits of all your increase, as a thankful acknowledgment of what he hath already done; and then you may by his promise be encouraged to hope, that in future instances your barns shall be filled with plenty, and your presses burst out with new wine. Know, my friends, that God hath given you your corn, and your wine, and your oil, and hath multiplied your wool and your flax. Lay by, therefore, for charitable uses, as God hath prospered you, and as you hope and desire he should prosper you in years to come: otherwise you may chance to have calculated your interests very wrong, and may find to your cost, that as there is that scattereth, and yet greatly increaseth, so there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to poverty. Once more,

3. Let me plead from the particular crisis, to which this affair is now brought, which is such, that it must be determined by what is immediately, or at least quickly, done.

The scheme of a County Hospital among us was thought of, and hinted at, long ago; but it was then looked upon as a thing to be wished, rather than attempted and hoped. The attempt is now courageously and vigorously made, and no inconsiderable sum has already been subscribed for that purpose: and what is much more important than any subscription yet made, many of the nobility and gentry of the county, who have not yet ascertained particulars, have declared their approbation of the general design, and their resolution to favour it. It is greatly for their honour to have it, and we may have reason to bless God who hath put it into their hearts; but it would be most ungenerous and unreasonable, to leave the whole burthen upon them. It is the general concurrence of the inhabitants of this county, which must give the greatest strength, stability, and extent to the scheme. Let me therefore entreat your cheerful and resolute concurrence. Suffer not this amiable infant, (if I may be allowed the expression,) to be deserted, and die, for want of due support in its tenderest state; nor let it be said, in Hezekiah's words, that when brought to the birth, there was not strength and assistance to bring it forth. Lend your charitable aid now, if you ever purpose to do it at all; for if it drop now, we cannot expect ever to see it revived: since the defeat of this attempt, so far advanced, and so warmly solicited, will be looked upon as a demonstration to many, that the thing cannot be effected; whereas it is most evident, that if it miscarry, it must not be charged on Providence, but on ourselves. Nothing surely can prevent its success, humanly speaking, but such dispositions, as I am unwilling on this occasion so much as to name, in those who should be leaders in every good work.

If these shameful causes should prevail to frustrate all, we love our neighbours, our brethren, and the public too well, not to lament it. But let us at least have so much regard to the credit of our characters, and the peace of our consciences, as to show, that it fails not for want of our concurrence. I know, it is but very little, in comparison, that we can do. We are by no means distinguished for our wealth, and we have of course our burthens and expenses peculiar to us, as a society of Dissenters. Nevertheless, let us judge equitably, as to what we are able to contribute, and let us do it cheerfully: rejoicing in this, that we act in the presence of a most gracious and merciful Father, who, where there is a willing mind, accepts a man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Let not therefore any of the poorer part of mankind, who often have as generous and as compassionate hearts as any which are to be found on earth, be discouraged, because they have not their guineas, or even their crowns, to give on this noble occasion. Were great numbers to join their smaller contributions through such a county as this, it would swell to a very considerable sum. And, which is the most agreeable thought of all, each would have his part in the honour and pleasure of doing something towards helping forward so worthy a design. And I am sure, it is the part of humanity to wish, that those who move in a lower sphere, may share with the rich and great in such pleasures as these; though they cannot in many others, much more expensive, yet not equally exquisite and refined. The joys of liberality, and the delights of benevolence, were intended by the great Author of our nature, like the light of the sun, to be the portion of the whole species, and to extend themselves to the lowest of mankind.

I hope therefore, that all who can without great inconvenience to themselves and their families afford it, will do something to promote this generous scheme. But I would remind those of you, in particular, who are in more distinguished circumstances of life, that you are in the sight of God and man obliged to distinguish yourselves in the various exercises of liberality. I have a great authority to warrant me to do it, and I think it one of the truest offices of friendship which a minister can perform to such, to charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God; and that, as they desire any well-grounded trust in him, they practically acknowledge him as the great Lord of all, by being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, so laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. And if there are any of you whose riches God hath lately increased, either by causing your grounds to bring forth plentifully, or by giving a favourable turn to the commodities in which you deal, or by any other methods of sudden prosperity; as I may say to you, I come in a good day, so I should think, you had reason to fear that very prosperity were a curse, and might be the means of destruction to you, if you did not feel your hearts as it were melted by it, and disposed to flow forth in the streams of large and cheerful beneficence. I would rather hope, that God has been providing an easy and abundant accession for this public charity, by the accession he has been making to your capacity of supporting it.

I would also particularly beseech those of you who are of tender constitutions, and know, by your own frequent experience, the calamity of illness, to pity the sorrows you have so often felt, and to show a readiness to relieve the poor who are labouring under them, as you desire that the eye of mercy may be directed toward you, and that the arm of God may be extended for your support, if such distresses should return upon you. And I hope, any whom God may lately have raised up to life and health, when they seemed in the extremest danger of being deprived of the residue of their years, will hear how loudly he calls upon them, to present a thank-offering, so suitable to the nature of that favour which they have received.

To conclude all, I would beseech every one of you who hear me this day, both high and low, rich and poor together, that they aid this good work by their prayers: a contribution, by which some of the poorest may be eminently helpful; for such are often peculiarly rich in faith, and high in the favour of the King of heaven.

And may He, the great patron of the afflicted, and of those that pity them, say Amen to our united petitions! May he graciously guide the minds of those who are concerting the scheme, and ripening it for fuller execution! May he open the hearts of those who shall be applied to, that they may give freely and cheerfully, in full proportion to what he, the only perfect judge, certainly knows to be their respective abilities! And may he abundantly reward all, who from worthy principles shall assist in so excellent a work, with health in their persons, prosperity in their families, peace in their minds, and at length, through the merits and grace of the great Redeemer, with an eternal abode in that world, where the great physician of souls having fully accomplished his healing purposes, the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick! Nevertheless, the grace of charity shall live and reign there; though such methods of expressing it as I have now been recommending be happily superseded: nor is it at all improbable, that some, whom we have for a few days lodged in our house of mercy here, may there, as our Lord himself expresses it, receive us into everlasting habitations. Amen.

SERMON XVI.

THE NECESSITY OF A GENERAL REFORMATION, TO OBTAIN SUCCESS IN WAR.*

DEDICATION.

To the Honourable Colonel James Gardiner.

SIR,

I AM far from thinking that I pay any part of the debt which I owe to your most engaging friendship, by presenting you with a plain Discourse; on the contrary, I am sensible, that by your permitting me to inscribe it to you, that debt is increased: but obligations to so much goodness as I have experienced in you, sit so easily and pleasantly upon me, that no objection arises from that quarter. And it has this claim to your patronage, that many of the thoughts are as much yours as mine; having been talked over between us with a great deal of freedom. I know, Sir, they are such as make a very deep impression on your heart, and such as you strenuously labour to promote among those who have the happiness of being under your command; and I am confident you will think it no reproach to you to avow them in the most public manner, as your whole life always speaks your steady regard to those principles on which they are built.

I heartily congratulate you, Sir, and I congratulate the public, on the visible effects of your resolute and courageous zeal for religion, in the remarkable sobriety and regularity of those to whom your influence most directly extends; and I doubt not, but it has extended much further than the company, or even the regiment, to which you stand peculiarly related. Were our officers and our soldiers in general such, I am persuaded it would soon appear, how much righteousness exalteth a nation: and that He who is wisdom to the pious counsellor, would also be strength to them that turn the battle from our gates to those of the enemy; so that our commanders, like the hero who has furnished me with my motto, might well give it for their word, GOD OUR ALLY AND OUR GENERAL.

To all the prayers which I have been offering for my country in the progress of that Discourse of which I now beg your acceptance, permit me to add this one more. That to whatever services you may be called in its defence, that God, whom you serve, in all may continually watch over you for good, and prolong to many future most honourable and important years, a life so faithfully devoted to him. My heart reveres you too much, to permit me to tell the world, so immediately in your presence, the high sentiments it entertains of you; and I am, (with an affection, which is, perhaps, too ready to forget the formalities of a public address, in the tenderness of private friendship,)

My dear Colonel,

Your most faithful and obliged,
and most obedient humble servant.

Northampton, February 25, 1739-40. P. DODDRIDGE.

DEUT. xxiii. 9.

When the host goeth forth against their enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

THE acknowledgment of that God, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways, is a duty in its obligation so evidently reasonable, in its exercise so delightful, and in its natural consequences so variously advantageous, that one would hope it should be the prevailing temper among men; a temper which should run through the most agreeable and secure scenes of life, since that agreeableness and security is the effect of divine care and goodness. Nevertheless we too generally see, that in this respect men are lulled asleep by those gentle gales of prosperity, which waft them on towards a haven they desire; but when cross and contrary winds arise, and beat upon them, the noise, the motion, the danger of the tempest often

* Preached at Northampton, January 9, 1739-40, the day appointed by his majesty for public humiliation.

awakens them, and engages them, like the mariners in the ship with Jonah, to call every one upon his God. I would hope, indeed, that I am now addressing to many, who have made prayer the business and the joy of their prosperous days; and such may with peculiar pleasure and confidence have recourse to it in circumstances of extremity, if God should be pleased to lead us in such circumstances. In the mean time, I doubt not but it is with great readiness that such numbers of you have obeyed the wise and pious call of our sovereign, to assemble this day, "That we may humble ourselves before Almighty God, in order to obtain pardon of our sins; and may in most devout and solemn manner send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for averting those heavy judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved, imploring his blessing and assistance on our arms, and for restoring and perpetuating peace, safety, and prosperity to us."

Christian princes have seldom omitted on such occasions as these, to give such calls to their subjects; and they have instructive precedents for it in Scripture. They might learn it from the conduct of pious Jehoshaphat, who, when numerous nations were conspiring against him, set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah, that they might gather themselves together, to ask help from him. Yea, the hint might be taken even from the behaviour of the king of Nineveh, who, when the prophet had so solemnly declared in the name of God, that his country should be destroyed, arose from his throne, and laid aside his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes, at the same time causing a most rigorous fast to be proclaimed through Nineveh, by his own decree, and that of his nobles; an abstinence in which, the more forcibly to impress the minds of men, the beasts were also to share, and neither to feed nor drink water; and those of them which had appeared in that luxurious city in the most sumptuous trappings and decorations, were in the sad procession, like their masters, to be covered with sackcloth. With such low prostration was the whole nation, as one man, to cry mightily unto God, to avert his displeasure: but it is worthy of our remark, that the light of nature and reason taught that prince also to add, in his royal mandate for a general humiliation, Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Now as obedience to the government, and love to the public, must engage every faithful minister to labour to address his people this day, on such a subject, and in such a manner, as he judges most suitable to its great design; I thought it my duty to fix my own meditations and yours, on the absolute necessity of national and personal reformation, in order to a well-grounded expectation of success in war. This the king of Nineveh inculcated, as you have heard; and Moses also had long before solemnly urged it, in the words of my text; When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. And surely every one's conscience will tell him, how fit it is, that, after we have been pouring out our confessions and our supplications before God, we should attentively reflect upon such a charge as this, lest future iniquities, aggravated even by the humiliation of this day, should prove our speedy and our final destruction.

You see the words contain a very plain and intelligible admonition to Israel, of the peculiar care with which they should guard against any unreformed wickedness, when (like Great Britain at this day) they were engaging in war: and they are a charge, not only to the soldiery, in such circumstances as these, to abstain from rapine, cruelty, and debauchery, as well as from any superstitious regard to those idols, which they might meet with in the camps and cities of their enemies; but also to the people in general, to be careful that they did not, by any impieties or immoralities at home, bring down the curse of God upon their arms, and blast the success even of the most righteous cause.

Before I proceed to a more particular consideration of the words, I will readily allow, they might have some peculiar weight, when considered as addressed to the Israelites; for they had God in a very extraordinary manner present among them, as the ark, often called the footstool of his throne, was now in the midst of their camp; and, when it was not, there were other holy instruments committed to the charge of the anointed of the field, by which God was to be consulted, and his presence acknowledged. Upon this account we find, in the following words, they are urged to keep themselves, not only from moral, but also from ceremonial, and even natural, pollution; that the order, decency, and cleanliness of their camp might be an habitual expression of their reverence for that God, who condescended to appear among them as their general, and their king: For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp;—therefore shall it be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

It may also be proper to recollect upon this occasion, that the Israelites were under something of a peculiarly equal providence; and consequently might expect victory or defeat, as they were obedient or disobedient to the divine command, with a certainty greater than is common to other nations. For though indeed it is probable, that, in a series of years, the prosperity or calamity of a nation will be proportionable to its general virtues or vices; yet the peculiar covenant which God had made

with Israel, not only seems to have engaged him to a more immediate retribution, but likewise extended itself to all those peculiar institutions, which they as a separate nation were under. Therefore does he particularly tell them, that if they did not observe to do all his commandments and statutes, he would cause them to be smitten before their enemies; they should go out against them one way, and flee seven ways before them; thereby strongly intimating, (and indeed with the utmost reason,) that the presumptuous violation of any ceremonial or positive precept would be attended with fatal consequences; of which, you well know, the defeat brought upon the whole army of Israel for the sin of Achan, in secreting the accursed thing, was an early and very memorable instance; as well as the severity, with which that crime was punished, on the offender and his family. And it was indeed a merciful method which God took, to preserve Israel in an external and visible adherence to the religion and the institutions he had founded among them, thus immediately to animadvert upon them by his chastising providence, whenever they deviated from it, though in circumstances otherwise indifferent; and it may be in those, in which human policy would have dictated a very different conduct, had not a divine command interposed: which, by the way, is particularly apparent in the effect of multiplying chariots and horses, which were always a curse, instead of a defence, to Israel, how useful so ever they might have been to other nations; because God had required them to employ infantry alone, as that by which (the more immediately to show his interposition) he would save them, when they depended upon him.

I pretend not therefore to maintain from these words, that we are concerned in them, just in the very same manner and degree that the Israelites were; yet I doubt not but I shall be able,

I. To prove, that we are highly concerned in this caution which is given to them. And then,

II. I shall endeavour to illustrate it, by the mention of some particular evils, against which, in our present circumstances, we are peculiarly obliged to guard. After which,

III. I shall conclude with some inferences from hence, further suited to the occasion of this day's most solemn assembly.

I. I am to prove, that we are all much concerned in the caution that is here given; and that as ever we, or any other nation, would reasonably expect success against our enemies, it is necessary that, when we go forth against them, we should keep ourselves from every wicked thing.

You will remember, I pretend not to assert that the event of every battle, or of every war, will always bear an exact proportion, either to the justice of the cause, or to the virtue and piety of those that are engaged in it. Indeed the event of some wars, especially towards the beginning of the Reformation, wherein the sufferers were persons of the most excellent, and the victors of the most hateful, characters, is too sad an evidence to the contrary.* I am very ready to allow, that in some instances, to form the hearts of his people to more eminent attainments in goodness by scenes of distress, or for other reasons to us unknown, God may determine events otherwise: yet I think I may very safely venture to affirm, that we can never form any just expectation of continued success and prosperity in our military affairs, unless there be a zealous concern about a reformation in our manners; and unless national piety and virtue be our earnest and governing care. And this may sufficiently appear, if we consider, on the one hand, that the divine favour can only reasonably be expected by those, who are careful to keep themselves from evil; and on the other, that prosperity in military affairs does evidently depend on the divine favour. Both these considerations are so plain, that they might almost be admitted as self-evident; though in order to impress them more deeply upon our minds, I shall spend a few words upon each.

1. The divine favour can only reasonably be expected by those, who are solicitous to keep themselves from moral evil.

I might introduce what I have further to say on this head, by observing, that the moral perfections of God seem evidently deducible from his natural; for to suppose otherwise concerning him, would be indeed to suppose him worse than even the very vilest of men, who, if they act unrighteously where they know what is reasonable and fit, do it as tempted by some self-interest; a temptation, to which an almighty being cannot possibly be obnoxious. Now the consequence from his being perfectly holy and righteous himself, to his loving the like character, and hating the contrary, in his reasonable creatures, is so plain, that the apostle appeals to every one's conscience to bear witness to it: What fellowship, says he, hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what communion hath light with darkness? It must then be granted, that as the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance beholds the upright; so his face must be set against them that do evil, that sooner or later he may cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Wicked men have reason therefore to be

* I hardly know a more memorable instance of this than in the success of that pernicious and ungrateful war, which the Emperor Charles V. unjustly waged against those two pious and worthy princes, John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse Cassel; in which the Emperor was supported by a confederate multitude of Spanish and Italian forces, who marched their way through Germany with unheard of cruelties, and particularly on the Lord's day set themselves to burn the churches, and feed their horses in the chancels, to testify their hatred against the Protestant Religion, which those princes professed. Pierre spes et splendidus ensemble manet atque perire, who miserum discrimen. Sleid. de Stat. Relig. lib. xviii. p. 731.

afraid of his judgments: and they have especial reason to fear them, who, like the inhabitants of Great Britain, have been favoured with the clearest knowledge of his will, have received the most eminent deliverances from him, and have for a long series of years been preserved in peace and prosperity; while, at the same time that they have called themselves his people, they have acted in a visible contrariety to their profession, and thereby brought proportionable dishonour upon his name. This is a case greatly to be feared in every condition, and it is especially worthy of our consideration in our present circumstances; because,

2. It is most evident, that the success of military affairs does entirely depend upon the divine protection and favour.

This is a well known maxim of the word of God; and considering the natural pride of our hearts, it was fit that it should be deeply inculcated. It is therefore repeated again and again; and it is observable, that it comes most frequently from the pen of David, who was himself so courageous a warrior, and so illustrious a conqueror. No king, says he, is saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength: behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, to deliver their soul from death. And we shall have occasion hereafter to mention many other passages equivalent to these.

It would indeed be thus, if the success of battle was always proportionable to the number, strength, and skill of those respectively concerned in it; for all the strength and all the skill of creatures is derived from God, and is supported by him. But we find in experience, as well as in Scripture, that events often arise, in which it evidently appears, that the battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; and circumstances happen, in which, with some allowance for the figurative expression, one chases a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Much of the success of military actions depends upon the weather, which almost the whole world acknowledges to be apparently at the divine disposal, and to be quite beyond any human alteration or control. Wind and rain, cold and heat, have been the destruction of thousands, who imagined themselves most secure of victory and success, even in land engagements. Much likewise depends upon a variety of little accidents; and especially, with respect to the discernment of those that command, and the alacrity of those who engage. Now God at pleasure takes away the spirit of princes, and dejects the men of might, so that they are not able to find their hands. He sometimes diffuses among mighty armies a spirit of discord, so that confederate forces desert or destroy one another, or perhaps sends a sudden panic upon them, and then, be their forces ever so numerous, the entrance of fear is the beginning of a defeat, in which numbers, instead of helping, only crowd, and bear down, and trample on each other. It is evident to all acquainted with history, that, by such incidents as these, small numbers have been rendered victorious, even almost beyond their expectation, and have stood astonished at their own success.

This is a remark peculiarly applicable to naval preparations. Their prosperity most evidently depends on the most uncertain elements, the winds and the waves; and he that gathers the winds in his fist, can with infinite ease pen up the most gallant fleets in their harbours, and waft over to defenceless ports, in the very neighbourhood of them, invading enemies in transports by no means a match for the fine navies, on which the sovereign of the sea has laid his embargo. Yea, at his command the ships of Tarshish shall be dashed in pieces with an east wind, and their bulk and strength only serve to give each other the more violent shocks, and to spread the wider ruin. This is a thought especially worthy our attention, who have in so many instances, within the memory of man, owed the preservation of our domestic peace, and probably, it may be added, even that of our religion and liberty, to the interposition of the wind in our favour. A circumstance which our enemies themselves have recorded with surprise, though we are, alas, too insensible of it.*

We see then how incontestably it appears, that the prosperity of our arms entirely depends upon the divine favour: and indeed the truth of this is so evident, that dissolute as the generality of mankind are, there are few of them entirely unimpressed with it. It is certain, that many of those vices, which tend to provoke God, do at the same time render men's circumstances desperate, their spirits mean, and their constitutions weak. Riot and debauchery unbrace the nerves; and in proportion to the degree in which they are indulged, render the glutton, the drunkard, and the whoremonger, incapable of sustaining those hardships, which would be comparatively easy to those, who had been long trained up under the discipline of abstinence, sobriety, and industry. But, besides all this, guilt of every kind naturally makes men cowards; whereas conscious integrity and upright-

* Not only the story of the Spanish invasion, and that of the [illegible] of the Prince of Orange, our great deliverer, in 1688, [illegible] instances of this; but also the invasions attempted [illegible] by King James the Second, or the Pretender and his [illegible] I cannot recollect any one that has not been [illegible] and those such as we ourselves could have wished. [illegible] Father Orleans, in his History of the English Rev[illegible] some of the former instances, with [illegible] and I know the author of the late Duke of Berwick's [illegible] some of the latter, in some passages which [illegible] reading, that I am sorry I have not room to [illegible] seeing so referring to them.

ness is a kind of impregnable armour, which secures the heart from fear, even in the midst of danger. This Solomon well knew, and therefore says, The wicked flee when no man pursues: but the righteous are bold as a lion. And indeed that man, who apprehends himself under the guardianship and defence of Divine Providence, may well be courageous; and when he can say, The Lord is my light and my salvation, he may justly add, Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident: for he has all the reason in the world to be assured, that God will either shield him from danger, which in the most perilous action he can easily do; or if he suffer him to fall by it, will open him a passage to eternal glory, by the wounds he may receive in a righteous cause. Whereas the man who is condemned by his own heart, cannot easily flatter himself so far, as inwardly to imagine, that he is not condemned by that God, who is greater than his heart, and knoweth all things. Nor can he always forget how entirely he is in the hand of that tremendous Being, whom his disobedience has made his enemy: and it is no wonder if death appear terrible, when he has so much reason to fear that hell will follow it; for though it is an easy thing to jest with its distant terrors, it is not so easy deliberately to brave them when they seem to approach. You may therefore observe, that, in order to lay conscience asleep, politic men have often contrived to blow up a wicked soldiery with an apprehension, that what they might want in the regularity and virtue of their behaviour, they had in the goodness of their cause, or in the orthodoxy of their belief; that a persuasion of the piety of their cause, might at least be a balance to the impiety and licentiousness of their characters: yea, they have, it may be, consecrated their cruelties as an atonement for their debauchery. What artifices have been used to this purpose, and by whom, it is by no means my present business to inquire; but I look upon it as a sort of testimony, borne often by the worst of men to the importance of some religious hopes in military affairs; as it does, on the other side, appear from what was before said, that these hopes can only be reasonably entertained by those, who are disposed to a thorough reformation of their lives, or, in the language of the text, to keep themselves from every wicked thing, when their host goes forth against the enemy.

But in order to render these general reflections more useful, by bringing them to a point, permit me, in the second place,

II. To hint at some of those evils, which we should, in our present circumstances, be particularly careful to guard against.

And here I must in the very first place, mention that in which all the other particulars, which might occur on this occasion, are in effect contained, as in their fatal cause; and observe,

1. That "a profane contempt of that divine revelation, with which God has favoured us," is one great evil, that should be carefully avoided.

As I cannot, so I hope I need not, be large in showing, how admirably the whole tenor of the word of God, and especially the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we all profess to believe, is calculated to promote a general reformation in mankind; and how certainly it will promote it, in proportion to the degree in which it is cordially received. It indeed most powerfully tends not only to regulate the life, but to awaken and impress the conscience; not only to control those evil actions, which, though detrimental in some measure to society, may not be cognizable by human laws, but also to suppress, and even eradicate, those irregular affections and passions, from which such actions proceed. We can therefore wish nothing better to our country, than that this gospel, this glorious gospel of the blessed God, may be universally considered, embraced, and obeyed; and I am persuaded, nothing would have a happier aspect upon our public affairs, than that we should all labour to our utmost to promote its establishment, and its influence over the minds of men.

We have the more reason to be concerned about it, as perhaps there is no Christian nation under heaven, in which bolder and more mischievous assaults have been made upon revealed religion, than among us: and though it has so friendly an aspect on the comfort of individuals, and the happiness of society, the licentiousness of some, and the pride of others, has engaged them to unite against it, as against a common enemy, and to treat it with a contempt, equal to that veneration it might justly have demanded. This is indeed the natural consequence of that liberty which we enjoy, not only of thinking for ourselves, which none can prevent, but of freely professing our own sentiments; a liberty so honourable to human nature and to truth, and on many accounts (as I have elsewhere shown[a]) so profitable, that I think no wise man could wish it were restrained. Yet the more freely we assert it, the more careful should we be by all rational and Christian methods to prevent its abuse, and to guard against those bad consequences, which, good as the thing itself is, are almost inseparable from it.

Let all who believe the gospel, take heed how they trifle with it; and let all who have any scruples concerning it, make their inquiries into its evidences with all possible diligence, humility, and impartiality; which if they do, they will undoubt-

[a] Sermon on Persecution.

edly end in a more established belief. And let us all, according to our abilities, exert ourselves for its defence; not only by pleading its cause by arguments, so far as we have an opportunity in our respective places to do it; but also by bearing our testimony to its importance, as well as its truth; and above all, by labouring to the utmost to make our lives a continued and prevailing apology for it, which they will be, if they are steadily governed by its holy dictates.

To excite us to the greater care on this head, let it be remembered, that nothing is more highly displeasing to God, than the contempt of that revelation which he has sent. They that despised Moses's law, found it so to their cost; for when they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy; and he brought an invading enemy upon them, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: and we cannot expect, that the effects of his displeasure will be less terrible, if we will not reverence his Son. It is owing to his wonderful patience, that we have not long ago been made a monument of his wrath, and punished for these iniquities, as remarkably as we have been known by him beyond most of the other nations of the earth. Our guilt on this head makes it more necessary to add,

2. "The luxurious abuse of the favours of divine Providence, which have in so long a peace been flowing in upon us," is another evil to be guarded against, if we would reasonably expect success in war.

I am now speaking to many who know, more particularly than I myself do, how plentifully our land has yielded her increase for many succeeding years; insomuch that we have been able to relieve the necessities of neighbour nations, out of our own redundant stores: a providence, which has not only prevented corn from growing a drug at home, but has been an occasion of bringing into the nation no contemptible return of riches for a considerable time. Besides this, whatever particular difficulties may have attended some traders, our commerce in general has long been in a flourishing condition. Very considerable estates have been raised; and it is neither to be wondered at, nor blamed, that those who have found their wealth increasing, have thought proper to live in a more liberal, and elegant, and some of them in a more magnificent manner, than before. But I fear, that, in many of those who have thus been distinguished by the blessings of Divine Providence, this indulgence has grown up into luxury and extravagance, and to neglect of honest and industrious employment, whereby God might have been honoured, and the public interest promoted; cares and labours, from which the wealthiest and the noblest of mankind are by no means to think themselves excused; nay, by which they are rather to be proportionably distinguished.

I fear also, that the taste for pleasure and grandeur, which has prevailed so much in persons of plentiful circumstances, has been too eagerly and vainly imitated, by those whose estates and families would have required another kind of conduct. This, in great measure, may have been the cause of the many bankruptcies, whereby such who have dealt largely, and have affected to deal much more largely than they ought, have frequently drawn down many others, and those, perhaps, more industrious and deserving families, into ruin with themselves. While others, in various employments, have been obliged to have recourse to mean artifices, to shore up a sinking credit for a while, till those props have at last only made the ruin the greater, and the more unpitied; and all this to the unspeakable reproach of religion, which has sometimes been vainly pretended to by those, whose conduct has been most contrary to its essential precepts. Indeed, to speak freely, I can by no means think, the great affectation of ornament in dress, and magnificence in living, which is the expensive taste of the present age, can bode well to the public. The sins of Sodom, pride and idleness, with fulness of bread, have long been in the midst of us; and if they are not reformed, they must, both by their natural consequence, and by the righteous judgment of God, involve our nation in destruction. We have long been made to eat the increase of the field, to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: we have been fed with the fat of kidneys of wheat, and drank the pure blood of the grape; till, like Jeshurun, we have waxed fat and kicked: and therefore, as the guilt has been ours, it will be but righteous, if the condemnation should be ours too; and a fire should be kindled against us in God's anger, that should burn even to the lowest hell, that should consume the land with its increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. It becomes us, therefore, if we would avert the deserved judgments of God, to set ourselves, as in his presence, to examine seriously how we are using the talents he has graciously lent us; and instead of profusely wasting both our time and our stock in vain indulgences, to apply ourselves with honest industry to the proper business of our calling; and by a prudent frugality at home, to lay a foundation for a liberal contribution to the poor. So are we most likely to regain the strength and honour of our nation, which luxury must infallibly enervate and disgrace, and to draw down the blessing of God upon our affairs, as well as to provide some resource for future supplies, if our present preparation should be (which God forbid) unsuccessful, or the war should be prolonged till the

burthen grow much more sensible than it can at present be. Again,

3. "Too great a confidence in our own military strength and preparations," is another evil from which we should be especially solicitous to keep ourselves, in such a conjuncture of affairs as this.

Through the abundant goodness of God, the armaments of Great Britain, both by sea and land, have, so far as I can recollect, in most instances, since the beginning of the present century, been attended with success; and in some circumstances that success has been glorious and remarkable. These being then the latest facts, and facts of so pleasant a nature, are apt to strike our remembrance very strongly; and are now recollected with so much the more pleasure, as the last of them was attended with equal honour to Great Britain, and shame and disappointment to Spain.* But I fear, that (to allude to the expressive language of the prophet) because we have often caught our enemies in our net, and gathered them in our drag, we are fallen into the absurd impiety of sacrificing to our net, and burning incense to our drag: and though it is to be sure a pleasant thing, to see our nation engaging in this necessary war with ardour and cheerfulness, and the apparent righteousness of our cause may indeed encourage our humble hopes; yet I cannot forbear saying, that I fear, that great cagerness which in many instances has been shown on this occasion, has proceeded from a forgetfulness of God, and a proud confidence in ourselves; as if victory were chained to our chariot wheels, and the winds, so often indeed listed under our banners, were always to blow according to our directions; as if the artillery of our ships were as unconquerable, as that of heaven itself, and we could at pleasure send forth our thunder, and scatter our enemies, and shoot out lightnings, and discomfit them.

But let it be remembered, that Pharaoh stood on the very verge of disgrace and destruction, when he said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, and my hand shall destroy them. Yea, let us remember in general, that pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. I can wish no happier omen, than that we should learn the language and sentiments, which that martial hero, whom we mentioned before on a like occasion, so often inculcates upon his people; that we may say with him, In the name of our God will we set up our banners; through thee will we push down our enemies; through thy name will we tread them under, that rise up against us; for I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. Though some trust in chariots and some in horses, we will remember the name of the Lord our God; for God delights not in the strength of the horse, neither takes he pleasure in the legs of a man, so that his victory should be proportionable to their strength, and their agility: and therefore, though in some cases the horse may prudently be prepared against the day of battle; yet still must it be acknowledged, that safety is of the Lord. He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder, he burns the chariot in the fire; salvation belongs to the Lord; his blessing is upon his people. We have indeed no warrant to expect a miraculous interposition of God in our favour; and it would be folly and wickedness, in a dependence upon that, to neglect any necessary methods of defence: but still it is to be remembered, that (as we proved under the former head) the success of all is from above; and that it is, on the whole, through God alone we can do valiantly, and he it is that must tread down our enemies. This we are solemnly acknowledging in the devotions of this day; and God grant, that it may fix on our minds that pious humility, which, as it is perfectly consistent with the firmest valour, has in some very remarkable instances been a prelude to the most glorious success.

Let me add but this once more,

4. "Too keen a resentment for injuries received from our enemies, growing into a malignant hatred against them," is another evil, which we should be peculiarly solicitous in our present circumstances to avoid.

It is certain indeed, that some of those violences which have been offered us, have been attended with circumstances of such barbarity and contempt, as cannot but awaken a strong indignation; and the genius of Britons can very ill brook such kind of treatment. Yet permit me to say, that it would be unjust to charge the whole Spanish nation with such enormities, as have been committed by some, probably in the number of the most abandoned among them. Humanity is not the growth of one particular climate, but a happy inheritance divided among the various inhabitants of the earth; and I doubt not, but it teaches many among them to abhor the villanies of their countrymen. But if not, be that reproach to our enemies; and may it never fall upon us, that we have delighted in the unnecessary misery of our fellow-creatures, and have retorted cruelty for cruelty. We are indeed to wish, that injustice may be so chastised, as that for the future it may be suppressed; but God forbid, that we should thirst for blood and ruin, or take delight to think of the sufferings of any, how ill soever they may have deserved of us!

War, in such circumstances as ours, is the rigorous and severe work of justice, and must be done; but methinks a humane heart consents to it with

* I suppose few need to be told, that I refer to that glorious expedition to Sicily, in the year 1718, which was conducted with so much spirit, prudence, and bravery by Admiral Byng, afterwards Viscount Torrington.

some sensible regret, and will sometimes bleed to think, that those benevolent and brotherly cares that ought to fill the heart of one man for another, and of one nation for another, should be turned into thoughts and schemes of destruction; and give place to contrivances, how men may be slaughtered, and cities laid waste, and the beauties of nature and art ravaged and defaced.

It would indeed be a partial and short-sighted tenderness, if potent nations should, on these principles, suffer themselves to be injured and insulted by every foreign bravo; till at length they sink into contempt, and yield up themselves, or their dependants, a tame and helpless prey to injustice and cruelty. A neglect of the proper methods of self-defence would leave them chargeable before God and man with the calamities resulting from it: yet still it becomes them, in the vindication of their just rights, to guard against that savage fierceness, which forgets that enemies are men.* It becomes us rather to wish, they may be brought to reason by the least destructive methods; and that what they in the mean time suffer, may be a profitable lesson to others, and, on the whole, to themselves.

I apprehend these admonitions not unseasonable, and having enlarged so far upon them, shall omit some other heads, which might easily be connected with them; and shall,

III. Conclude this Discourse with some general reflections.

Now, such as these will probably present themselves to most of your thoughts; and, no doubt, you have anticipated me in some of them.

1. Let us be deeply humbled before God for the evils that are to be found among us.

Let us lie down, as it were, in the dust, in his sacred presence, when we consider that with us, even with us, there are so many crying abominations to be found, notwithstanding all that God has been pleased to do for us. Let us be humbled before him, not only for the sins of our princes, and nobles, and priests, and people; but more especially under a sense of our own guilt, and of what we have added to the divine displeasure, by offences, if not in their kind peculiarly enormous, yet at least in their circumstances most highly aggravated. Let us borrow the expressions of humble contrition, which were used by God's ancient people, and each of us say with Ezra, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens: since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day;—and behold, we are now before thee in our trespasses; and we cannot stand before thee, because of this. Let us say with Jeremiah, We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Let us say with Daniel, when he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek him by prayer, and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and thy judgments:—O Lord, righteousness belongs unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day,—to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee;—neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets:—Nevertheless, O Lord, hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy people are called by thy name.

Nor let this be words alone, but the deep-felt sentiments of our hearts. Let us call to remembrance our manifold engagements to God, on the one hand, and our transgressions against him, on the other; and acknowledge, in the abasement and bitterness of our souls before him, that it would be a righteous thing in him to bring destruction upon us in its most painful and dreadful forms, to infatuate all our counsels, to blast all our undertakings, to sink our navies in the midst of the sea, to cause our own hearts to melt, and our hands to fail, while those of our enemies were strengthened for our ruin! Let us humbly acknowledge, that he would be just in all that came upon us, if this pleasant land, in which we have enjoyed so great plenty and prosperity, should become a desert; or if we should see those possessions for which we ourselves have laboured, or which have been transmitted to us from our forefathers, plundered by strangers, or even inherited by enemies. And while we are confessing this, let us endeavour by earnest and importunate prayer to avert these deserved judgments, and wrestle with God not to destroy his people; but to give us that help from trouble, without which we shall find, that vain is the help of man.

Let these thoughts, which I hope are impressing our minds in the solemnities of this day, be carried along with us into our secret retirements; let us spread them before God in our family devotion, and let them have a becoming share in our private worship. And if we desire that these supplications and prayers may not be an abomination to a holy God, let us,

2. Be very solicitous to exert ourselves to the utmost, to promote a work of general reformation, according to the various stations in which Providence has placed us.

* Viri boni est, unira bella invitum suscipere, extrema non libenter persequi.—*Sallust*

Our care in this respect, if it be earnest and sincere, will begin with ourselves; and we should now particularly consider ourselves, as solemnly called by God to search and try our ways, that we may turn again to the Lord. In obedience to the command, let us, as it were, call a court in our consciences, and impartially judge ourselves, as those that are shortly to be judged of the Lord. Whatever is criminal, whatever is even suspicious, in our temper and conduct, let us endeavour to regulate it by the certain rules of religion, and bring all our sentiments and actions to its unerring standard. Let us not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; labouring to the very utmost to prevent any reproach to our profession, and to reflect a glory upon it. Could every one be engaged to this, all would be well; nay, should it grow the prevailing temper, we might reasonably hope, that the innocent would deliver the island; yea, that it should be preserved by the pureness of their hands.

And this will naturally engage us to a proper care of those committed to our immediate charge. It will, no doubt, have a happy influence upon heads of families, to stir them up to walk before their houses in a perfect way; and so to govern, as well as instruct, their domestics, that none under their roof and care may make themselves vile, without being restrained by proper discipline. This would, under God, (who very seldom denies a blessing to such pious endeavours,) have a happy tendency to secure to our country a race of virtuous and pious youth, whose behaviour might wipe off the stain which the sins of their fathers have thrown upon it; out of regard to whom God might deal so much the more graciously with us, while they were growing up for public service, and might say of our nation, as in another case, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it. And, to conclude all,

3. Let us, from what we have now been hearing, be excited earnestly to pray for those, who, by reason of their more public stations in life, may be capable of doing more than ourselves, to promote the work of national reformation.

And here our magistrates justly claim the first share in our remembrance. Let us earnestly pray, that divine grace may possess their hearts with a sense of the importance of their respective offices, and of the strict account they must another day render for the manner in which they have discharged them.—Let us especially pray for our gracious sovereign, who is calling us to these prayers, and joining with his people in humiliation before the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Let us pray, that the Lord may hear him in the day of trouble, that the name of the God of Jacob may defend him, that he may send him help from his sanctuary, and strengthen him out of Zion! That the king may joy in the strength of the Lord, and in his salvation may greatly rejoice! That as he is thus publicly declaring his trust in the Lord, through the mercy of the Most High he may not be moved; but that God's hand may find out all his enemies, and his right hand may find out those that hate him! That his glory may be great in God's salvation, and increasing honour and majesty may be laid upon him! I am persuaded, there is not a heart that does not answer Amen! May the father of our country hear, that his enemies are humbled abroad! May he see his people united and reformed at home! Yea, may God make him most blessed for ever; that in the future and infinitely most important world, they that have been here protected by him in war, and cherished in peace, may see him as much distinguished by celestial glories, as he now is by earthly dignities!—May all our counsellors be wise, and all our judges faithful! May our legislators enact good laws, and inferior magistrates vigorously execute them! And may all our rulers, from the highest to the lowest, be themselves examples of universal goodness! May they scatter away all evil with their eyes, and make it ashamed by their presence! May they resolutely reform the people who generally of all others need it most, their own domestics and dependants! And may they have that inward veneration from all about them, which nothing but a character for real religion can give, even to the greatest and wisest of mankind.

Let us pray likewise for our military, as well as our civil, officers; that they may exert themselves, with a bravery so well becoming their character, to drive out wickedness, that most dangerous enemy, from our camps and navies, which it has so boldly invaded; yea, where it has by so long a custom claimed a kind of right to pitch its tent, and to set up its banners. This will indeed be a very hard conquest, considering the circumstances in which persons generally enter on such a life, and the great and dangerous leisure which it gives them, in a time of long peace, of corrupting themselves and each other. Yet the extensive power, which is annexed to superior officers in every regiment, and company, may give them great advantages for serving their country, by regulating the external behaviour of those under their command; and human authority can pretend to regulate nothing more. They may, for instance, be restrained from the open violation of the sabbath, and called to an attendance upon public worship, under one form of it or another; and a great check may be given to that lewdness, debauchery, and profaneness, in which not a few of them vie with each other, as if they were the distinguishing honours of their order. I look upon it as a great ornament, honour, and blessing to our land, that many of our officers are very amiable examples of virtue and piety, and know how deficient even the character of a gentleman is, when notori-

ously wanting in either. And we in these parts have had many opportunities of observing, how good an influence the inspection of such persons has upon the inferior soldiery, to secure the regularity and decency of their behaviour. Let us earnestly pray, that the Lord of hosts, whom we are entreating to cover the heads of our warriors in the day of battle, may more generally inspire the hearts of those that lead them forth with his fear, and excite them, however it may be censured by the abandoned and profane, to exert themselves to the utmost, to form their troops to the discipline of virtue, as well as of war. It is what the credit of their profession, and I will add, the safety of the public, requires. And I must take the liberty particularly to say, that when my ears are at any time wounded with those detestable imprecations, which are in many places so common among our soldiery, and which are, I think, an infallible proof of a character thoroughly bad, I am ready to tremble with the sad apprehension, lest their guilt should turn back their weapons of war; and lest God should suddenly send them, from the points of their enemies' swords, or the mouths of their guns, that damnation which they have so wantonly invoked on themselves and each other.

We are under yet more apparent obligation, to pray for those that preside in religious assemblies of all denominations; that God would clothe his priests with salvation; as what will have a most important influence to make his people joyful and happy. May their hearts and hands be united in that good work which is committed to them! May God deliver them from the shame and folly of employing the solemn seasons of public worship, in reproaching their brethren, and animating the hearts of professing Christians against each other! An enormity which, I think, is in our day generally driven out with a just contempt; unless perhaps it be yet sheltered among a very few, whom great ignorance, or greater wickedness, has reduced to this wretched expedient, as a kind of forlorn hope. May a better temper universally succeed; and however Christian assemblies may differ in some of their forms of worship, yet as they agree in the essentials of it, may their ministers agree in pursuing the same great end; and as they all have one errand, may their language, in the main, be one! May they all speak with plainness, with seriousness, and I will add, with that authority too, which nothing but conscious integrity and goodness can give! Not even amusing, and much less hurting, the minds of men, with matters of doubtful disputations; but rather exerting themselves to the utmost for that one plain, but glorious, purpose, of reforming men's tempers and lives upon the Christian plan!

For promoting the efficacy of such labours as these, we should earnestly pray, that all who are employed in them, may be examples of distinguishing piety; and that God would be like a refiner's fire, to purify the sons of Levi. For while any gross immoralities are observable in their conduct, they will wound religion like a two-edged sword; as their hearers, by a perverseness and inconsistency very natural to the licentious and profane, will look upon it as a sanction at once for despising their persons, and imitating their vices. Ministers of all denominations claim our prayers on these heads; and peculiarly those of established churches; where, as the temporal emoluments are generally greatest, there is of course more to invite unworthy persons to offer themselves to the ministry.—Nor ought we to forget in our prayers at such seasons, those wise, learned, and pious men, whom our governors may from time to time think fit to raise to the most exalted stations among the clergy, and to invest with a dignity and authority, which though no part of their ministerial office, is capable of being improved to great advantage. It is devoutly to be wished, that they may use their great influence and power, to exclude those that are unworthy from that important trust, as persons whom they cannot suppose to be called by the Holy Ghost to take it upon them; and that they may preside over the doctrine and behaviour of those committed to their care, in such a manner, as may render both most edifying to those who attend their instruction. By these pious and zealous endeavours an establishment will flourish, and separate interests decrease. But what folly and iniquity were it, so much as secretly to wish, that one limb might grow by the distemper of the body, or one coast be enriched by the wreck of the public navy!

Once more, let us, on the principles on which I am now insisting, earnestly pray for those, who have the care of educating youth intended for public stations. Let us pray for all the universities of Great Britain, and for more private academies and schools; which, according to the manner in which they are regulated, will either be the blessing or the calamity of our country. May those, that are so trained up for one important employment or another, and especially those intended for the ministry of Christ's church, be formed to extensive knowledge, and above all, to the knowledge of the gospel! May they be regulated by proper discipline, that habits of virtue may be formed, as well as principles of science and truth imbibed! May those to whom God has committed the high and laborious, though honourable, charge of presiding over such societies, ever remember how much they have to answer for, to God, and to their country! May they cultivate these plantations with that assiduity, may they watch over them with that caution, and I will add, may they weed them

with that prudence and resolution, which in concurrence with those influences from above, on which all depends, may render them like a field which the Lord has blessed, and a garden which he continually cares for! There may the rising hopes of future generations flourish, and those plants be reared and spread, which in due time may beautify our land, and refresh and nourish its inhabitants!

And may God so guard our religious and civil liberties from generation to generation, that in this respect, as well as the other, the inhabitants of our favoured island may sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and have none to make him afraid. May not the study and the arts of peace, among us at least, be interrupted by the noise of war; may not our ears hear the tumult of battle, nor our eyes see the miserable spectacles it produces! Only by report may we learn the success of our fleets and our armies abroad; till we at length hear, that the contention ends in a safe and honourable peace!

And let it not be misinterpreted, as unworthy a British and a Christian heart, to add, let us pray for our enemies; for that haughty nation, which despises our prayers, and has treated us with so much injustice and contempt. May they be sensible of the injury they have done us, and of the affront they have, by every act of injustice and cruelty, offered to the Majesty of heaven, the Father of nations, and the Guardian of men; whose penetrating eye sees through the frauds which may cover treaties, and before whose tribunal those criminals must be arraigned, who are too great, or too distant, for the reach of human justice! May Spain have no reason to glory in those vain refuges, to which the idolatrous principles of their unhappy church teach them to fly! May they be disposed to give, and we to receive, all reasonable satisfaction! And O that, if it were the will of God, their eyes might be opened to see the delusions of popery, which they support in all its darkness, and rigour, and terror! O that they might be so happy, as to understand the guilt of those murders, which they are committing in the injured name of the most merciful Jesus! May their princes, and their priests, see how much it is for their own interest on the whole, whatever the principles of carnal policy may dictate, to divest themselves of those spoils of innocence, and ornaments of superstition, which, gaudy as they seem, may mark them out as the objects of divine vengeance! The day will assuredly come, when the cry of the souls under the altar shall be heard: and there is hardly a nation under heaven that has more reason to dread it, than that with which we are now contending; for none have been more eager, and none more resolute and inexorable, in treading out the first sparks of truth, when it began to kindle among them, and in adding the blood of the martyrs to all their other pollutions.*

In what rigour that diabolical engine of mischief, the inquisition, is still established among them, you need not to be told; but though its foundations are laid deep as hell, the hand of God can overthrow them. He can shake the firmest arches of the dungeon, and lay open all that laboured artificial darkness to the full lustre of truth and the gospel. May he hasten that happy time, when he will do it; that day, when the all-uniting religion of the blessed Jesus shall exert its genuine influence, and cement the divided kingdoms, that now call themselves his church, in holy friendship and fraternal affection! that happy day, when instead of preparing the instruments, and studying the arts, of destruction, they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea! Amen.

* I doubt not but many of my readers will know, that I here refer to what happened in Spain quickly after the Reformation, which we learn particularly from Paramus, in many [illegible] which we [illegible] as quoted by Dr. Gooding in the [illegible] of his [illegible] Tracts, p. 417, et seq. viz. That the Spanish troops sent by the emperor Charles the Fifth, and by son Philip the Second, into Germany, England, and Flanders, to convert the protestants in those parts to the Roman faith, were themselves converted from popery, and as they were persons of great parts and piety, returned into their native country full of zeal for its reformation; but were entirely destroyed by the inquisition, and together with many thousands converts which were the first-fruits of their ministry were massacred or ordered on scaffolds and at the stake. Dr. Gooding has preserved an account of some of the glorious leaders in that army of martyrs, which, short and incomplete as it is, deserves an attentive perusal.

SERMON XVII.

REFLECTIONS ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE CONCLUSION OF THE LATE WAR.*

PSALM cvii. 43.

Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

As almost all the nations of the earth have, from their first plantation upon it, had some forms of religion among them, (though alas, those forms have been too generally erroneous and superstitious,) it is observable, they have had recourse to their sacred solemnities, when they have been passing from peace to war, or from war to peace. Among some of the most celebrated of the ancients, war was proclaimed by the ministers of religion, and military expeditions were opened by devout processions and public sacrifices; whereby they seemed to appeal to their deities as witnesses of the justice of their cause, and professedly to put themselves under their protection.† And when the strife of war ceased, pacific treaties have generally been confirmed by the sanction of mutual oaths; and the festivities which have accompanied the conclusion of them, have crowded the temples with worshippers, as well as the streets and houses with tokens of rejoicing. Well then may such customs prevail in Christian states, where our dependence on Divine Providence is known to such advantage; and most suitable is it to a sovereign, who esteems it his honour to be called the defender of the faith, after having so often called us together to supplicate the divine blessing on his arms, thus to assemble us this day to return our thanks to the great Disposer of all events, for the success with which he has crowned our negociations of peace. And surely our cheerful compliance is the more evidently reasonable, as all the successes of the war abroad, glorious as some of them have indeed been, were so balanced by events of a different nature, that our governors (who sing not *Te Deum* in vain) did not think it convenient to appoint one day of general thanksgiving on the account of them.

As we well know Divine Providence to be concerned even in the minutest affairs of the animal or vegetable creation, we must certainly, on the most obvious principles, acknowledge its interposition where large communities of men are in question: with relation to these it is peculiarly said, I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things. And as a careful attention to Providence is always our duty and interest, it will especially appear so in proportion to the importance of the events it produces and directs. To such reflections therefore I would this day invite you, and I know not how to do it better than in the words of the text; which are the more suitable, as the vicissitudes to which they immediately relate are evidently of a public nature; circumstances, whereby men were on the one hand blessed with prosperity and plenty, or on the other hand diminished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow, by such revolutions as did not only affect numbers of private persons, but poured contempt upon princes, and caused those that had once been distinguished, perhaps in cities, provinces, or armies, to wander forlorn in the trackless wilderness. All these things are supposed under a moral government and superintendency, which should at length cause the righteous to rejoice, and iniquity, how loudly soever it had for a while triumphed and insulted, to stop its mouth, confounded and ashamed. And then it is added, Whoso is wise, he will observe these things; so observe them, as to see the secret hand of God in them, even where the train of events is most natural: and they who attend to them in this light, shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord to them that fear him, which shall emerge gloriously out of every cloud that might seem for a while to darken it. Thus the psalm ends; and the prophecy of Hosea concludes with a passage exactly parallel to this, in which my text seems to be quoted and paraphrased: Who is wise, and he shall understand these things! prudent, and he shall know them! for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Permit me then solemnly to call you this day, to

* Preached at Northampton, April 25, 1749, being the day appointed by his Majesty for a General Thanksgiving on account of the Peace concluded with France and Spain.

† I am persuaded, that the 149th Psalm is an ode of this kind, that was sung when David's army was marching out to war against the remnant of the devoted nations, and first went up in solemn procession to the house of God, thereunto it were to consecrate the arms he put into their hands. The beds referred to, verse 5, on which they were to sing aloud, were probably the couches on which they lay at the banquet attending their sacrifices, which gives a noble sense to a passage for any other interpretation hardly intelligible.

make a serious pause, and to employ that recess from other business which the season and the place give, in looking back upon the series of events through which we have lately passed, as those that believing the universal government of God, would regard the works of the Lord, and consider the operation of his hands. The power of reflection is the glory of the rational nature. May we now be directed to a proper use of it! and it will afford us a calm pleasure, which, though in these circumstances not unchastised with pain, is nevertheless much to be preferred to all the joys of a licentious mirth, to the laughter of fools, which Solomon esteemed but as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

It would very ill become me, to pretend to a knowledge of the secret springs of those events which have lately passed before us, or to set up for any peculiar penetration in judging of things which are most apparent. But there are certain obvious remarks which arise from circumstances universally known, which, though they be important in proportion to the degree in which they are obvious, some for want of attention may not fall upon, and others may not discern in that connexion which is like to render them most useful. I think it therefore congruous to the relation in which I stand to you, and to the occasion of this day's assembly, to endeavour to guide your meditations to them, and to assist you in dwelling on the review.

Let me then mention several things which have lately passed before the eyes of all Europe, as worthy of your further remembrance and consideration. And I shall endeavour to do it without any unnecessarily severe reflections upon those of our neighbours, with whom we have lately been contending. When hostilities were once commenced, many of the events most grievous to us were justifiable by the laws of nations: and so far as ambition, or any other evil principle, might be the occasions of opening them, may the great Preserver of men forgive it, and make us and our new friends for the future wiser and happier! In the mean time, as the most solemn acts of mutual reconciliation have passed, it would be unworthy the generosity of Britons to rehearse the wrongs they could not but once apprehend and resent. But it is surely consistent with the sincerest reconciliation, and with all the rules of propriety and decency, on such an occasion as this, to commemorate the divine goodness to us in events, which during the breach were afflictive to those who were then our enemies: and it is with no unfriendly disposition that we wish, they likewise may remember them for their future instruction. I shall not therefore make any further apology for what of this nature may occur; but proceed to those reflections which may be naturally suggested from what we may easily recollect of the rise, progress, and conclusion of the war; reflections, which it may in many instances be pleasant to pursue, and I hope in all profitable to retain.

I. Let us recollect, how much we are obliged to the divine goodness, that the late war hath not proved our destruction, or that of our protestant neighbours.

Nothing is more common, than for those who have long been pampered with the blessings of peace, in the height of their spirits, to plunge themselves into war with a kind of wanton confidence, like that with which the horse rushes into the battle: but the issue has been so frequent, that it grew into a proverb many ages ago, They who take the sword perish with the sword. Let us adore the divine goodness, that Great Britain is not added to the instances which illustrate it. It is the more reasonable particularly to acknowledge it, considering how ill we were provided with some kind of preparations, and how destitute of alliances, when the war with Spain broke out; and how deplorably, I will not pretend to say by what sad fatality, we have since been disappointed in our expectations from some, who were most evidently joined with us in a community of public interest, had public interest been duly understood or regarded.

But it is sufficient to have hinted at this. Let me rather call back your thoughts this day to the storm that hung over us, when France was preparing for so formidable an invasion, and God blew with his wind, and scattered them, and strewed their own shores with the wreck of those ships and men, which had been armed for our destruction: an event, the importance of which there were few that then thoroughly understood, though what since happened opened the view more distinctly upon us. I here refer to that bold attempt, then concerted, and quickly after made, by the enemies of Britain at home, in concurrence with those abroad. And let me now more solemnly recall to your remembrance that day of alarm and consternation, when a little spring from the Northern mountains, which seemed in its rise beneath our notice, (and was unhappily too much despised,) swelled on a sudden into a torrent, that deluged half our land: when battalions of desperate and infatuated men, having consecrated their swords to our destruction, in blood ever to be lamented, bent on completing the ruin of their country, came pouring on us with such savage fury and unrestrained impetuosity, till it pleased God, according to the language in which he speaks of the proud Assyrian, to put a hook into their nose, and a bridle into their jaws, to turn them back by the way which they came, even like him to their own land, that they might perish there. Dwell, Sirs, on an idea, which I hope is already familiar to your mind, and ought for ever

to be retained. Do you not even now tremble to think, what the consequence would probably have been, if those westerly winds which blew almost continually during the same season of the last year, had then been commissioned to detain our forces on the continent! What an æra had that been in the British history! What a spectacle to Europe! What a lamentation to ages unborn! But God wafted over to us speedy deliverance, so that not a company was kept back; nay, I think I may add, hardly a man or a horse miscarried. A deliverance greatly endeared to us by the hand that brought it, and by the remembrance of those importunate prayers which we had so often presented in the day of our distress. Pursue the reflection, and let your hearts this day feel anew the tender and lively gratitude which you owe to God, and to your human protectors.

It becomes us also this day most thankfully to recollect, in what undisturbed tranquillity we have generally lived, during this ten years' war; sitting as in the profoundest peace under our own vines and fig-trees; as entire strangers to those grievous desolations and horrid spectacles, which so many thousands of our neighbours have known, as if no sword had ever been unsheathed. We immediately owe it to the vigilance of our governors, and the advantages of our situation, in concurrence with the strength of our navy, and the conduct, courage, and fidelity of those to whom the command of it was entrusted, (and which the contrary character and behaviour of some in their station has, alas, too unhappily illustrated:) but let us remember, that the governors, the situation, the navy, the commanders, in which we rejoice, are the gifts of a kind Providence, and are to be acknowledged as such. Let the safety of Britain and its provinces, in consequence of all, be the subject of our repeated and continued thanksgivings. Nor let us be so unfeeling for the protestant in general, so forgetful of former benefits, so insensible even of our own present and future security, as not to rejoice, that our allies, and especially the United Provinces, have shared with us in the rescue God has been pleased to give us. Let us adore the Almighty that those prayers for their safety, which we had so much reason to unite with those for our own, have appeared to come up in remembrance before God; so that they are indeed as a brand plucked out of the burning. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in our Sion, on all these accounts; and unto thee may our vows be performed! the vows, which we made when we were in trouble and perplexity, and lifted up our eyes unto thee, from whom our help cometh, even to the God that made heaven and earth. But amidst all the joy which these reflections may afford,

II. Let us humble ourselves in the review of those rebukes of Providence, which we experienced during the series of the late war.

I question, whether modern history * can produce an instance, in which a war has been entered into with more towering hopes, with more anticipated triumph, than that which we proclaimed against Spain; and probably, the wisest men amongst us thought that confidence no very good omen of our success. We seemed to think, we had nothing to do but to gird on our terrors, and make the earth tremble. As if, according to the beautiful manner in which Isaiah describes the pride of the Assyrian, we might at pleasure go to the nations that had offended us, as securely and irresistibly as to the nest of some little insignificant bird, and gather their riches, as one gathereth eggs that are left, and there should be none to move the wing, or to open the mouth, or to peep. But the event proved very different: we found there was such a thing as military prudence, and strength, and bravery among our enemies, as well as among ourselves: and after all the vain parade with which we set out, we returned, in repeated instances, disappointed and ashamed; so as to have evident reason, after such vast preparations, and such presumptuous confidence, to apply to several of our projects and attempts the words of Israel by the same prophet, We have been with child, we have been in pain; we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen before us. For succeeding years during our war with France, though the British soldiery to their immortal honour behaved so bravely, we heard not of one battle gained, of one town taken by us or our allies, on the continent; while on the other hand, we received repeated information of actions, in which we had greatly the disadvantage, and in which victory was snatched out of our hands by accidents so vexatious, that they are not, even at this distance, to be named; and of fine towns, more than memory can number, lost to the enemy almost as fast as their forces could march from one of them to another, some without any resistance, and most of the rest with only a feint of defence.

These, Sirs, are mortifying, but they are indisputable, truths; and they must stand upon record, not indeed to the shame of our forces or our generals, but for the instruction of generations to come, that with good advice they may make war; and that, how well soever the measures of it may seem to be concerted, they may not, while girding on their harness, boast as if they were putting it off. I know, that by the war some particular interests

* I say [illegible]

have been largely advanced, and many considerable advantages for commerce, while we remained so incontestably masters of the ocean, gained, which to those concerned in them have more than balanced their share in the public expense: but I cannot imagine, that had the nation distinctly foreseen all the consequences, they would have engaged in it with the eagerness they did, when I suppose the whole gain that can be set down at the foot of the account, to balance the loss of so many thousand lives, and so many millions of treasure, is this, that some of our neighbours are perhaps more exhausted than we, and are less able, should they immediately attempt it, to make themselves terrible to the liberties of Europe. On the whole, just as our cause, and upright and strenuous as our measures, were, it appears to have been the scheme of Providence, to save Great Britain from sinking into ruin, rather than to exalt it: and we have much greater reason to wonder, when we consider our circumstances in comparison with our characters, that ruin was averted, than that so few memorable advantages were gained, or some sensible inconveniences incurred. In these views,

III. Let us acknowledge the divine interposition, which facilitated so equitable a peace as that which we this day celebrate.

I shall not enter into any large discourse on the blessings of peace in general; since, how proper soever it may be to recollect them at present, the subject is trite, and many of the most material thoughts which might illustrate it, sufficiently obvious. But I would hint at some things, which are peculiar to the present occasion. I am persuaded, distant posterity will wonder, that so equitable a treaty should take place, when they consider a variety of attending circumstances, and compare them with the great rapidity and extent of the French conquests, and the evident superiority with which they threatened the Low Countries, and by a necessary consequence Britain itself, and all its allies. To suppose this to have been owing to some sudden change in the spirits of men, moderating their ambitious views, and assuaging their thirst of plunder and of empire, would increase rather than abate the wonder; and there are incidents by which, on very different principles, the change of measures may be accounted for; but they are such as still leave room to say, especially when compared with each other, that it is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes.

In this view we shall naturally think of our late successes at sea, in the first place; whereby the designs of hostile powers were rendered abortive, and those naval preparations which were intended to ruin our colonies, were led home in triumph to our own shores, and made at length to pour that vengeance on themselves, which they had meditated against us; whilst the opportunity which our maritime force gave us of cutting off their trade, and at the same time of extending our own, added strength to the sinews of war amongst us, which it weakened amongst them. Nor are we to consider that ever-memorable series of providences which gave Cape Breton into our hands, as insignificant to this end. For though important reasons obliged the government to restore it, it is certain, the possession which we actually had of so valuable a jewel of the French crown must add great weight to our negociations, and equitably entitle us to many advantages which we might not otherwise have been able to obtain: not to say what influence our having so long held it, and intimately known its state, connexions, and dependences, may have on settling and conducting that colony to our adjacent province of Nova Scotia, which under the divine blessing, (to which I hope we shall fervently recommend it,) may be productive of signal advantages, and prove a happy equivalent for what it has been necessary to resign.

In these things the arm of the Lord hath been made bare; and lest the part which we ourselves have had in them should make us less sensible of it, God hath been pleased to interpose in other instances, where we could pretend to no share of glory. In this view, besides what I said of the renewed wonders of Providence in so favourable a disposition of the winds,* we have great reason to reflect on the scarcity of provisions in France, while we were enriched with plenty, for many successive years. And though in the mean time distempers reigned among our horned cattle, yet, blessed be God, never to such a degree, as in some neighbouring countries, where various provisions were raised to almost three times their former value. And the fertility of our sheep, as well as of our lands, while our kine have been visited and afflicted, is never to be reflected upon without grateful acknowledgment; as it hath not only moderated the price of our food, but furnished us abundantly for those manufactures, the trade of which has been carried on extensively abroad, so much to our national advantage; in consequence of which, we have been much better able to support the necessary expense of the war. And this has taught our enemies to look upon us, not as an exhausted, ruined people, but as those who had still resources sufficient to render them formidable, and whom it was not their interest to provoke to the last extremities.

I am indeed sensible, there are some, who being themselves surrounded with all the blessings of plenty, and attentive only to accidental personal advantages, or to the happy consequences which

* See some illustration of the expression here used, in my sermon, preached on the Fast Day, 1758-9; and a much fuller in that excellent pamphlet, called Britain's Remembrancer.

might have attended some successful action on the seas, or in the field, at a crisis like that which has lately occurred, regret the pacification in which we are this day called to rejoice. But such should temper these sanguine views, by remembering, how possible it was that another action might have been unsuccessful to us and our allies, and how dreadful the consequences of this must have been to the public cause, and even to Britain itself; whose army might then probably have been utterly cut off, and whose naval strength might not have been able to have defended it, if the wealth and shipping of Holland had fallen into the hand that was stretched out over them. The view indeed is so affecting, that it is painful to dwell upon it; and one trembles to think of casting the die for so deep a stake, had the chance been more equal than it seems to have been. But one of the first unhappy events which might have attended the risk, leads us to reflect on that signal interposition of Heaven, which, in the hour of extremity, and with a hand conspicuous to the whole world, raised the House of Orange to such distinguished dignity and power, whereby the strength of the Low Countries is drawn into a point, and a steadiness and weight is given to their councils; which will render them respectable in the eyes of all Europe, and must surely put it out of the power of any neighbouring states, to traverse our interest in them, and to deprive us of their important assistance, if future emergencies should arise. From this surprising event, with many others which have occurred of late years,

IV. Let us take occasion to reflect on the vanity of human ambition.

Some of its fatal effects we immediately saw; and I persuade myself, the hostilities which were exchanged between us and our neighbours, could not so far steel our hearts against all sentiments of humanity, as that we should not tenderly regret on their side, as well as on our own, the many sacrifices which were made to that merciless demon. And who must not now be struck, to observe how it has repaid its votaries? We may hope, it will be a lesson of wisdom, moderation, and justice, to distant nations, and to future ages, when they hear and read, how after so vast an expense of blood and treasure, after so many fine provinces harassed, so many rich cities plundered, so many thousands and myriads slain in their prime, the consequence of all should be, to quit what had been thus violently usurped, with this only consolation, or little but this, that the places through which the sanguinary procession had passed, were left less populous, less beautiful, less opulent, than they had been found, and that perhaps a day had ruined what nature and art had been years in forming. Can we imagine, that if France could have foreseen, how France would have been lacerated, chastised, and exhausted, not to say in many instances disgraced, it would have purchased the disquiet of Flanders, of Germany, of Italy, of Britain, at so dear a rate? Surely it would be unjust to suspect that, or any nation under heaven, of so much disinterested malevolence. But, as in the instance of Edom, it may justly be said, The pride of their heart hath deceived them; and the men of their confederacy, the auxiliary forces on which they so much relied, have only brought them back to their own impoverished border. The river rose with impetuosity, and deluged the lands on either side; it bore down their ornaments, and their wealth, into a sea of destruction: and now its force and fury are spent, it runs, not unsullied, within its former channel.

While we reflect upon this, and perhaps suppress in our minds some of those reflections which will naturally arise upon it, let us pray, that wiser and more equitable, as well as more benevolent, measures and principles may prevail among the rulers of the earth. And let us rejoice, that the counsels of Britain, and the conduct of that generous prince who presides over them, may teach the nations honour and good faith. The glory of our sovereign in this respect must be the joy and boast of his people, far beyond what the trophies of conquest could yield: and it must give a satisfaction not to be paralleled by any little momentary advantages which a contrary conduct might promise, that posterity will testify for his Britannic majesty, how religiously his treaties have been observed, and his engagements fulfilled; in consequence of which his throne has stood firm against all efforts to shake it, supported by the grateful affection of a free people, supported, above all, by the omnipotent Guardian of justice and truth.

V. Let the scenes through which we have passed, teach us to value and cultivate peace at home.

The public virtues of a prince take off very much from the merit of loyalty; and in an assembly like this I need not urge, how much those of ours would increase the infamy of disaffection. May they who need such kind of lessons more, reflect how sadly our dissensions at home have weakened our strength and our importance abroad. Taught by what the common interest has suffered by them, let us exert the utmost influence of our examples, our persuasions, and our prayers, to unite all around us in attachment to our illustrious king and his family, and in unfeigned love to each other. And O that he, whose powerful influence alone can effect it, would so subdue every unkind suspicion and unfriendly prejudice, as to promote our civil and ecclesiastical union in degrees which have been hitherto unknown! A civil and political union seems so easy under a government like ours, that one would wonder any should oppose it, who have not some unnatural antipathy to liberty and pros-

petty, or whose desperate circumstances and characters do not apparently give them an interest in the confusion of the public. In religious affairs, mistaken principles conscientiously admitted and retained may create mutual difficulties, which may embarrass the most faithful and affectionate counsellors of peace; not to say, how far secular interest may, in some cases, increase the embarrassment. But let us humbly look up to that universally acknowledged, but alas, almost as universally neglected, Head of the church, to whose all-healing energy no evils are incurable; that he may diffuse those gentle but powerful influences of the spirit of love, which may effectually prevent our reviling or suspecting, our judging and despising, each other. As for us, while under an unwilling necessity of continuing separate from our brethren, may we use, thankful, peaceful, and unenvied, the liberty which the laws of God and man allow! and may growing experience more fully teach protestants of every denomination, how good and pleasant it is for brethren, though perhaps in different habits and assemblies, to dwell together in unity; how much beauty, and pleasure, and strength, are added to the community, when it is cemented by such bonds! Which leads me to a yet more extensive reflection:

VI. Let what has passed, teach us to conduct ourselves, and all under our influence, by such rules of prudence and virtue, as may have a natural tendency to increase our national strength.

I would not cloud the festivity of a day like this, by any thing which might appear an inauspicious insinuation as to the peace so lately established: may it be as lasting as it is welcome to any who are concerned in it; and may Providence give our children's children to rejoice in its happy consequences! But we know, that all human affairs are uncertain; and it cannot easily be forgotten, that the peace with France towards the end of King William's reign, and that with Spain towards the end of Queen Anne's, did neither of them continue seven years. It is however evident, that nothing will tend more to perpetuate this pacification, than our being so provided against a contrary event, that none of our neighbours may find it their interest, if by a fatal relapse it should be their inclination, to disturb us.

There are natural and political precautions to be taken for this purpose, which will undoubtedly be the care of our governors, and concerning the particulars of which none but they who have the management of public affairs can competently judge: but there are others, and those on the whole not less important, which are of such a nature, as well becomes the teachers of religion to recommend and enforce; I mean, the cultivating those moral dispositions, without which we may venture to say, that none other can have a sufficient efficacy for the general safety.

And here no thought more readily occurs, than the necessity of endeavouring to curb that taste for luxury and pleasurable expense, which has done so much to enervate, disgrace, and impoverish us. One would imagine, that the degree to which our finances must necessarily have been exhausted during so long and expensive a war, should enforce a prudent frugality on all who have any regard for the public good. But instead of this, were we to judge from the glaring objects which every where strike us, a considerate man would be tempted to suspect, that the whole nation, if it acted on any scheme at all, was fallen into the unhappy artifice whereby so many particular persons have been undone; I mean, that of fancying a credit may be established among their neighbours, by making a gay figure, when there is least to support it. True prudence would certainly teach us to endeavour to retrieve our affairs, while there is a possibility of doing it, by imposing on ourselves those sumptuary laws, (if I may be allowed the expression,) which the indulgence of our superiors spare us; that a vain parade, and an excessive delicacy, in the articles of food and dress, of furniture and equipage, may not melt down our spirits, and increase our necessities, and so make us the more accessible to corruption, the more averse to those labours and dangers, which, if we know not now resolutely to face, we shall in consequence of that be forced to meet, and perhaps the sooner when we turn our backs upon an enemy to avoid them.

Permit me further to observe, of how great importance it is, that a wise and steady care be taken in the education of youth, that they may be trained up in the way in which they should go; a care to form them betimes to strenuous resolution and industry, to activity and self-denial, to reverence for laws, and obedience to just and equitable government, and in a word, to every generous sentiment with regard to the public good and the liberty of their country: that they may take an honest pleasure and pride (if I may be permitted to say it) in sacrificing to that every personal interest which may seem to oppose it. The more elevated and distinguished the station of any one in question may be, the more important will these precautions be found, and the more solicitously should such principles be inculcated: but even in lower life this care is necessary; that if those whose prerogative it is to set the fashion should fail, as amidst their strong temptations they so generally do, all may not be carried away by the torrent.

The like considerations call us to exert ourselves for the execution of those wholesome laws, which are enacted for the suppression of profaneness and vice, but which are so frequently violated, and

audaciously insulted. Associations of worthy and public-spirited men are in this view very desirable; especially for restraining that licentiousness, which if not carried into an army, is so frequently brought out of it, even where it has in the main been well disciplined; and which in civil life, to which disbanded soldiers must return, is pregnant with many grievous and fatal consequences.

I might enlarge here; but these are hints of advice, easily suggested by one destitute of all religion, and which no prudent atheist would oppose or neglect. It becomes the servants of the living God, the ministers of the everlasting gospel, to lead your thoughts much further on such an occasion: I must therefore add,

VII. Let us all be engaged by the survey we have been taking, to repose ourselves on God, and to seek his protection and favour in the way he has graciously appointed.

We well know him to be the great disposer of all events, who speaks at pleasure, with an efficacious voice, concerning a nation, as well as a family, to plant or pluck up, to build or destroy it. Our highest wisdom must therefore consist in securing his favour, by a most grateful reception of his gospel, and a faithful and constant compliance with its great and blessed design. And indeed it is, as the apostle insinuates, absolutely necessary, that virtue should be grafted on faith in order to its flourishing. Permit me therefore this day, solemnly to renew the exhortation I have so often given you, that you submit to the authority of the word, and of the Son of God, and that you endeavour religiously to conform yourselves to the Christian institution; acting as in the presence of that Holy Majesty of heaven, who registers all our actions, and penetrates our hearts; feeling at all times the deepest and most affectionate sense of your infinite obligations to redeeming grace; and considering yourselves as continually on the borders of an eternal state, where happiness or misery awaits you complete and perpetual. These are motives and considerations, suited to produce that consistency, that uniformity, that elevation of goodness, which must never be expected on any other foundation.

And what glorious hopes might we not form for our dear country, if sentiments like these were generally to prevail! "O Britain, thou nation saved and favoured of the Lord! If God hath so powerfully rescued thee again and again, plunged as thou art into so many excesses and enormities; if his arm has been thus made bare in thy defence, whilst many who boast the most ancient hereditary honours, or whose achievements for their country's good have ennobled their line, deem it no stain to their greatness, to show their contempt of religion, and to teach every rank below them, to profane his sabbaths, to neglect his ordinances, or to affront them yet more by their irreverent attendance, and by every other method to dishonour and outrage that tremendous name, which is the awe of heaven, and the terror of hell;—if he not only spare, but by signal interpositions deliver and bless thee, while profaneness and riot walk through thy villages and cities uncontrolled, and almost unreproved too; and so many of thy watchmen themselves sleep over their charge, where they do not by false principles or scandalous examples cause their people to err,—what mightest thou not expect were a general reformation to prevail! What prosperity, what felicity would not attend thee, if thy princes and thy nobles appeared indeed to reverence the God of heaven; if his sabbaths were religiously observed, his name honoured, his worship devoutly celebrated, in the family as well as in the sanctuary; if pastors, to the strength of argument and the fervour of exhortation, publicly and from house to house, added the sanction of a blameless, an holy, and edifying example; and in consequence of this there were a general solicitude in those under their ministry, however they varied in opinions and in forms, to unite in adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things!"

Surely the consequence must be, that a nation thus truly Christian, though far less distinguished by natural advantages than ours, would appear at once amiable and awful; or, in Solomon's sublime language, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Our neighbours would revere us; our God would protect us, and shower down his blessings upon us; the blessings of peace and plenty; which being traced up to their true source, being also moderately used, and equitably and generously distributed to those that were real and proper objects of compassion, would be far sweeter than ever. When our counsellors were faithful, and knew no interest of their own to be compared with that of the public; when our leaders, like that excellent man who so lately fell in our defence,* feared to sin, but not to die; and there was in the breast of every soldier a calm resignation to the will of God, a noble ambition of securing his approbation, a well grounded confidence in his favour, whether for time or eternity; what could we reasonably dread! Surely, bad as the world is, the enemies of such a people would be few; and God, their guardian, would make such enemies to know, that he who touched them touched the apple of his eye.

Whose heart does not kindle at such a representation! Who that loves his country would not form the most ardent wishes, that this may be its character and its felicity! May the repose God hath been pleased to give us be subservient to this blessed end! and now that our public counsellors

* See Colonel Gardiner's Life, § 11.

are eased of many burthens, which the exigences and operations of the war must occasion, may their thoughts be directed to the happiest measures, whereby immoralities may be further curbed, and pure, genuine, catholic Christianity most effectually promoted and established among us! And may they who stand in the first rank of the ministers of Christ, be animated to lead the way, with a courage, magnanimity, and zeal, which may transmit their names with glory to the remotest ages, and through the grace of the gospel entitle them to more distinguished honours in the church above, than any constitution or prince upon earth can confer!

To conclude all, with the mention of what in this connexion may easily present itself to our mind,

VIII. Let the occasion of this day's assembly lead our thoughts to that universal peace of the church, which we expect in the latter day, and to the complete peace of the heavenly world.

How delightful is it to think, that whatever blemishes we for the present lament in churches, whatever desolations in states and kingdoms, there is a time approaching when all shall be remedied; a glorious, long expected time, for the manifestation of which the whole creation seems to travail and be in pain; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channel of the sea, and the world shall learn by happy experience, what Christianity is, and what the invaluable blessings with which it is pregnant. Let us cheer our hearts with the lovely and glorious prospect of that day of grand and final pacification, when, once for all, those who have been armed for the destruction of each other, shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, having so cordially learned the gospel of peace. Glorious period, when the religion of Jesus shall universally prevail over the whole human race, and disarm their fierce passions, and regulate their exorbitant desires, and inspire the most benevolent and generous sentiments! When men shall regard their fellow-men of all nations as their brethren, and desire to see all around them as happy as themselves; forgetting, with a nobleness of heart which nothing but the gospel of Christ can inspire, every personal, yea, I will add, every national, interest, which appears inconsistent with the happiness of the whole human species!

But who shall live when God doth this? when this great miracle shall close the scene of wonders, which the Christian revelation has opened? Probably a distant generation, by whom our names shall be forgotten, though the event itself be as certain as the divine oracles can render it. We will, at least, with the first-fruits of a temper which shall then so universally prevail, rejoice in the expected happiness of those who shall not so much as know that we ever existed.

And if some regard to personal engagements will, as it is so natural and so just, mingle themselves with sentiments like these, let me, on this good occasion, call your thoughts to the much nearer and more important prospects of the eternal world; prospects which, I hope, are familiar to the minds of many among us, and to which so many sad spectacles as daily present themselves here, concur to lead us. It is painful to a truly benevolent spirit, especially to one who considers the remoter consequences of things, to look round on what is generally the state of the present world, and to look back on the history of mankind in preceding times, ancient or modern. There is no branch of science with respect to which it may be so truly said, He who increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow in proportion to it. In this respect, they seem to have the greatest advantage, who know only the story of their own personal and domestic afflictions, and those of a little circle of near neighbours. Yet so is our nature constituted, that we delight and wish to know how it fares, and has fared, with others, though at the expense of a sad sympathy: but it is most comfortable to reflect, that, where God has given such a sensibility of heart, founded on true principles of piety and charity, he hath appointed, that the soul in which it dwells should not long inherit the infirmities and sorrows of human flesh, nor multiply years in the provinces of calamity and misery. He did not send those heaven-born graces down to earth, merely to teach men to weep the tears of humanity, though they have their intermingled sweetness too. Unfeigned universal love shall infallibly be the source of joy. Yet a little while, and God will draw a veil over all these mournful spectacles; or rather, he will raise us beyond the view of them, to a high and serene situation, from whence the penetrating eye shall command an ample prospect, beyond the present stretch even of thought, and nothing shall strike it but sights of bliss.

In the mean time, let our eyes be lifted up towards heaven, in humble hope, and in fervent prayer, for the public prosperity, for the prevalency of true Christianity in the whole world, especially in our own country; and above all, (as it is that in which we are first and most intimately concerned,) for its prevalency in our own hearts; that we may steadily retain it, that we may faithfully practise it, that we may daily advance in our conformity to it. So shall we understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, in the general conduct of present affairs; and though there may be mysteries of Providence which we cannot particularly explain, shall assuredly believe, that all the paths of it are mercy and

truth, and find the truest and the securest peace in our passage to everlasting joy. Amen.

A HYMN,

Sung after the Sermon, to the Tune of the Old Fiftieth Psalm.

I.

Now let our songs address the God of peace,
Who bids the tumult of the battle cease.
The pointed spears to pruning-hooks he bends,
"And the broad faulchion in the plough-share ends."
His powerful word unites contending nations
In kind embrace and friendly salutations.

II.

Britain, adore the guardian of thy state;
Who high on his celestial throne elate,
Still watchful o'er thy safety and repose,
Frowned on the counsels of thy haughtiest foes:
Thy coasts secured from every dire invasion
Of fire and sword, and spreading desolation.

III.

When rebel-bands with desperate madness joined,
He wafted o'er deliverance with his wind;
Drove back the tide that deluged half our land,
And curbed their fury with his mightier hand:
Till dreadful slaughter and the last confusion
Taught those audacious sinners their delusion.

IV.

He gave our fleets to triumph o'er the main,
And scatter terrors cross wide ocean's plain;
Opposing leaders trembled at the sight,
Nor found their safety in the attempted flight:
Taught by their bonds, how vainly they pretended
Those to distress whom Israel's God defended.

V.

Fierce storms were summoned up in Britain's aid,
And meagre famine hostile lands o'erspread:
By sufferings bowed, their conquests they release,
Nor scorn the overtures of equal peace.
Contending powers congratulate the blessing,
Joint hymns of gratitude to Heaven addressing.

VI.

While we beneath our vines and fig-trees sit,
Or thus within thy sacred temples meet;
Accept, great God, the tribute of our song,
And all the mercies of this day prolong!
Then spread thy peaceful word thro' every nation,
That all the earth may hail thy great salvation.

SERMON XVIII.

DELIVERANCE OUT OF THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES URGED AS A MOTIVE TO OBEDIENCE.

Being the substance of two Sermons, preached at Northampton, February 9, 1776, on occasion of the precipitate flight of the Rebels from Stirling Castle.

Luke i. 74, 75.

That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

I should think myself inexcusable, if, after having publicly addressed you with so many admonitions, and so many encouragements, through the whole period of our late public alarms, I should be silent as to the favourable turn which our affairs seem now to be taking; and did not lead you to greet these first openings of deliverance which God is giving us, with your earliest hymns of grateful praise. Far be it from any of us to resemble the nine lepers, who though they had been so loud in their cries for mercy under their affliction as to be heard afar off, yet having received their cure returned not to give glory to God. I am indeed sensible, that our deliverance is not yet complete. Though our enemies are fled with so much precipitation before our forces, led on by that heroic prince whom Providence has raised so gloriously to command them, we are not as yet putting off our harness. But we have reason to hope, that the end of guiding it on is in a great measure answered, and it is certain that a becoming acknowledgment of these beginnings of mercy, will be the most probable means to secure the full accomplishment of our hopes. I have therefore chosen the words before us, with a particular view to this great and happy event; and it is obvious, that they will naturally lead me into suitable and important reflections upon it.

You will easily remember, that these are the words that

celebrated song, in which Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, uttered his joys and his hopes on the birth of such a son, and in which he employed and consecrated the first accents of his recovered speech. This venerable priest, under the influence of the prophetic spirit, blesses the God of Israel, who had raised up a horn of salvation, (that is, who was just raising a powerful Saviour,) for them, in the house of his servant David, whose office and glory it should be, to perform the mercy promised to their fathers, the substance of which he comprehends in the words of my text; and thus to complete what he had so often engaged in effect, though not in express words, that Israel under his auspicious government, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, and of all them that hated them, should serve him without fear, in a steady course of holiness and righteousness before him.

I will not take upon me to determine the exact idea, which Zacharias himself had to these words; whether he meant to refer to that great salvation from our spiritual enemies, which Christ gives, and to those influences of his Spirit on the hearts of his people, whereby they are effectually engaged to a persevering course of holiness and righteousness; or whether he might have his eye to some expected conquest over that Gentile power, by which Israel was then held in subjection, and to a temporal kingdom to be established in consequence of it, in which righteousness should reign in a more remarkable manner, than it had ever before done among the children of men. He, like others of the prophets, after having delivered their divine oracles, might have need of searching what the Spirit of Christ did particularly signify therein. But it is evident, that whether we take it in the one or the other of these views, it will afford us a just foundation for two remarks, most suitable to our present circumstances:—that to be delivered out of the hands of our enemies is a great favour of Divine Providence;—and that it loudly calls for a course of steady and cheerful obedience to God as our great Benefactor.

It will, therefore, be very agreeable to the general sentiments expressed in these words, that I should,

First, Endeavour to make you sensible of the greatness of this deliverance, which God has now granted us out of the hands of our enemies. And,

Secondly, Represent and enforce that return, which he most reasonably demands from us, and to which the text may naturally direct our thoughts.

Such representations are undoubtedly necessary: I pray God they may in this instance be as effectual as they are sincere. I am,

First, To endeavour to make you sensible of the greatness of this deliverance, which God has now granted us; by the pains with which he seems to have struck the leaders and abettors of that unnatural rebellion, which he hath permitted to arise amongst us: that so our hearts may be disposed to those returns of gratitude which he demands.

Now to this purpose I shall consider it,—first, in a more general view:—and then in some particular circumstances, which may further heighten our grateful sense of it.

I. I would consider the deliverance out of the hands of our enemies, which God is now opening upon us, in a more general view.

Here I shall take a view of it in general, with regard to the aspect which it has—upon our substance,—our liberties,—our religion,—and our posterity. And each view will convince us of its importance, and do its part towards awakening our gratitude.

To make you more sensible of this, let me now lead you to imagine, (though the imagination is painful and shocking,) what must have been our case, if the progress of the rebellious arms of our enemies had been carried on with a rapidity, like that which they at first boasted; if they had been supported by powerful succours from abroad; and if, according to their vain hopes, considerable numbers from the southern part of our island had joined them; so that they had marched on to our capital, and taken possession of it, either destroying or driving away that illustrious prince whom God has set over us, and those numerous branches of his royal family around him, whom we have so long beheld with delight as the pledges of peace and happiness to succeeding generations. Consider, how our possessions and liberties, our religion and posterity, would have been affected by such an event; and then judge, what an aspect our deliverance has upon each.

1. As to our worldly substance.

This, among so many dearer names, may seem less worthy of our mention. A generous and manly spirit will indeed bear the diminution of it with a calm steadiness; and the true Christian will be conscious of a better and more enduring substance, laid up beyond the reach of violence and rapine. Yet some value is justly to be set on what we here possess, as the gift of Providence, and as that by which we are enabled, not only to make some comfortable provision for those whom God has committed to our immediate care, but likewise to do good to many others, by a variety of humane and charitable actions, which may greatly adorn our religious profession. And whether our wealth be the acquisition of our own industry, or have descended to us by inheritance from our fathers, there is something in each of these considerations, which makes the loss of it grievous; how gradually soever it may be impaired, and though no circumstance of external violence deprive us of it, but we seem (according to the remarkable expression of the pro-

phet) to put our money into a bag with holes. Much more grievous then must it be, to be stripped on a sudden, and above all, in such a way; to see our enemies possessed of what we just before called our own, and perhaps taking a malicious pleasure, not only to use, but to destroy it before our eyes.

The great Author of our nature, who most fully knows its frame, does sometimes mention this among the saddest consequences of invasion and conquest. So the distress and vexation of it is pathetically represented, in the message he sent to Israel by Moses: Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof; thine ass (the usual beast of burthen among them, and answering to our ordinary horses) shall be violently taken away before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given to thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them: the fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up: so that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

While our enemies have been traversing the northern part of our island, and penetrating even to its centre, thousands have known the literal accomplishment of these words. And I hope we shall never forget that the cup was just passing to us: so that had not God, and that brave prince whom he made the instrument of our deliverance, turned them back, they had in a few hours entered our houses with haughty violence: and had we staid till they arrived there, we might have beheld our provisions greedily devoured, yea, protusely wasted; perhaps, too, had we not been sufficiently obsequious to these detestable inmates, our furniture wantonly destroyed; our houses plundered; our very garments stripped off; and, beyond all peradventure, heavy contributions levied, the amount of which, in one day, might have been much greater than the necessary taxes which the legislature, though with reluctance, are compelled, for the public safety, to demand; or than charity to the families of those who are gone out to fight our battles inclines us voluntarily to advance for their support. This might have been our fate in their march towards our capital; and in a more extreme degree, in their return. And when this tumultuous scene had been over, what could we have expected but much heavier exactions than even the present distress requires? with this painful difference, that instead of advancing our money for the assistance of those who guard and defend us, it must then have been given as a reward for our oppressors and spoilers; I had almost said, as a fee to our executioners. When, therefore, you enter your peaceful habitations, when you sit down to your plentiful tables, and repose yourselves as under your own vines and fig-trees, remember to whom you owe it, that you can call them your own, and be thankful for this deliverance out of the hands of your enemies: a deliverance which will be felt in proportion to the degree in which it is considered; and which we are next to view,

2. In the aspect which it bears on our liberties.

As bondage renders plenty and magnificence tasteless to a generous spirit; so poverty itself puts on a cheerful smile under the blessings of liberty, which makes, if I may allude to the words of David, a little that a freeman hath, better than the abundance of many slaves. Were liberty the portion of the whole human race, (and would to God that it were,) each of them should prize it as, next to religion, his choicest treasure. But it is well known, that, by the proud usurpation of princes or priests, and generally by their collusive combination to support the tyranny of each other, it has been almost entirely banished from the continent, and seems, if not to have sought its last refuge, at least to have fixed its favourite abode, in the British dominions; where it now reigns, in the person of our gracious sovereign, as its guardian genius, who understands the rights and the honours of royalty so well, as to make it his chief glory to be so. It is here, if I may be permitted so to speak, the law that rules supreme; and the greatest and best of our princes most justly esteem it the noblest point of their ambition, to be its protectors and vicegerents: as it is indeed a glorious ambition, to defend a system of wise and equitable laws, which the inhabitants of Britain, from age to age, in their own persons, or by their representatives, have chosen to impose on themselves and their posterity, for their common security and happiness.—And could we have borne to see them insolently trampled under foot, and arbitrary will established in their stead? I hope we could not have endured it; while heaven had left us any force to oppose it; but that, according to the animated expression of a celebrated writer, "we should rather have chosen to die the last of British freemen, than to live the first of British slaves." Yet what but slavery could we have expected, had our throne been filled by one trained up in the oppressive maxims of the French and the Roman courts, who had also some old arrears to discharge, that it is absolutely impossible he should have done it without impoverishing us to a degree which only a nation of slaves could have submitted to: for surely we must have been bound, before we could have permitted ourselves to have been stripped so bare.

Great reason indeed have we to believe, notwithstanding all his empty and absurd pretences "of establishing us in the possession of what we never lost,"* that if ever we should be so unhappy as to

* See [illegible] Answer to the Protestant Association Manifesto, &c.

see the Pretender possessed of the power he so unreasonably claims, the manner of our king would be like what Samuel so strongly describes to the men of Israel; by whom (he tells them) their children would be abused, and their estates taken away, or the product of them subjected to such impositions, that they who retained the titulary right to them, would be little better than tenants and servants to their haughty monarch. Had we, like the Israelites, ourselves concurred in making such a king, we might like them have reasonably expected, that when we had cried out under this load of oppression, the Lord should not have heard us.

Let us always remember, that it is our indispensable duty, to exert ourselves to the utmost to prevent so fatal a change in our constitution: and let us bless God every day of our lives, that they who were weak or wicked enough to attempt it, have found themselves unable to perform their enterprise; and that, through the special care of Divine Providence, our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers, that the snare which would have hampered us, not only to our vexation, but to our destruction, is happily broken, and we are escaped free and unhurt. A simile, which in this application of it will appear more evidently just, when we survey our deliverance,

3. In the aspect which it has upon our religion.

If religion be any thing at all significant to a man, it is beyond all comparison more than every thing else. A nation does not easily change its gods, be they what they will; and to have merely some particular forms of a religion, in the main acknowledged to be true, obtruded contrary to a man's conscience, is an insufferable evil. What then must it be, to have our religion violently torn away from us, so far as it can be torn away; to see it at least injured, oppressed, and insulted, if not immediately borne down and extirpated? That pure, holy, and perfect religion, which Christ and his apostles planted upon earth; and which our pious forefathers have delivered down to us, in all its evidence, with such faithful care, sealed with the blood of so many martyrs and confessors!—To exchange this, (or to be urged at length by penal, perhaps by sanguinary, laws, to exchange it,) for so erroneous and superstitious, so absurd and idolatrous, a heap of tenets, ceremonies, and usages, that it seems almost profaning the word to call it a religion; to give up our Bibles to the flames; to lay aside this rational and devout manner of worshipping God (as we assuredly believe) in the most Scriptural and acceptable way, for the unintelligible jargon of a mass, to bow down to images, as if we had been trained up in the most stupid heathenism; and to adore a piece of bread as the Saviour of the world! How much is the thought worse than death! Yea, how beautiful must death appear, as met in opposition to such a change!

And is the supposition I am now making at all unnatural? We will make all the most candid allowances; we will suppose the disposition of all the branches of the aspiring family, which urges its divine right to rule us, to be ever so gentle; we will grant, (what indeed I very believe,) that many who have been bred up in popery, would abhor the cruelties of persecution, and grieve to see their protestant neighbours, among whom many of them have lived so long unmolested, perishing in jails, or expiring in flames. Yet were that corruption of Christianity restored amongst us, it would not be in their power to prevent it. The iniquity is established by a law; and (as several excellent writers have of late very seasonably demonstrated from the most authentic authority*) persecution is grown into the very vitals of their religion, and become not only an appendix to it, but an essential part of it. And indeed its absurdities are so great, that it is difficult to imagine, how it could subsist, if it were not thus supported. At least, we evidently see this to be fact, that wherever popery has prevailed, such methods have been used; and if any protestant churches remain within its dark domains, it is plainly for want of power to destroy them: for in many places we see, they have been barbarously exterminated, where every consideration of honour and gratitude, of public faith and national interest, must have loudly demanded, that they should be tolerated and sheltered.

The present deliverance therefore strongly calls upon us, in testimony of the gratitude we owe unto the Lord our God, to enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; since we have so much reason to imagine, that if he had not put a stop to their designs, our enemies would have been advancing with hasty steps, to shut up those gates, and to make those courts desolate, or, (which is far worse than desolation,) to fill them with idolatrous altars. And if any should suggest, that "common policy, and indeed necessity, might have obliged them, even if they had been conquerors, to proceed by slow degrees in their attempts to compass a design of this nature;" I might answer, that no consideration of prudence can curb the sallies of blind zeal, which often calls it piety to set wisdom at defiance. I might also plead, that the first attempts of this kind must be grievous to every good man; and especially to such as have penetration enough to see whither those attempts would naturally lead. And this remark will appear to us with a great increase of weight, when we consider,

* See the Bishop of Oxford's excellent sermon on occasion of the [illegible] and Dr. Wesley's excellent preservative against popery. See also Mr. Whitehead's sermon and his Pretender.

4. The happy aspect which this deliverance wears, with respect to our posterity.

Should we suppose it possible, that we ourselves, while groaning under so many injuries and oppressions, might have been permitted to alleviate our sorrows, by attending divine ordinances in a pure and regular administration of them; yet ecclesiastical tyranny, the inseparable companion of civil, might have grown strong enough to have prohibited that attendance in the days of our children. Should the fiery trial come sooner, as it not improbably might, I am well persuaded, that religion, degenerate as the present age is, would not want its martyrs, of various denominations, ages, and circumstances. There are undoubtedly pastors who would lead on their flocks to this glorious combat, and multitudes of private Christians who would bravely follow, to defend the cause of truth and piety at the stake, when they could no longer defend it in the field, and to honour it with their blood, though unable to rescue it. But our dear offspring in the tender scenes of childhood and infancy, what would they do? Into whose hands would their education fall? How easily might their unexperienced eyes be struck and enchanted with the vain glitter of superstitious worship, in a ceremonial which looks as if it were chiefly intended to amuse children! How easily might their weak minds be seduced by the sophistry of error, or their soft hearts intimidated by the threatenings of cruelty! Yet all would most assuredly be tried upon them. And perhaps, before the parents themselves were driven away or destroyed, or their hearts broken by other calamities, the inhumanity so lately practised in France might be renewed in Britain. Children might be forced out of their parents' hands, to be educated in what is so unjustly called the catholic faith, and those words of the Mosaic threatening might in a dreadful sense be fulfilled with regard to them: Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand. What parent's heart could bear the prospect, yea, what other humane and generous heart could bear it, and not bleed to look on these innocent victims, which must on that supposition so soon be devoted at idolatrous altars, and pass a wretched enslaved life, amidst temptations arising from their very religion itself, which might have so fatal a tendency to seduce them into the ways of eternal death?

When I reflect upon all these particulars in their connexion with each other, I am inclined to repeat what I said to you in public, when this rebellion first broke out: "that considering, on the whole, all the probable consequences of things as to both worlds, it would be better, that our whole island should sink into the ocean, and all its inhabitants perish at once in that general wreck, than it should remain to be through succeeding ages the theatre of such scenes, as our enemies are studying to prepare, and labouring to introduce." This at least I can most deliberately say, "that had their designs succeeded, they who seemed, and who were with regard to external blessings, the happiest of mankind, would have become of all others the most miserable." In the sad situation I have been supposing, the rich might envy the lot of those, who had no property to lose;—they who had been educated in the warmest sentiments of liberty, might think those comparatively happy, to whom the weight of chains was grown less sensible, by having been worn from their infancy;—and the parent of the most numerous and amiable family, might rather have blessed the womb that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Only the sacred name of religion, amidst all our miseries, would still be delightful: and the happy soul that has felt its power, would in poverty, in servitude, in captivity, or in the most immediate views of martyrdom, rejoice in the unconquerable supports and glorious prospects it administers. Yet still, by such a one, the desolation of God's sanctuary, the slaughter of his servants, the seduction of the rising generation, with the apparent hazard of the protestant cause, when the strength of Great Britain was not only taken from it, but turned against it, would be felt with the most tender agony, and make a more painful impression than could be apprehended even from all the engines of popish cruelty.

Proportionable to the grief and terror of such a prospect, is the joy of our opening deliverance, when considered in these general and most important views. But I must not forget, that I am to remind you,

II. Of some particular circumstances, which may serve further to heighten it.

Deliverance from an enemy must be acknowledged a peculiar favour of Providence,—when his character is savage, and his rage exasperated;—when his heart has been elevated with repeated success;—when deliverance has been earnestly sought by prayer;—and when it is at last given, in a manner that renders the hand of God eminently conspicuous. A few words may suffice to show, that each of these considerations is applicable to the case before us.

All that are acquainted with the character of our rebellious enemies from Lochaber, and the neighbouring counties, know that they are numbered among the fiercest and most barbarous of the Highland clans. They have so much of the disposition of banditti in their very nature, that it had been terrible to have met a company of them in times of the profoundest peace; insomuch that their neighbours have long been forced to set a guard on their

substance, lest these wretches should have broke in upon it, and carried it away: so that the words of Ezekiel seem the very description of them: Brutish men, skilful to destroy. And to whatever distinguished politeness our neighbours on the continent, who have joined them, may pretend, there are numerous instances in which it has appeared in fact, that their tender mercies are cruel. The nearly desperate situation of the Pretender's affairs, of which they well knew this to be the decisive crisis, might also have prompted them to a severity of rage, sufficient to double all the terrors of an ordinary war. The disappointment attending a former rebellion, with the death of some of their near relations who fell in the cause, either by the sword of battle, or by that of public justice, might also exasperate particular persons: and the supposed injuries sustained through so long a series of years, by him whom they call their prince, whom they have seen exiled, disowned, abjured, and outlawed, would be a more general cause of indignation against us; and (so far as the views of policy would admit) might very probably lead them to consider the greatest extremities of military execution, as not only justifiable, but meritorious.

The success they had gained in the ever to be lamented day of Prestonpans, together with the advantage which they seemed to have over our forces in the late action at Falkirk, would naturally tend to make them more insolent; as minds so base are always elated by prosperity to an outrageous kind of madness. At the same time, the grief into which we were thrown by our repeated disappointments, (of which their escape into Scotland was none of the least,) does further serve to render their sudden consternation and retreat at last, though their numbers are said to have amounted to above nine thousand, matter of more agreeable surprise, and more pleasing reflection. And so much the rather, as some tender minds might be ready to apprehend, that Heaven itself had declared against us a few days before, in pouring down showers of wrath upon us in the day of battle, so as to damp our fires; thereby in effect disarming us of the weapons in which we trusted, and delivering our artillery into the enemies' hands. A double pleasure must it be in such a circumstance, to view the appearance of a return of mercy: especially,

When we see in it God's gracious answer to our repeated prayers. Often have we cried to the Lord in our trouble; and he is now saving us out of our distresses. After long delay, he has seasonably appeared, and given us reason to own, that he hath not turned away our prayer from him, nor his mercy from us. Justly therefore may we say, We will love the Lord, because he hath heard our prayer and supplication, because he hath inclined his ear unto us, therefore will we call upon him as long as we live. And once more, the reflection and resolution are more evidently just,

As the hand of God is so remarkably apparent in the issue of this affair. Long has he seen, (and seen, I doubt not, with just displeasure,) how ready we are to ascribe the glory of success to ourselves, and to boast, that our own right hand and arm have gotten us the victory. He hath therefore (if I may use the expression) been digging deep to hide pride from us; seeming to make it the care of his providence to prevent such arrogance from taking place: and the mercy is great, in proportion to that care. To God we must surely ascribe it, that our enemies did not immediately come forward on their first success, while we were unprepared for our defence, and take advantage of the terror they had spread, before the arrival of our forces from abroad. To him we must ascribe it, that the politics of France and Spain were so infatuated, that they did not attempt to invade our coasts, in the midst of that consternation which the rebel army occasioned, when it was marching into the heart of our country: or if the delay was owing to the damage which their ships sustained in the late tempests, we owe it to the great Sovereign of the winds and seas. And to his powerful influence, which at pleasure takes away the spirit of the boldest, we may piously ascribe that sudden panic which seized the host of our enemies, so that (though so lately flushed with some visible advantage gained over us) they did not dare to look our army in the face; but fled with the utmost precipitation, destroying their artillery, and blowing up their own ammunition, though not without some circumstances of treacherous cruelty which have justly increased their infamy.

I am sensible, there are some views in which it might have appeared more desirable that they should have ventured a battle, which must in all human probability have proved fatal to them: but on the other hand, not to insist upon the possibility of another panic on our side, (which, in circumstances like those in which we then appeared, we had, I hope, no just cause to apprehend,) we may at least conclude, that many among them would have sold their lives dear when grown desperate, and have fought in the bitterness of their hearts. Now surely we must allow, that, after the deplorable losses we have already sustained since the war and the rebellion began, it is a very favourable circumstance, that the foe was defeated without a combat; and especially at a time, when every brave soldier, and much more every valiant and experienced officer, is (as the prophet speaks) more precious than the gold of Ophir. Your own thoughts prevent me, I doubt not, in applying what I now speak, to that heroic and amiable branch of the royal family, who was to have led our forces to the field, and whose safety is so eminently, and so

justly, the public care. Had God permitted the hurtful sword to have approached him, (and how many swords would have been pointed at him!) surely the joy of complete victory and national deliverance would hardly have been felt, and our shouts would have been turned into one universal groan. But God has preserved him from the hazards of the field, and given him to vanquish by the terror of his name.*

I hope your hearts glow with gratitude, while you hear these imperfect hints of the many merciful circumstances with which God hath adorned this great deliverance, and are secretly crying out, What shall we render to him for these accumulated benefits? I have not left myself time to enlarge on the answer; but I would suggest it briefly under the other general head, where I am,

Secondly, To represent and enforce the return which God may reasonably expect from us, and which the text hints at in the concluding part: That we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

I may take a just and natural occasion from hence, to exhort you—to consecrate yourselves to the service of God;—to set yourselves to walk before him in holiness and righteousness;—to pursue this course with cheerfulness;—and to persevere in it with unwearied constancy.

1. The deliverance which we are now receiving, calls upon us all to consecrate ourselves to the service of God.

It calls upon us, to be truly religious; to remember the blessed God as the great author of this and every mercy; and in consequence of this, not only to address some transient acknowledgment to him, but to serve him: to make an unfeigned regard to him the foundation of all our virtues, and the principle of all our actions. It particularly requires, that, conscious of our obligations to him, and our dependence upon him, we keep up a grateful commerce with him, as our Creator, our Redeemer, our Protector, and our Father; and daily address him in prayer and praise, as those who know that we are unto him a holy priesthood, and a peculiar people.† Let those therefore, who have neglected these important and delightful exercises, set themselves to approach the blessed God, through the great Mediator, and make a dedication of themselves to him, that their services may be accepted: let those who have already done it, renew it with pleasure: and let us all,

2. Take care to approve the sincerity of such solemn acts, by walking before him in holiness and righteousness.

As the God to whom we profess to devote ourselves, is holy, let us be holy in all manner of conversation; separating ourselves from every pollution both of the flesh and of the spirit, and religiously observing righteousness in all its branches; giving in the first place to the blessed God his due, and esteeming it an indispensable duty to abound in all the offices of justice and charity to our fellow-creatures. Thus let us behave ourselves, as before him; remembering that we are continually in the venerable presence of that glorious Being, from whom no artifice can conceal our actions, to whom no specious pretences can disguise them; who sees our ways, and counts all our steps. This will give a firmness and a consistency to our conduct, which it could not otherwise have; and will further dispose us, as we are required in the text,

3. To pursue this course with a holy cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit; to serve him without fear.

The filial fear of God is so essential a part of true religion, that it is often put for the whole of it; and the angel which John saw, flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, demanded it aloud. But there is a certain anxiety and servitude of spirit, which is beneath the genius of Christianity; a gloomy and ungenerous conception of the Deity, which is a kind of heavy chain upon the mind; which makes all its operations unwieldy, and painful. This the gentle and encouraging constitution of the gospel was intended to cure, by inspiring us with sentiments of gratitude, hope, and love. Fear hath torment; and therefore that perfection of love, to which so gracious a dispensation was intended to bring us, casteth it out. For we have not received the spirit of bondage, but of adoption; and full of filial affection and confidence, under the influences of that Spirit, we cry, Abba, Father. Having laid hold on the covenant of grace and peace in Christ, having secured our everlasting concerns by committing our souls into his faithful hand, and listing under him as the great Captain of our salvation, we ought not to be terrified, as if we every moment apprehended some fatal event; but should march on with cheerful courage, as those that expect to be more than conquerors. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Renewed deliverance should encourage

* Two small incidents contributed very much to the great end. One was, that Cumberland, the head of the rebellion, was wounded in the action at Culloden, and obliged to give over the command, which all his brother would not. The other was, that Lord George Murray, Macdonald of Glengarry, Lochiel, and several of the principal officers at Prestonpans, was slain in the battle, killed or wounded many of his own men; and all that were going off on the first news of the victory, a great desertion followed, which had, no doubt, in every good measure taken place precipitation with which the rebel army fled. Carnage often, it was the terror of his Royal Highness's name, that completed the victory and salvation, so that, as a person of great eminence in those parts told me, whom I had the honour to be informed of these particulars by, every observer, he might say more than Cæsar, Veni, vidi, vici.

† As the word λειτουργια is used in the text, it evidently leads our thoughts to these views.

our hope and confidence in him, and should forbid that anxiety of spirit, which seasons of public alarm are too ready to occasion. Let this therefore be our character and temper: and to conclude the exhortation,

4. Let us constantly persevere in it, and carry it through all the days of our life.

It was the unhappy character of Israel, that though under the first impressions of his merciful appearances for them they sang God's praise, they soon forgat his works. But we ought to remember, that though this particular interposition and act of Divine Providence be a transient thing, the effects of it are solid and permanent. If (which I hope will be the case) we enjoy future tranquillity and liberty; if our religious rights continue unmolested, even to the end of our lives; and our posterity rise up to the same blessings after us; we are to ascribe it to this defeat of the common enemy. It ought therefore to be our care, to carry the substantial proofs of our gratitude through every remaining day of life; and, as far as in us lies, to transmit the impression to them that come after us; as it is the divine pleasure, that one generation should praise his works to another, and should declare his mighty acts. And indeed, if the gracious hand of God in our deliverance be forgot; if men either attempt no reformation at all, or soon return to their former indolence and wickedness; I fear, our case will be like that of the wretched demoniac in the parable, to whom the evil spirit, which had left him for a while, returned, with seven confederate spirits worse than himself, who rendered his last state more miserable than the former.

But this naturally leads me to mention some considerations, by which I shall further enforce the exhortation I have been addressing to you. And you will easily perceive, that they are very obvious; and the importance of them is equally apparent.—We shall otherwise make a most ungrateful return to God;—we shall be condemned even by the tenor of our own prayers;—we may reasonably expect, that God should renew his chastisements with greater severity;—or we may be assured, that to have alienated ourselves from his service after such a deliverance, will be matter of dreadful account at last to every particular person, however God may be pleased to deal with us as a nation.

1. Let your own consciences judge, whether it were not a most ungrateful return to the blessed God, for all the benefits we have received from him, to neglect the temper and conduct to which we have been exhorted.

What can we imagine he intended by this train of providences; by the alarm, and the rescue? Was it not to awaken us? Was it not to engage us to serve him?—What other end could his wisdom and goodness propose in it? Or what so worthy end can we ascribe to him? And shall we, so far as in us lies, frustrate this gracious design of Providence; a design, which indeed so greatly enhances the value of the mercy itself? Shall we go on in our sins, and act as if we really imagined, that we were delivered on purpose to repeat and aggravate our abominations? Surely we should think of it with detestation. According to that just and lively reasoning of the pious Ezra, After thou hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments? God forbid.—Were this to be our conduct,

2. We should be condemned by the tenor of our own prayers.

Let me on this occasion seriously remind you of our late solemn assemblies, in public and in private; of the repeated and earnest supplications, which we have made it our professed business to pour out in the divine presence. And what was then the language of our lips, and of our hearts? Could we have presumed to say, "Lord, deliver us, that we may go on to offend thee? and lengthen out our tranquillity, that our minds may be as vain, our passions as irregular, and our lives as unprofitable as before!" No, far from this, it was our prayer, that God would by all this reform us; that he would reform us as a nation; and what vile hypocrisy, what profane contempt of the Divine Being, were it, to pretend to desire reformation as a nation, while we are unwilling to bear our part in it; nay, while we are throwing in the weight of our example, be it more or less, into the opposite scale! Alas, Sirs, you may forget your prayers, as soon as you have ended them; you may disregard the purport of them, even while you pretend by your bodily posture and appearance to be offering them to God: but they are all set down in the book of his remembrance; and his eye, which can never be eluded or imposed upon, discerns the consistency or inconsistency of your actions, when compared with them. If therefore these reasonable and grateful returns be not made, it follows by a natural connexion with the former consideration,

3. We may justly apprehend, that God will renew his chastisements with greater severity.

Such is the tenor of that dreadful scripture, If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, saith the Lord, (that is, by the calamities which had been spoken of before,) but will still walk contrary to me; then will I also walk contrary to you, and will punish you yet seven times more for your sins. And let us not imagine this impossible. Let us not act as if we thought, (what it is certain none of us can think,) that God hath no weapon but the sword, by which he can chastise us. Those arrows of his righteous displeasure which he is discharging against our cattle, such as in some instances have been a forerunner to the most terrible of all tem-

poral judgments, a pestilence among men, may sensibly teach us the contrary.—Nor can we imagine, that if he chose to make the sword the instrument of his justice, he has no other hands to wield it, than those from which it now seems to be falling. Nay, even these falling hands can be strengthen. His almighty breath can in a moment blow up the dying embers into a flame, which shall spread from our cities to our villages, and consume our houses, our palaces, and our churches.—It is very observable, that when Jerusalem was just going to be destroyed, first by the Chaldeans, and several ages afterwards by the Romans, that a few months before the fatal blow came, the hostile armies which were encamped against the city, on a sudden raised the siege, and removed to some distance; which afforded a short triumph to the wretched inhabitants.* But alas, soon did they return with redoubled terror, and execute the divine judgments upon them, with a severity hardly to be equalled in the history of any other country. Let Britain bear and tremble: lest after having shared with Jerusalem in the rich blessings it received and abused, we also share with it in a proportionable vengeance. But whether that vengeance fall upon us as a kingdom, or not,

4. We may be assured, that to have alienated ourselves from the service of God, after having received such and so many deliverances, will be to each particular person matter of dreadful account before the tribunal of God at last.

Remember it, Sirs, the day is near; that awful important day, that will call you to the divine bar: and are not many of you every hour liable to be called thither, with the guilt of all your sins upon your head? Alas, how many have passed into eternity since this rebellion broke out, even of those who have not been exposed to the ravages of war, and the terrors of the sword! How many, that but a few weeks ago were as inquisitive after news, and as impatient to hear the event, as we, have been suddenly cut off in the midst of all the tumult and agitation of their various passions; and found perhaps, that, important as the affair was about the issue of which they were so solicitous, there was another of infinitely greater moment to them, which they neglected; and neglected to their eternal ruin!

We all know, that we must shortly be among the dead: and surely when we have that solemn interview with our Judge, he will remember through what a scene we have passed; and will distinctly attend to every circumstance, in his conduct towards us. And how justly may he expostulate with us, at least by the voice of our own conscience, in some such language as this? "What could I have done more for you, than I did? What methods did I not try upon you? By my kind providence you were born in a land, for its civil and religious privileges the glory of all lands. You grew up from your infancy in a profound peace, and only heard by a distant report of the calamities with which other nations were exercised. On you I tried gentler methods, sending to you all my servants, rising up early and sending them, with messages of the most evident importance; but ye would not hear. You still continued settled on your lees: and therefore, after long forbearance, I for a little while changed the dealings of my providence. I shook my rod over you: I permitted an enemy to invade you, and evil to rise up against you at home: and after long insensibility, you saw your danger extreme. But while it was pressing, you were too busy to mind religion. It was judged employment enough, to prepare for your security against the violence of man; whereas my displeasure was not apprehended, nor any serious measures taken to provide against it. I bore all this; and by a sudden turn in my providence I delivered and established you again: and you did indeed take some notice of it. You inquired into the circumstance; you talked of it for a while, as a remarkable story; but it proved a mere amusement. Your hearts were not struck; you returned not unto me; no man repented of his wickedness, so as seriously to say, What have I done? Therefore were you justly given up as incorrigible. I had reason to say, Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. Wonder not therefore, that you are now given up to destruction, after having been thus solicited and alarmed, thus rescued and entreated again, in vain."

May divine grace preserve you from that dreadful sentence, which must succeed to such a remonstrance! May it inspire us all with better sentiments; that we may not only learn (what these insufferable disorders must, I think, teach the most stupid) to be sensible of the blessings we enjoy under his majesty's happy administration, and most loyally to exert ourselves to the utmost in its defence; but may we also learn, to submit ourselves most constantly to the government of God! May we all be engaged to search our ways and our hearts, that we may correct every thing that is amiss, and may act more worthy the signal blessings we continue to enjoy, and the gracious providence by which we are re-established in them!

I shall conclude, with one more general reflection and inference, which will ever be seasonable, and which most directly suits the text in its primary design, as uttered at the birth of John the forerunner of our Lord.

How incomparably great are our obligations to God, for that deliverance which he hath granted us by his Son; and how great will our guilt and condemnation be, if we do not improve it aright!

* See Jer. xxxvii. 5. 10. and Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. ult. [24.] § 6. 7.

The utmost rage of human enemies can only kill the body; but those spiritual enemies from whom Christ delivers us, are aiming at the everlasting destruction of the soul. By him God hath condescended to give us the most complete rule, and the most amiable example, of a pious, holy, and righteous life; enforced by every motive that can strike the most active of our passions. The stupid disregard of it which so generally prevails, is, next to the mad opposition which men of corrupt minds are making to it, the basest and most provoking ingratitude to the Divine Being. And the just displeasure of God against it will be irresistibly demonstrated, when he, whom men will not now receive as a deliverer, shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his gospel.

But, I hope, many of us have been engaged by divine grace to comply with its design, and have the testimony of our consciences that we are walking before God in holiness and righteousness. Let such of us be animated to go on cheerfully in our way. Let our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour; persisting in his service, till we arrive at that world, where our disposition to it, and our happiness in it, shall meet with no interruption or allay; even at those peaceful and blissful regions, where no name of an enemy shall be heard but in songs of triumph; and where the utter destruction of the last of enemies shall furnish out matter for those songs.

POSTSCRIPT.

I add the hymn which was sung after the Sermon, as what may rationally and piously express those devout sentiments which I hope, rise in the mind of every attentive reader.

I.

SALVATION does to God belong,
His power and grace shall be our song
His hand hath dealt a secret blow,
And terror strikes the haughty foe.

II.

The Lord's avenging sword is nigh;
In uproar wild their legions fly:
And stores, so late their boast and joy,
Their own despairing hands destroy.

III.

Praise to the Lord, who bows his ear,
Propitious to his people's prayer;
And, though deliverance long delay,
Answers in his well-chosen day.

IV.

O may thy grace our land engage,
Rescued from fierce barbarian rage,
The tribute of its love to bring
To thee, our Saviour and our King!

V.

Our temples, guarded from the flame,
Shall echo thy triumphant name;
And every peaceful private home
To thee a temple shall become.

VI.

Still be it our supreme delight,
To walk as in thine honoured sight;
Still in thy precepts, and thy fear,
To life's last hour to persevere!

SERMON XIX.

THE ABSURDITY AND INIQUITY OF PERSECUTION FOR CONSCIENCE-SAKE.

PREFACE.

THE emissaries of the Roman see are so far from giving up their cause in this kingdom as lost, that the most distant prospects of success produce new and vigorous efforts to promote it. Some time since, they were very busy in town, and in many places in the country, perverting the common people, and making proselytes. These bold steps awakened the attention of those who have always manifested a warm and disinterested zeal for the Reformation: and gave occasion to that seasonable attempt, which was made the last year, by several eminent ministers, in a course of lectures at Salters Hall, to prevent the growth of popery. Our fathers beheld that mystery of iniquity with abhorrence and terror; but the present

generation were not so well acquainted with its fatal tendency. It would, therefore, have been an inexcusable neglect, if, while the enemies were sowing tares, the servants had slept, or had not faithfully warned the rising age of their gross errors in doctrine, and of that superstition and idolatry with which they corrupt and defile the Christian worship.

I observed, with pleasure, that those sermons met with general acceptance. The vast demand for them, among persons of a different taste and education, is a full evidence of the masterly manner in which that important design was executed. And I cannot but look upon it as a singular happiness to the public, that the work fell into the hands of men who understood the true principles of liberty, and steadily pursued them through the whole performance; which has not always been the case of those who have gone before them in that controversy. The secular powers were not called upon to interpose with their authority; but a calm and sober appeal was made to the Holy Scriptures, and to the reason of mankind, as the only proper judges in these debates.

On a careful perusal of the following Discourse, I conceived it might be of service to publish it: and since it attacks one of the principal bulwarks of the popish usurpation, I apprehended it could not appear with greater advantage, than as an appendix to the above-mentioned Lectures, if my worthy brethren concerned should approve of it in that view.

It has been the great unhappiness of many protestant dissenters, that they have entertained too narrow sentiments of the right of private judgment; without which a separation from an establishment can never be rationally defended. The writings on that argument, in which the question, in all its circumstances, is examined, are so large, and the reasoning so abstracted, that I have long wished for something more immediately calculated for popular use: and so much the rather, as pious and well-disposed minds have been too much impressed with the pretences urged to justify religious severities, without considering the consequences to which they lead.

My known affection to the author may perhaps incline some to conclude, that I am prejudiced in his favour, and will readily recommend every composure which he offers to the world; but so far as I am capable of judging of this Discourse, it is the best I have ever seen on the subject in so narrow a compass; the case of persecution is so clearly stated, the absurdity and iniquity of it so fully exposed, and the reasons advanced in its defence, especially those drawn from the penal laws amongst the Jews, are so well answered, that, I am willing to believe, it will give satisfaction to all impartial and candid readers.

It is with a great deal of concern, that I have taken notice of some unwary expressions, dropped by our writers of the last age, which countenance restraints inconsistent with toleration in its largest extent. These have been industriously collected to upbraid and condemn us. And it has been artfully and maliciously insinuated, that when we are pleading for liberty, we are only struggling for power to deprive others of the privileges we claim for ourselves. I hope the ensuing pages, in concurrence with that ample testimony which has been borne to the same cause, by the most considerable persons amongst us, will silence our adversaries, and wipe off so unjust and invidious a reproach.

D. SOME

Harborough, Feb. 17, 1735-6.

LUKE ix. 55, 56.

But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

IF popery be considered in a religious view, it must appear the just object of our contempt, as well as our abhorrence; but if we regard it as a political contrivance, to gratify the avarice and ambition of the clergy, it will appear very artfully adapted to answer that end. The wisdom of the serpent eminently prevailed when the innocence of the dove had long been lost. Cunning ecclesiastics, who were by their office obliged frequently to converse with persons under awakenings of conscience, and serious impressions, laid hold on that opportunity of improving themselves in an acquaintance with human nature; and on that foundation they gradually formed and completed a scheme, dexterously adapted to make the minds of their people easy, by the same notions and forms by which the clergy enriched themselves, and secured that temporal dominion and grandeur, for which they were contented to exchange true Christianity, and to make merchandise of the souls committed to their care.

Some of these principles were so evidently absurd, that the common sense of mankind, however bribed in their favour, must often have risen up in open opposition to them, had freedom of inquiry been allowed, and the Scriptures been left in the hands of the people. It was therefore one of their most important artifices to take away that key of knowledge, and to put out that light which would have exposed the folly and wickedness of their conduct. And further, to support that Babel which must otherwise have sunk under its own weight, the powers of this world were brought in, and its rulers taught to think it their highest honour, to employ their sword against those obstinate miscreants who were disobedient to the faith, as the

priests thought fit to explain it. To injure the weaker part of their subjects in their religious rights, was represented as an ample atonement for violating the civil liberties of them all; and thus the mouths of gainsayers were most easily and effectually stopped. From some countries the reformation was utterly excluded, in others it was stifled in its very infancy, and in some rooted out, after it had for a while been happily advanced.

This is undoubtedly the grand bulwark of popery, even to this very day; and were it removed, the anathemas of the church would become as incapable of giving terror, as they are of doing any real mischief. And therefore one of the most effectual methods which can be taken to secure and promote the Reformation, is to convince men, if possible, of the absurdity and iniquity of persecution for conscience-sake, in all its kinds and in all its degrees.

This is what, by the divine assistance, I purpose to attempt this day; nor could we at any time more properly examine the subject;* since it is to the repeated deliverances of this day, that we owe our exemption from those usurpations and inhumanities, which would have deprived us of the liberty of arguing, or even of complaining. How justly the church of Rome is charged with persecuting principles and practices, you have heard; and blessed be God that you have only heard it.† How absurd those principles and how criminal those practices are, I am now to show you. And amongst a variety of scriptures, which might have been prefixed to such a discourse, I could think of none more proper than this which I have now been reading.

Our Lord was now going up to Jerusalem, at one of the great feasts; probably that of tabernacles: and as he then came from Galilee, he thought it proper to pass through Samaria. This was the directest road which it was then perhaps necessary for him to take, in order to his being at Jerusalem in due time. You well know that in this country, *i. e.* on Mount Gerizim, there was a temple built as a rival to that on Mount Zion, to which the Samaritans, who, after their way, kept the three great annual feasts appointed by Moses, were probably at this time preparing to resort. But as our Lord appeared to be passing by this temple, and setting his face towards that where the Jews worshipped, these bigoted Samaritans denied him the common rites of hospitality, and would not suffer him and his attendants so much as to refresh themselves at any of their inns; which seems to be all the favour they now asked. This was indeed very outrageous and inhumane treatment, and the apostles James and John, who were now present, resented it with a great deal of warmth. Full of zeal, and, as they imagined, of piety, and of faith too, they only ask leave of our Lord to command fire from heaven upon these unreasonable and wicked men, assuring themselves that if an affront offered to the prophet Elijah, even by the express command of the king of Israel, were once and again thus severely avenged, the artillery of heaven would be yet more ready to plead the cause of the Son of God, when thus affronted, perhaps by some of the meanest of the people.

How far they would have extended the execution, if our Lord had favoured their motion, we cannot certainly say; perhaps it had reached further than the persons from whom the offence directly came, and might have laid the whole city in ashes. It is certain that a judgment, inflicted in such a miraculous way, would have been less liable to objection, than if secular power had been armed on the occasion. Yet our gentle and compassionate Redeemer, far from indulging their request, very faithfully reproves it, and expressly says, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; *i. e.* "You neither consider the difference which there is between the genius of the Mosaic and the Christian dispensation; nor do you sufficiently weigh the secret motives which influence you on this occasion; for, if you did, you would see there is something of pride and personal revenge mingling itself with your zeal for God, your affection to me, and my kingdom. Your proposal is, on the whole, most unsuitable; and, as such, I absolutely reject it. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. The general design of my appearance is most benevolent and gracious, and I am determined still to act agreeably to it, and to exert my miraculous power in works of kindness rather than of terror; for the preservation of mankind, and not for their destruction."

Now, surely, if our Lord thus severely rebuked his disciples for the proposal they here made, he would have censured them with much greater displeasure if they had talked of using his interest amongst the Jews, to raise an army to ravage Samaria by fire and sword; and, on the same principle, to spread desolation over the face of the whole earth, wherever they and their doctrine had not met with a favourable reception. The argument urged in the text would have concluded against this with equal and superior force: The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

You see then, how properly these words may be used, to introduce a discourse against persecution on any religious account: I shall therefore, without any further preface, go on,

* N. B. This sermon was preached Nov. 5, 1745.

† N. B. This particularly refers to a sermon on the persecuting principles and practices of the church of Rome, which I had preached and published a few months before against popery and you. Most expected on that occasion than was done, with much greater advantage, in Dr. Grosvenor's sermon at Salters Hall on the same subject, which is full of that easy, but penetrating and convincing eloquence, of which he is so eminent a master.

I. To state what I apprehend to be the Christian doctrine on this head, as opposed both to the tenets and practices of the Romish church, with regard to it.

II. To show, by some plain arguments, the absurdity and iniquity of persecution for conscience-sake.

III. To answer some of the most plausible considerations which have been urged in defence of it. After which I shall,

IV. Conclude with some practical improvements of the whole.

I should abundantly exceed the limits of a single discourse, if I were not to content myself with a few short hints on each of these heads, which have furnished out copious matter for several large volumes. And I hope those who have had an opportunity of inquiring most accurately into the subject, and of perusing what has been written upon it, by some of the most celebrated persons of our age and nation, will not be displeased with such a short survey of what seems most material on both sides the question. And it may be highly necessary for others, who have not such leisure or abilities, and who, for want of having the matter fairly and clearly stated, may fall into sentiments very injurious to the honour of their profession, and the peace of their minds.

I. I am to propose what I take to be the Christian doctrine on this head; and to offer some previous remarks towards stating the question aright, and preventing mistakes which often embarrass it.

I say, the Christian doctrine, lest, if I call it the protestant, any should question the propriety of the expression. It is indeed too plain, that our first reformers, when they separated from other corruptions of the Romish church, retained this unhappy principle: "That error and heresy are to be extirpated by violence; and that the conduct of some pious princes amongst the Jews, in destroying idolaters, is to be a model for Christian magistrates." This was not the opinion of the pious Calvin alone, whatever pleasure some may now take in heaping distinguished infamy on him; but it is much easier to make a large catalogue of those in England, as well as abroad, who maintained this tenet, than of those who opposed it. Nor indeed can we justly wonder, that the whole system of truth did not break in upon them at once. We have great reason to be thankful, that they were enabled to lay such a foundation, and that others, in succeeding ages, have, in any measure, raised and improved the superstructure; yet I will not presume to say, that all protestants are now agreed in what I take to be the truth here: it would be much for the credit, and much for the interest, of their cause, if they were; and we ought earnestly to pray, that God, by his Spirit of goodness and love, would purge out the remainder of that old leaven, which still sours the hearts of some. But, I persuade myself, I am about to represent sentiments, in which multitudes of worthy and excellent men, of all parties amongst us, concur; and they seem to be breaking in on men's minds with a growing light: may it shine more and more, until the perfect day! The protestant doctrine on this head, so far as protestants are consistent with themselves, seems plainly to be this: "That none are to be subjected to any kind or degrees of civil penalties, merely on account of their religious opinions, or for any practices arising from them, if those practices be not detrimental to the peace of society, which the magistrate, by his office, stands engaged to preserve."

We readily allow, that if any man's religious principles carry him on to any actions injurious to others, in their persons or properties, he is to be restrained and punished, as any other offender might be. Should any man, for instance, offer his son as a sacrifice to Moloch, he would justly be treated as a murderer, notwithstanding any plea of conscience which he might pretend to make. For the magistrate has no business with conscience, which is entirely under the jurisdiction of God, but must never be allowed as an excuse for an action injurious to others; for this very obvious reason, that if it should be so allowed, there would be no room for any penal laws at all, and consequently all civil government would be overthrown. For a bold and impudent malefactor would never fail to have recourse to this easy and unanswerable apology, if his judges were so weak as to admit it. Nor can we indeed imagine any blacker villanies, than those which some have pretended to commit for conscience-sake.

We likewise grant, on the same principle as before, that if any man's religion necessarily subject him to the obedience of a foreign prince, the government under which he is born and protected, has a right, by the grand law of self-preservation, to insist on some more than ordinary security for his good behaviour in such circumstances. And this is evidently the case of the papists amongst us. They are under such obligations in conscience to obey the pope, and to submit themselves to whatsoever prince he shall see fit to establish here, that they are at best but very precarious subjects to that royal family which the gracious providence of the Almighty has been pleased to fix on the throne of these nations; especially while there is a Pretender to that throne devoted to the see of Rome, and espoused by it. Justly therefore may the present government insist on such security from them as it does not demand from other subjects. And if in consequence of this, some hardships should fall on a few peaceable and well-disposed persons, who

are too wise and honest to act to the utmost of what their own principles would warrant, it must be borne as an inconvenience inseparable from present circumstances. And perhaps it is an inconvenience less than those very persons might suffer, from the establishment of a religion so oppressive and tyrannical, as popery always appears, when it comes to be arrayed with the robe of the magistrate, and armed with his sword. However, it is a pleasure to every good-natured protestant, to think, that what they can suffer by the laws put in execution against them, is not very extreme; and that they suffer this, not for believing transubstantiation, or purgatory, nor for praying to saints, or bowing down before images; but merely for acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, a doctrine so hurtful to all other supreme authority, that it is amazing all the princes in Europe have not long ago renounced it with the utmost disdain.

Allowing for such cases as these, which are not properly exceptions, we still maintain our proposition in its utmost extent; and assert, that unless God, the searcher of hearts, is pleased to interpose by a special revelation, (which there is now no reason to believe he will ever do,) taking the matter on the principle of human reason, or of the Christian religion, no man is to suffer the least degree of punishment, either in his person or property, on account of his religious opinions, or of any practice consequent upon them, which is not an overt act, plainly inconsistent with the public peace, and punishable in another subject. They who are for a toleration limited, as good Mr. Baxter used unhappily to express it, "to errors which are not quite intolerable;" and would have such punished at least with fines and imprisonments, if not with greater severities, seem not to be aware of the consequences of their own scheme; and, as Dr. Owen very forcibly speaks, in his excellent treatise of toleration,* "they had need to examine their light; for their tenet must lead down to the chambers of blood." We do not indeed pretend to say, that the magistrate is obliged to make such provision for maintaining and accommodating those whom he apprehends to be teachers of error, as he may for those who are of his own sentiments, and consequently, whom he believes on the side of truth. This would be carrying matters to an excess; but surely he has no right to inflict any penalties upon them, nor in any degree to abridge them in those liberties, which peaceable subjects are entitled to. And if he may exclude any from such places of civil trust, as their capacity, experience, and fidelity, might otherwise qualify them for, merely because their religious persuasions, and their modes of worship, differ from his own, it is upon principles which I am yet to learn: nor can I perceive at present how they are to be reconciled with those of a Christian and a protestant.

You will easily imagine, what reason I had to be thus particular in stating and in guarding my proposition. I proceed,

II. To offer some obvious but important considerations, for the proof of it.

And here I shall particularly show, that persecution for conscience' sake, in all its kinds and degrees, is built on the absurd supposition,—that one man has a right to judge for another in matters of religion;—that it contradicts the grand principle of doing to others as we would think it reasonable they should do to us;—that it is by no means calculated to answer the end pretended to be aimed at by it;—but, on the other hand, tends to introduce a great deal of mischief and confusion, to overthrow truth and religion in the world.—On these accounts, it is inconsistent with natural religion;—and it appears from the whole tenor of the Christian revelation, that it is most contrary to that.

1. Persecution for conscience-sake, *i. e.* inflicting penalties on men, merely for their religious principles or worship, is plainly founded on an absurd supposition, that one man has a right to judge for another in matters of religion.

How absurd this supposition is, has been fully proved at large, by many excellent writers in this controversy; and you have, no doubt, often heard, how contemptibly weak those arguments are, by which the Romish church would appropriate this right to itself. Nevertheless, absurd as their pretence to infallibility is, I confess there is much more consistency in the persecutions of those who claim such a privilege, than of those who acknowledge they are destitute of it. Can any man, with the least colour of reason, pretend that I have a right to judge for myself, and yet punish me for using it?—that is, for doing that which he acknowledges I have a right to do. To plead for it, would be a direct contradiction in terms. And if it should be said, as some have most weakly asserted, that the erroneous are to be punished, not for their opinions, but for their actions in consequence of those opinions, I would then inquire, For what actions? and how are these actions condemned? Not on account of their tendency to disturb and annoy the public; for that case has already been excluded from the charge of persecution: and, when that is excluded, I repeat the question, how are those actions condemned? Why, the persecutor must say, "I know them to be contrary to the divine law." But how do you prove that you are not mistaken? If you allow of argument on the head, you give up the cause of persecution so far. If you wave argument, you only in effect say, "the actions are wrong, because I condemn them, *i. e.* in other

* Would by the way, some large principles as Mr. Locke [illegible], and embrace what is most essential in the [illegible]

words, I am infallible; I am to judge for myself and you, and, by a parity of reason, for all the world besides." And who might not make that pretence? Or, how should it ever be decided but by the sword, in the present circumstances?

2. Persecution is most evidently inconsistent with that obvious and fundamental principle of morality, that we should do to others as we could reasonably desire they should do to us.

This is a rule which carries its own demonstration along with it; and it was intended on purpose to take off that bias of self-love, which would draw us aside from the straight line of equity, and lead us to be partial judges between our neighbours and ourselves. Now I would ask the advocate of wholesome severities, how he would relish his own arguments, if they were turned upon himself? What if he were to go abroad into the world, amongst papists, if he be a protestant; amongst Mahometans, if he be a Christian? Supposing he was to behave like an honest man, like a good neighbour, like a peaceable subject; avoiding whatever would injure and provoke, and taking all opportunities to serve and oblige those about him: would he think that, merely because he refused to follow his neighbours to their altars, or their mosques, he should be seized and imprisoned, his goods confiscated, and his person condemned to tortures or death? Undoubtedly he would complain of this as a very great hardship. And what if one, who heard him plead for religious severities at home, were to remind him of it, would he not be wounded with his own arrows? What could he answer? "I am in the right, and these people are in the wrong." "Nay," would not the inquisitor or the Turk cry full as loudly as he, "but we are in the right;" and they might justly add, "with what face can you complain of us, for treating you in such a manner, as, you must confess, you should think yourself bound in conscience to treat us, if we were in your power, as you are in ours?" Surely, a man would see the absurdity and injustice of such a treatment, when it fell upon him; when with such measure as he had meted to others, it was measured to him again. And accordingly, I must observe, as many have done, that the effect of this argument is so cogent, that those who, when they have had the power in their own hands, have been least willing to tolerate others, have immediately found new light breaking in upon them, as soon as they have needed toleration themselves.

3. Persecution is evidently absurd, as it is, by no means, calculated to answer the end which its patrons profess to intend by it

I say, which they profess to intend: for if the priests do really intend to make the laity slaves, that they may exalt their own empire, and increase their possessions, it may indeed very probably answer that end, and these holy men may make themselves fat with the sin and plunder of the people, and purchase church-lands with the price of their blood. But, to save appearances at least, they profess to intend the glory of God, and the salvation of men; for so you know the forms of the inquisition run, "To answer to sundry questions relating to their souls' health, as well as the correction of their manners and excess." Now, I beseech you, let it be seriously considered, how persecution can be like to do good to men's souls.

To be sure, if it does them good at all, it must be by making them truly religious. But what is true religion? Is it to repeat a creed, or subscribe a confession, to wear a name, or perform a ceremony? If it be, I am sure religion is much changed from what it was, when the Scriptures were written; and the nature of God must be entirely changed too, before such a religion can be acceptable to him, or before it can have the least value in his sight.

True religion must be founded in the inward conviction of the mind, or it is impossible it should be what yet it must be, a reasonable service. And pray let it be considered what violence and persecution can do, towards producing such an inward conviction. It cannot to be sure do it immediately by its own power; because it is a demonstration, that will at the same moment suit both the parts of a contradiction. And it is certain a man cannot reasonably expect to bind an immaterial spirit with a cord, or to beat down a wall by an argument, as to convince the understanding by threats or by tortures. They may indeed make a man mad, but it is the hardest thing in the world to imagine how they should ever make him wise.

Not immediately, you will say: we grant that. But mediately they may; as by these severities his mind may be awakened to attend to arguments; thus a rational conviction may be introduced: and the rod and reproof may give wisdom. But I confess I cannot see how a man is the more likely to judge of an argument because he hears it on the back of it, because he sees the lash, or perhaps the sword over his head, and trembles lest he should not believe it. Far from opening the mind to fair conviction, methinks it should rather prejudice a man against it; as it would give him some aversion even to a draught otherwise agreeable, to have it forced down by such methods as a draught is given to a horse. There is, if you will pardon the expression, a kind of an elasticity in the human mind: and the more violently it is pressed down and bent, the more forcibly does it endeavour to expand itself again. But if this were to be put out of the question, we may depend upon it that men will ever have the better opinion of any religion because it makes its professors very bad men: and so they will undoubtedly think their persecutors bad.

Nay, indeed I should rather think that if they were pretty well satisfied in the religion of their country before, the very thought of its being defended and obtruded on by others in this brutish and unnatural way, would be enough to raise some secret suspicions to its disadvantage:* suspicions which perhaps might prevail, and impress the mind more strongly, where men were not allowed to give any vent to them; or even to propose their doubts, lest it should be looked upon as a crafty way of insinuating their heresies, and should be a word spoken against their estates, or perhaps against their lives. On the whole, as you have often been told, persecution is much more likely to make men hypocrites than sincere converts. They may perhaps, if they have not a firm integrity and heroic courage, change their profession, while they retain their sentiments; and, supposing them before to have been unwarily in the wrong, may learn, I will not say to barter away honesty for truth, (though that were a traffic which no wise man would covet,) but rather to add falsehood and villany to error. How glorious a prize after all! especially when we consider at what an expense it is gained. Which leads me to add,

4. That persecution evidently tends to produce a great deal of mischief and confusion in the world.

It may truly be said, where persecution is, and that zeal and rage which is inseparable from it, there is confusion, and every evil work. It is mischievous to those on whom it falls, and in its consequences mischievous to others too; so mischievous, that one would wonder, that any wise princes should ever have admitted it into their dominions; or that they should not immediately banish it thence. This follows, in part, from what I said under the former head of my discourse: even where it succeeds so far, as to produce a change in men's forms of worship, it generally makes them no more than hypocritical professors of what they do not believe; and this must undoubtedly debauch their characters: so that having been villains in one respect, it is very probable they will be so in another; and having brought deceit and falsehood into their religion, they will easily bring it into their conversation and commerce.

This effect persecution will have where it is yielded to. In other respects, it will be yet more immediately and apparently mischievous where it is opposed. And it is probable it will be often opposed, by those who have certainly a title to the greatest protection and favour of the government; I mean upright and conscientious men. An honest mind, zealous for what it apprehends to be the cause of truth, and animated by the thoughts of the divine presence and protection, will learn to say of bonds and imprisonments, and even of tortures, as St. Paul did, None of these things move me, in such a cause, neither count I my life dear unto me. As Mr. Boyle very justly and finely expresses it:† "Personal sufferings, which a well-meaning man undergoes for his conscience, are but such a kind of burthen to his mind, as feathers to an eagle or a falcon; which though in themselves considered they have a weight, in the situation in which they are placed about him, enable him to soar towards heaven, and to reach a height which makes him praised and wondered at by beholders." Nay, perhaps where there is no true religion, a native sense of honour in a generous mind may encourage it to endure some hardships for the cause of truth: not to say, that sometimes on the principles we hinted above, "obstinacy may rise as the understanding is oppressed, and continue its opposition, for a while, merely to avenge the cause of its injured liberty."‡

And it is further to be remembered, that where the persecution is not very extreme, and sometimes even where it is, spectators are brought to judge more favourably of the cause thus violently opposed, when they observe the fortitude with which the patrons of it endure hardships and severities, from which they might otherwise deliver themselves at so easy a rate. Thus Tertullian boasts to Scapula, under all the butcheries he exercised at Carthage; "Our sect (says he) is built up by your endeavours to destroy it. The very sight of our patience in sufferings awakens men's consciences to inquire into the cause of it; and that inquiry leads them to discover the truth, and embrace it, even though it expose them to the same sufferings."§ This made the blood of the martyrs, what it was so often called, the seed of the church. And something of the same spirit has appeared in succeeding ages. Now in proportion to the degree in which a prohibited religion spreads, persecution must spread and propagate itself, and its desolations. And at this rate, if the persecution be severe, (as it must be in order to a victory,) how many persons, how many families, must be undone by it! For it is apparent, that in many instances what one suffers for the case of his conscience, draws ruin on a family, perhaps on many families dependent on him, wherein some may hardly know their right hand from their left. I might also mention the encouragement hereby given to informers, who generally in such cases are the vilest and most infamous of mankind: and might discourse copiously

* In terris, heu, certe, via nulla reperiri potest, qua religio, quæ fides, quæ superstitio, quæ error, quæ pietas, quæ veritas, quæ falsitas, quæ scelus, quæ pietas, ut non ad se vi, minis, terroribus, mortibus, tormentisque perducat. Sed non ita Deus. Non vult servitium fidei, voluntarium vult. Sanct. Cypr. Ad Scap. p. 107.

† Occas. Medit. p. 147. ‡ Locke's Let. p. 356.

§ Nec tamen occultari hæc secta potest, cum tot nostrorum adspectu accendat ad testimonium quemque, ut eligendo exitum vindicet. Quæ ergo ista tam contemptrix apud vos, et ubique nisi penes vos, persecutionum et dominatrix veritas, quod est de causa, et ubi cognoverit veritatem, et ipsa statim sequitur. Tert. ad Scap. ad fin.

on the animosities hereby raised amongst neighbours, on the discouragement of honest industry, and the injury done to trade and commerce? But I rather choose to refer these and many more calamities, which stream forth from this bitter fountain, to your own reflection, which may easily enlarge on the melancholy subject.

Now when so much must be sacrificed to public orthodoxy and uniformity, who can wonder if such a degree of oppression make a wise man mad, and force multitudes into desperate measures, most destructive to the community? Who can wonder if an injured and persecuted people rise up, I will not say in rebellion, for it deserves not that infamous name, but in a just and generous vindication of their liberties; and even when the event is most hazardous, choose rather to die warm with their swords in their hands, than to perish perhaps by the artificial cruelties of a lingering execution, or to starve in the darkness and solitude of a dungeon?

How many wars, and how great confusions, have by this means arisen in Great Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, the Low Countries, and various other places, even since the opening of the Reformation, it is not for a few moments, or indeed a few hours, to recount. But I take it for granted, that few of you are entirely unacquainted with these things, which make up one of the most instructive, though at the same time the most melancholy, parts of history. As the consequence of all, it has generally been found both at home and abroad, that ecclesiastical and civil tyranny has been either established or expelled together; and that wherever this dragon has kept its seat, it has devoured the glory of the land around it, and heaped infamy and misery on its inhabitants. It has marked its way by desolations; so that one may well apply to the bands of persecutors, what Joel says of the armies of locusts and caterpillars, when the country is like the garden of Eden before them, it is behind them a desolate wilderness. And surely were not the remainder of their wrath to be restrained, religion and truth would be buried in the ruins. Which leads me to add,

5. The Christian religion, which we here suppose to be the cause of truth, must, humanly speaking, be not only obstructed but destroyed, should persecuting principles universally prevail.

Let us for argument's sake suppose, what I am sure we have no reason to believe, that in some particular countries it might be a means of promoting and establishing the purity of the Gospel, yet it must surely be a great impediment to its progress. What wise prince who was a heathen or a Mahometan, would ever admit Christian preachers, if he knew that it was a principle of their religion, that as soon as the majority of the people were converted by arguments, the rest, and himself amongst them, if he continued obstinate, must be proselyted or extirpated by fire and sword? Surely if this were known to be the case, the secular power would at once seize on such missionaries as public enemies, and condemn the whole sect on this single tenet, whatever their other doctrines or precepts might be.

Nay further, if it be, as the advocates for persecution generally suppose, a dictate of the law of nature, that the true religion is to be propagated by the sword, then it is certain that a Mahometan or an idolater with the same notion, supposing himself to have truth on his side, (as no doubt many of them do suppose, and also admitting the principle we contest,) must think himself obliged in conscience, if he have an opportunity to do it, to arm his powers for the extirpation of Christianity. Thus a holy war must commence over the face of the whole earth, in which nothing but a miracle could render Christians successful against so vast a disproportion in numbers. Now I think it hard to believe that to be a truth, which would naturally lead to the extirpation of truth in the world; or that a divine religion should carry in its bowels the principle of its own destruction.

If these reasonings be admitted, then persecution will by the light of nature appear so absurd, so unjust, and so mischievous a thing, that it ought to be rejected with abhorrence; unless it should be warranted and required by a divine revelation, which had such degrees of evidence as should be sufficient to overbalance that strong objection against it, which would arise from the consideration we have now been urging. But on this head we need have no apprehension, for I am to show you,

6. That persecution is so far from being required or encouraged by the gospel, that it is most directly contrary to many of its precepts, and indeed to the whole genius of it.

A Mahometan may perhaps prove from his Alcoran,† that the true faith is to be propagated by the sword, and that heretics and unbelievers are to be cut off or made tributary; but if a Christian plead in favour of persecution, while he has his New Testament in his hand, in an intelligible language, he must be condemned out of his own mouth. He is condemned by the example of Christ, who went about doing good, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; who waved the exercise of his miraculous power against his enemies, not only in this instance in the text, but even when they

* I doubt not but on this occasion many of my readers will be pleased that the Dutch were some of the first protestant states who allowed a universal toleration, to which, as Sir William Temple most justly observes, "they owe the continued and unmolested peace of their government, and the mighty increase of their people: whereon will appear to consist chiefly the vast growth of their trade and riches, and consequently, the strength and greatness of their state." *Temple's Accounts*, vol. i. p. 208.

† Alcoran, cap. 2. 4. 8. 47.

most unjustly and cruelly assaulted him: and never exerted it in one single instance that we read of, to inflict death or any corporal punishment even on those who had almost justly deserved it. his doctrine also, as well as his example, has taught us to be harmless as doves, to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. And will a maxim like that allow us to persecute others? When Peter desired leave to smite with the sword, though drawn in so just a cause, Christ commanded him to put it up in its sheath again; and he declared before Pilate, that his kingdom was not of this world; which he expressly mentions as a reason why he did not arm secular power to plant or to defend it.

As for the apostles, they declared, agreeably to the example and precepts of their Master, that the power they had received was for edification, and not for destruction, that the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, and that the servant of the Lord, the Christian minister, was not to strive, but in meekness to instruct those who opposed themselves. They inculcated it as of the highest importance, that religion must be a reasonable service, and that bodily exercise, which is the utmost persecution can extort, profited but little, and was a thing of a most different nature from true godliness. That the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak. And in a word, that Christians must in the whole of their conversation be harmless, as well as holy and undefiled, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shining amongst them, by these amiable examples, as lights in the world, and so hold forth the word of life.

You well know, that these passages are but a little specimen of those which might be produced on such an occasion. Most prudently therefore do the popish clergy wrest the New Testament out of the hands of their people, before they venture to arm them with a sword, to destroy others for their religious opinions.

These are the principal arguments against persecution which have occurred to my mind. You easily see they are chiefly pointed at high severities; but if you consider them attentively, you will find that they proportionably conclude against every degree of it, not excepting the lightest pecuniary fines, or civil incapacities. I am,

III. To touch on the chief arguments which are urged in defence of penal laws enacted for the pretended security and advancement of religion.

Persecution is so harsh and so infamous a word, that few will defend it. But under this milder name they maintain the thing, by pleading the glory of God and the good of mankind, (sacred prostituted names!) the penal laws of the Jewish constitution, and a few tortured passages of the New Testament; which one would think mentioned to expose the cause, rather than seriously to serve it.

1. The glory of God is generally pleaded as an apology for persecution.

The time is come, when those that slay his servants are supposing they offer him an acceptable service. "God, say they, is the God of truth; and therefore the cause of truth is his cause; and the magistrate, who is in his sphere the minister of God, is to be a nursing father to his church, and to point the sword he has received from him against those impious persons, who will no otherwise be restrained from perverting the right ways of the Lord."

Now it is most evident, this is taking for granted the innocence and morality of the thing in the general, as well as the infallibility of the magistrate, or of the priest, whose executioner he must be. But if, as we have endeavoured to prove above, persecution in general is contrary to the light of nature, and to the Christian revelation, it must be great impiety to pretend to consecrate it to the divine glory. And a man might on the same principle lie and plunder, or even murder, his neighbour, could he but persuade himself that God would be honoured, as the truth might be promoted by it; and take it for granted, that the goodness of the end must sanctify the badness of the means. Paul evidently determines the matter otherwise, when he introduces a man as excusing his own lie, by its tendency to promote the truth of God; and overrules that plea by observing, that if it were allowed, we might do evil that good may come. Which he accounted so abominable a maxim, that he says that the damnation of such is just.

Yet, after all, if the preceding arguments were to be waved, and we were to begin our inquiry with examining what would be most for the glory of God, and the advancement of truth, I am fully persuaded that persecution, instead of being established, must, on this foundation, be exploded and condemned. For, not to repeat what I said above, of the improbability of fixing any rational conviction by this means; it is plainly a dishonour to truth, and therefore to God, to suppose, that it needs the supports of secular terrors, and that its enemies must be suppressed by violence. We then sanctify the Lord our God in our hearts, when we are ready to give an answer to those that inquire into the foundations of our religion, and our hope, with meekness and fear; and when we use those methods with others, which are likely most effectually to engage them to render him a rational service. But when we drag men to his altars, as unwilling victims, and attempt to bind them otherwise than with the cords of a man, and the bonds of love, he may surely reject our forward and officious zeal, as an affront, and say, Who has

required these things at your hands? The same answer will, in a great measure, serve for the second plea in favour of persecution: which is,

2. That it may tend to promote the happiness of mankind.

If we will believe those, who have sometimes a crocodile's tear to shed over those whom they are devouring, all the severity they use to men's bodies is in mere mercy to their souls. But it is hard to say, how this can be an argument for putting them to death, in what they call a damnable error; as an ill-natured man may call any error, and an inquisitor must, of course, call that which he makes capital. I know they will answer, it is for the good of others, that they may be deterred from the like pestilent heresy. But I endeavoured to show before, that such a course was much more likely to prejudice, and to exasperate, and to debauch men's minds, than to recover or secure them. And here their most plausible answer is, that though it should be granted, that the first converts of violence are insincere, yet at least succeeding generations, being educated in the bosom of the church, and the forms of the true religion, may cordially imbibe it, even to their everlasting salvation. A rich equivalent, as some may think, for present inconveniences to others! But I see not that we can be obliged to introduce so much confusion and misery in our own days, out of regard to posterity, any more than to burn up the produce of our own fields and plantations, that the ashes may meliorate the soil, and render it more fruitful to those that come after us. If such an expedient were not likely to answer even that end, it illustrates the subject so much the more. For we may naturally expect to find, in the hearts of children, a deep resentment of the wrong done to their parents, and even to their remoter ancestors: nor is it any uncommon case at all, for an aversion or attachment to particular notions and forms, to prove hereditary; especially when young persons, so exceedingly jealous of their liberty, as at their age they are, apprehend a religion to be forced upon them, contrary to that which their ancestors bravely defended, at the expense of their estates and their lives; or which they unwillingly seemed to renounce, for the preservation of them. It is exceeding probable, that the penal laws, by which idolatry was imposed on the Jews, in some years of the Babylonish captivity, might contribute greatly to give them that aversion to it, which has been transmitted through so many following ages. And the contempt, which both the Spaniards and Portuguese put on those whom they call new Christians, (that is, whose ancestors, most of them above two hundred years ago,* were obliged by violence to profess Christianity,) seems plainly to intimate, that they secretly suspect them to be Jews or Mahometans in their hearts, as many of them declare themselves to be, when they escape into a land of liberty.†

Yet, perhaps, many of more pious dispositions, and more tender tempers than those of whom I have been now speaking, may be ready to plead, that unlimited toleration will leave room for writing and publishing the most pernicious books; whereby the principles of young and unexperienced minds may easily be corrupted, and heresy and profaneness introduced into the rising generation; and with it that licentiousness of practice, which generally attends such an apostasy from the truth.

I acknowledge, that the plea seems to have a considerable weight; but I desire it may be seriously examined, whether the mischief of such a restraint be not yet greater than the advantages of it? Might not the most excellent and useful writings of the best men be suppressed on this principle? Nay, is it not on this principle, that the Bible itself is prohibited in popish countries? Some inconveniences arise from every imaginable constitution: it is the part of wisdom to choose that which is attended by the fewest and the least, and to apply the most proper remedies to them. If toleration be abused, as the means of sowing tares amongst the wheat, let it teach all, and especially those who have the care of young persons, to be so much the more watchful over their charge, to keep them out of the way of infection, or to furnish them with proper antidotes against it. But let not those, who would approve themselves the patrons of truth, act as if they thought religion such a scandalous cause, that it must suffer by the freedom of inquiry, and could only be safe under the covert of darkness.

On the whole, let the friends of the truth fairly propose its evidences, and show its influence too, by the candour of their temper, and the benevolence and usefulness of their lives; and if its enemies raise objections, as against what cause may not objections be raised? let us give them a fair consideration, and endeavour to expose the sophistry and weakness of them, in a plain, rational, and convincing manner, in the spirit of meekness and serenity. We may then hope, through the concurrent influences of divine grace, that the souls of men will be established, even by the attempts made

* The Moriscos were expelled Spain, A. D. 1492 [illegible] upon them erected about four years after.

to pervert them: and that, in another sense than the apostle originally intended the phrase, the trial of that faith, which is far more precious than the purest gold, (which, in succeeding ages, perishes and wears out, though it have been tried in the fire,) will be found to praise and glory. And if (which may very probably be the case) some who will eagerly listen to every objection against the truth, will not have the patience to hear or examine its defence, we must leave them to the final judgment of him, who searches the hearts, and tries the reins of the children of men. With so dishonest a temper, a name, or a form, whatever it had been, could have done them but very little good. It is impossible for us to save men against their own wills: and I cannot see, that it will be any part of Christian charity, to put out their eyes, or tie up their hands, lest they should use them to the injury of themselves or others.

If any should pretend that we are to punish heretics and infidels, that we may not make ourselves partakers of other men's sins, and draw down the judgments of God on the nation in which we live: I answer, that this argument so evidently takes it for granted, that persecution is for the glory of God, and will be a proper expedient for promoting the true religion, that what I have said, under the former heads, is an abundant answer to it. I shall not, therefore, enlarge on this as a distinct topic, but proceed to another of much greater importance.

3. The most plausible argument in favour of the doctrine we oppose, is taken from the penal laws, which made a part of the Jewish constitution.

It is urged here, that God did, in the strongest terms, expressly appoint, that all who taught or practised idolatry amongst the Jews, should be punished with death; and that many severe executions were accordingly done on this statute: not only by the prophet Elijah, an extraordinary divine messenger, but likewise by Jehu, and Josiah, and other princes amongst them; who, far from being censured, were applauded and rewarded on this account.

If we answer here, as we most easily and naturally do, that the merciful genius of the Christian dispensation is so different from the rigour and severity of the Mosaic law, that no argument can be drawn from one to the other: it is pleaded, that this will at least serve to overthrow the greater part of our discourse, which was intended to prove the natural absurdity and immorality of persecution; unless we will allow, what surely no Christian can, that a natural immorality was made an essential part of a divine institution.

It will be proper, therefore, to examine this matter a little more largely; which I shall the rather do, because I think it has seldom been handled with the accuracy which it requires. Now I apprehend the solution of this difficulty will depend on considering, on the one hand, the limitations attending these penal laws; and, on the other, the peculiar circumstances of the Jews, to whom they were given.

1. Let us consider the limitations which attended these penal laws.

They affected only the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; and animadverted only on some overt act, whereby they publicly declared a revolt from God to idols.

There was no commission given to the Jews, to arm themselves for the propagation of their faith amongst their heathen neighbours; nor was there any express law to pursue any Israelite with the sword, who, settling among idolaters in foreign countries, should conform to the religion of them. Though, for reasons afterwards to be mentioned, his part in the land of Israel would undoubtedly have been forfeited. And, it is further to be remembered, that even with regard to the inhabitants themselves, the law only took cognizance of some overt act of revolt. Had God given a large confession of faith to the Jews, to every article of which he had required them, on some high penalties, to subscribe their assent, a much stronger objection against what I have advanced would have arisen from such a constitution. But this was so far from being the case, that the Sadducees, erroneous as they were in some of the most important articles of natural, as well as revealed, religion, were not only tolerated, but, without any direct violation of the Mosaic law, were frequently promoted to offices of high dignity and authority. Now there is a most evident difference between a law thus limited, and an universal allowance of religious severities, to Jews or others, in any such circumstance as they should think fit. And, were the particular reasons ever so unknown, the former might be allowed, as consistent with the divine perfections, without laying a foundation to infer that the latter might be so. As there was an apparent difference between God's requiring Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, and his publishing a general declaration, allowing any parents whatsoever to sacrifice their children, whenever they should suppose that the glory of God, and the interest of religion, would be advanced by it. Thus the limitation of these penal laws destroys the argument which might be drawn from them, in favour of persecution in general. And, if it still appear a difficulty, that, even with these limitations, they should be enacted, I hope the point may be yet more fully cleared up, by considering,

2. The peculiar circumstances whereby the Jews were distinguished from all other people.

Now here, the extraordinary discoveries which God made of himself amongst them, and the peculiar manner in which he stood related to them, as their King, concur both to vindicate the equity

of the laws in question, and to prove that no reasonable consequence can be drawn from them, in favour of persecution, in any other nation upon earth.

It is surely of some importance, to recollect the extraordinary discoveries which God had made of himself to them, though the whole stress of the point does not lie here. The miracles which he had wrought amongst them, in order to prove his deity, and the vanity of idols, were of the most awakening and convincing nature; and these were not only delivered to them by credible report, as they are now delivered to us; but God was, from age to age, raising up prophets, with a power of renewing these wonders before their eyes. Nay, he had interwoven into their constitution certain periodical, and most extensive and obvious miracles, not only in the extraordinary fruitfulness of every sixth year; (when, after the ground had been exhausted in the five preceding years, the poorest harvest must naturally have been expected;) but also in the safety of their borders, though surrounded with enemies, when all the males were gone up to worship, even in the very heart of their country, as they were obliged to do three times in the year, between the beginning of March and the end of September, which is the most proper time for armies to be abroad.

Now God, the searcher of all hearts, might know, that nothing but obstinate and incorrigible wickedness could make a man an idolater in such circumstances as these. And consequently, he might righteously condemn him to death, and appoint his fellow-creatures to execute the sentence. But no argument can be drawn from thence for inflicting the like punishment on another person, who is not as expressly sentenced by the divine law, and whose opportunities of better knowledge are not, and cannot be, entirely the same.

But it is further to be considered, as of the utmost weight in the present argument, that God also stood in a peculiar relation to the people of Israel, as he was their temporal King, as well as their God. Their government, as you well know, was different from that of all other nations: it was indeed a Theocracy, as Josephus very justly calls it; their whole system of civil laws being enacted by God, and their magistrates appointed by him. And when they came to have kings, as other nations had, yet even these kings were to be considered but as the viceroys of God: as appears by their being obliged to transcribe his law, when they began their reign; to consult his oracle on all extraordinary exigences; and from his interposing in various cases, both in Judah and Israel, to transfer the crown from one person and family to another.

Now, in consequence of this peculiar system of government, God thought it proper, as it apparently was, to annex certain temporal privileges to their obedience to him; and they held their estates and possessions in the fine country they inhabited, not by one absolute donation to them, and their heirs for ever; but through succeeding generations, as tenants to the crown, upon an express condition of certain homages to be paid to God, as the great proprietor; renouncing all dependence upon, and all subjection to, any of his competitors. Now it was plainly equitable, that, as the counterpart of these advantages, they should be subjected to some peculiar temporal punishments; if, while they claimed these privileges, they falsified that allegiance which was the condition of them; in which case they suffered, not merely as idolaters, but as traitors.

I will further add, that as God was determined, in the course of his providence, to send national judgments upon them, in case of a national revolt to idolatry, which he accordingly always did, it was a merciful as well as just severity, thus to animadvert upon the first appearances of this aggravated crime, to which they were strongly inclined; and by which, if it prevailed amongst them, they must be universally undone.

But as all these circumstances were peculiar to the Jews, I hope you are, by this time, fully convinced, that it is absurd to draw arguments in favour of religious severities in general, from the penal laws of the Mosaic institution.* I have been so large on this head, that I must only hint at those weak and contemptible arguments which are brought,

4. From some abused passages in the New Testament.

And indeed I should hardly mention them, but to expose them; and to show to what wretched straits ingenious and interested men must be brought, when they will condescend to make use of such arguments: for, after all, to their shame I must say, the chief texts which I find produced for their purpose, by popish writers, are two; which I am persuaded, a wise and honest man might have read a thousand times before he had ever dreamt of such a consequence from them. Christ gave Peter a commission to feed his sheep; and that must, say some, imply a power in the church, and especially in the pope, as the head of it, to kill wolves, that is, heretics. As if an argument, from this figurative expression, to so distant a circumstance, could be allowed against such strong evidence, both of Scripture and reason. But I must do them the

* I have not mentioned the argument which some have drawn from Job's saying, that adultery is a [illegible] to be punished by the judges: Job xxxi. 28. because it was evident, that Job [illegible] with the [illegible] in the [illegible] and [illegible] Jews. And I think it very [illegible] in the [illegible] Arabia, as many [illegible] of that nation [illegible] constitution from those [illegible] Jews [illegible] Judah's sentence against Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 24. that there was then a divine law for executing [illegible] they were [illegible]

justice to say, their grand argument is behind, and it is couched in those words, Compel them to come in. But, what compulsion and violence must be offered to these words, before they will be of any service in the cause of persecution! How often have they been told, that this relates only to friendly importunity, like that which the disciples used to engage Christ to spend the evening with them at Emmaus, when, as the evangelist expresses it, they constrained him? And how absurd it would be to suppose servants sent out with sword in hand to force in guests to an entertainment, I think you will easily apprehend.* Another argument, a little more specious than either of these, might be brought from the corporal punishments inflicted on blasphemers in the apostle's times; but it is to be considered that these were the effects of a miraculous power, and consequently had a proper tendency to convince the understanding of the sufferers and spectators, of the divine mission of those with whom the hand of the Lord thus remarkably was. It is therefore most absurd to talk of substituting the power of the magistrate instead of these extraordinary penalties, unless the magistrate can inflict them the same way; and then we will acknowledge they merit not the name of persecution, but come under that singular exception which we admitted in the beginning of the discourse.

I have the pleasure to assure you, that these wretched arguments, or rather empty shadows of argument, are the most material which I have seen produced from the New Testament in favour of religious severities. It is the glory of that sacred book, that it affords no better arguments in so infamous a cause. And I cannot forbear observing, that the silence of the New Testament on this head is a strong argument against persecution, and would have been so, had the apostles omitted the many passages before quoted, in which they seem directly to oppose it.

I know it may be said, the sacred writers did not advise the primitive Christians to use violence, because their religion was then in its infancy, and they had no power in their hands. Yet, one would imagine, that if the apostles would have approved themselves honest men on the scheme we oppose, they should have laid in some directions for future times, and have instructed Christians in the use of their secular power, when it was obtained; as the Jews were particularly directed in the management of theirs. Especially since this is a case in which the wrath of man, which worketh not the righteousness of God, is so ready to throw about firebrands, arrows, and death.

Nor will it here be improper to remind you, that there was at least one prince converted to Christianity in the apostles' time; I mean Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus; yet we do not find St. Paul exhorting him to proselyte his subjects by violence, or even to inflict any penalties on Elymas the sorcerer, though he had been convicted of error in so miraculous a way, and though an inspired apostle had called him, in his presence, a child of the devil, and an enemy of all righteousness.

I must also add here, that it is well known masters amongst the Greeks and Romans had an unlimited power over the persons and lives of their slaves. Now if corporal severities were ordinarily to have been used to promote the gospel, we might have expected that the apostles writing, as they so often do, of the duty of masters, should have added some exhortations to them to compel their slaves to embrace it. Yet nothing of that kind occurs, which I think makes the negative arguments as strong as one can well suppose a negative argument to be.

IV. I must conclude my discourse with touching on those reflections which I have left myself but little time to enlarge upon.

1. Let us bless God that we are free from the guilt of persecuting others, and the misery of being persecuted ourselves.

Had we been born in Spain or Portugal, education and example might have corrupted our judgment so much, that without further inquiry we might have taken it for granted, as a first principle, (as many there seem to do,) that heretics are to be punished with death. And on this foundation we might have practised or applauded the greatest inhumanities, perhaps towards the best of men. We might have been presenting to God what is much worse than robbery, even murder for a burnt-offering; and trusting in that for the expiation of our other offences, which is itself in the number of the greatest enormities which human nature can commit. In such a case I fear the blindness and ignorance of our zeal would not have been allowed as an excuse for its pernicious consequences. St. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners for those severities which he exercised on Christians ignorantly, and while he verily thought that it was his duty to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And indeed, as Mr. Baxter well expresses it, in his masculine and lively manner,† "If charity be a grace most necessary to salvation, then certainly it will not keep any man from damnation, that he had malice and uncharitableness enough to persuade him, that the members of Christ were children of the devil, though he persecuted them under that notion."

Let us be thankful that we are preserved from

* I think the word [illegible] has [illegible] in the New Testament. Matt. xxii. 3. Mark vi. 25. Luke xiv. 23. Acts xxvi. 11. 2 Cor. x. 11. God is [illegible] to 12. [illegible] and both of those places [illegible] rather [illegible] [illegible] Luke xxiv. 29. Acts xvi. 15. [illegible] those places [illegible] than friendly importunity.

† Rest. Pract. Works, Vol. I. page 612.

that guilt, and let us also acknowledge it as an instance of the divine goodness to us, that we are not suffering by persecution; that we are not plundered and banished, or perhaps imprisoned and tortured, for conscience-sake; and so brought under a formidable temptation, to make shipwreck of that as well as of faith. Let this day remind us of the frequent dangers of this kind to which we have been exposed; and let us gratefully own God's watchful care over us, and that powerful hand exerted in our favour, to which we owe it, that our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers, which was once and again spread for our lives: the snare is broken and we are escaped. Let the memory of those who were the glorious instruments of our deliverance be ever dear to us, and the persons of those who, under God, are the great guardians of our civil and religious liberties, be regarded with becoming reverence, affection, and obedience.

2. Let us envy none that liberty of conscience which they enjoy on such equitable principles.

While we rejoice in a toleration ourselves, we were inexcusable if we were grieved that many who most widely differ from us share in the same common benefit. A variety of opinions must be expected, and debates will unavoidably arise from it; but when we are pressed by the arguments of our opponents, or, it may be, provoked by what we think their obstinacy; let us not indulge even a secret wish, that there were a sword in our hand to slay them, or a chain to bind them. Far from complaining of it as an evil, let us rather rejoice in it as the peculiar glory and happiness of our age and country, perhaps beyond any other, that our neighbours, as well as we, enjoy a freedom of choosing their religion for themselves; and amidst all the diversity of that choice, sit every one under his own vine and fig-tree, and have none on that account to make them afraid.

And I will add, let not private malice and uncharitableness assume the place of public severities. Let those who are in the superior relations of life, lay aside a rigorous and imposing temper towards those who are under their care. In matters of conscience, let not the husband pretend to determine for the wife, nor the parent for the child, nor the master for the servant; but if fair argument and love will not fix a conviction on their mind in favour of what we apprehend to be right, let us leave them to worship God in their own way, without absolutely insisting upon it that they should do it in ours.

Once more, let not neighbours and equals be severe on one another upon account of religious differences, but make the most candid allowances which the case will bear for the errors and weaknesses of each other. Far from injuring and reviling each other, and refusing the mutual offices of humanity and friendship, let us study to abound in them more and more. Let us pray, that if any are otherwise minded, than truth, reason, and Scripture would teach, God would in his own method, and time, reveal unto them whatever it may be of importance for them to know; and in the mean time let us endeavour to act on the great principles of virtue and benevolence, which, blessed be God, are not peculiar to any distinguishing forms of religious profession amongst us. And I heartily pray, that domestic persecution may never be the guilt or the misery of any, who by the laws of our country are protected from public violence.

Lastly, Let us be very cautious that we do not abuse that religious liberty which, by the singular favour of Providence, we enjoy.

Let us remember, that as the best blessings may be perverted, it is too possible that even this may be turned into licentiousness. It is true, that our consciences are under no human jurisdiction, but let it be considered they are not without law, but under law, to God. He who searches men's hearts, knows how to judge of the sincerity and impartiality of our inquiries into truth, though none else can do it. Let us therefore be wary in our determinations in matters of importance, and let us earnestly pray for the enlightening influences of God's Holy Spirit, to preserve us from erroneous principles, and superstitious worship.

And, once more, let us be very careful that we do not abuse our religious liberties by trifling with opportunities for spiritual improvement, either absenting ourselves from them, or attending them in a careless and unprofitable manner. Let us remember, the servant who knows his master's will, and prepares not himself to act according to it, will be beaten with many stripes. The freest profession of the purest religion on earth will signify nothing, if it be no more than a profession; and all that zeal for liberty which is consistent with being the slave of sin, is only a natural haughtiness of spirit, which will aggravate a man's guilt rather than extenuate it. The Lord grant that none of us may reject the truth, and that none may hold it in unrighteousness: lest the time come, when we wish for that excuse which they will have, who have known the restraints and discouragements of persecutions; and another day reflect with horror, even on those repeated deliverances, for which we are this day returning our public acknowledgments.

HYMNS

FROM

VARIOUS TEXTS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

PREFACE.

THE author of the following Hymns, well known to the world by many excellent and useful writings, was much solicited by his friends to print them in his life-time, from a hope they might be serviceable to the interest of religion, by assisting the devotion of Christians in their social and secret worship: and, had God continued his life till his Family Expositor on the Epistles had been published, it is probable he would have complied with their request: but this and many other pious and benevolent purposes were broken off by his much-lamented death. During the last hour I spent with him, a few weeks before that mournful event, he honoured me with some particular directions about transcribing and publishing them. I have at length, through the good hand of my God upon me, finished them, and present them to the world with a cheerful hope, that they will promote and diffuse a spirit of devotion, and, together with other assistances human and divine, prepare many to join with the devout author in the nobler and everlasting anthems of heaven.

These Hymns being composed to be sung after the author had been preaching on the texts prefixed to them, it was his design, that they should bring over again the leading thoughts in the sermon, and naturally express and warmly enforce those devout sentiments, which he hoped were then rising in the minds of his hearers, and help to fix them on the memory and heart: accordingly, the attentive reader will observe, that most of them illustrate such sentiments as a skilful preacher would principally insist upon, when discoursing from the texts on which they are founded. There is a great variety in the form of them: some are devout paraphrases on the texts; others expressive of lively acts of devotion, faith, and trust in God, love to Christ, desire of divine influences, and good resolutions of cultivating the temper and practising the duties recommended; others proclaim a humble joy and triumph in the gracious promises and encouragements of Scripture, particularly in the discovery and prospect of eternal life. The nature of the subjects will easily account for the difference of composure, why some are more plain and artless, others more lively, sublime, and full of poetic fire. If any of them should at first reading appear flat or obscure, it may well be supposed they would affect the mind in a stronger manner, when used in a religious assembly after sermons upon the texts, in which the context hath been considered, (if that were necessary,) parallel places compared, the design of the inspired writer judiciously opened, and the beauty, propriety, and emphasis of the several clauses of the text illustrated: they therefore who use them in their devout retirements, should first read and consider the texts and contexts: and if they would consult some Expositor upon them, particularly the author's on the subjects taken from the New Testament, they will see a spirit and elegance in these composures, which may otherwise be overlooked, and be more likely to reap real and lasting advantage by them.

In this collection there are many hymns formed upon passages in the Old Testament, particularly in the Prophets, directly relating to the case of the Israelites, or some particular good man among them, which the author hath accommodated to the circumstances of Christians, where he thought there was a just and natural resemblance; and he apprehended, that the practice of the inspired writers of the New Testament warranted such accommodations.* He experienced this to be a very acceptable and useful method of preaching on the Old Testament, and accordingly recommended it to his pupils, as what would afford them an opportunity of explaining the design of the prophecies, displaying the wisdom, faithfulness, and grace of God, and suggesting many striking and important instructions: this method would at the same time occasion an agreeable variety in their discourses, prevent their confining themselves to general or common-place subjects, or (in order to avoid a frequent repetition of well-known arguments) running into dry and abstruse speculations, which the capacities of the generality of their hearers could not comprehend, nor their hearts relish and feel: a fashion in preaching too prevalent, and, considering its apparent unprofitableness, much to be lamented.

Those young ministers, who are desirous of entering into the spirit and copiousness of Scripture, may find this work greatly useful to them, by directing them to many very suitable texts, and to some natural thoughts and useful reflections, to be insisted upon in discoursing from them.

There are several hymns in this collection suited to special and extraordinary occasions, for which there was not before a sufficient provision: such as, for opening a new place of worship, the vacancy and settlement of churches, the ordination of ministers, their removal from our world, &c. especially for days of

* Compare Hebrews xiii. 5, 6, and Family Expositor in loc. note (c). There are also some good remarks on this subject in Dr. Watts's Harmony of Times, Places, &c. Diss. V. especially Prop. 15.

fasting and humiliation on account of actual or apprehended calamities; the want of which during the late rebellion and war was much regretted by many ministers and private Christians.

In these compositions I hope few low or trivial expressions will be found: nothing appears unsuitable to the gravity and dignity of a worshipping assembly; nothing likely to darken or damp the devotion of the humble Christian, or excite passions merely sensual. There is nothing that savours of a party-spirit, or carries an appearance of designing to confine their use to any of the sects into which Christians are unhappily divided. The materials are divine, and the author's soul was never more enlarged, than when he was promoting a spirit of piety and candour in their just connexion.

I choose to place these Hymns in the order in which the several texts lie in the Bible, as that prevents the necessity of another index, and there appeared no particular reason for disposing them in any different order. In a few places where words occur not sufficiently intelligible to common readers, I have added some more plain and familiar ones in the margin, that they may be read and sung with understanding; preferring this method to that of some authors, who have collected and explained them in a particular index.

As these Hymns were composed during a series of many years, amidst an uncommon variety and daily succession of most important labours, by a man who had no ear for music, and as they want his retouching hand, the reader will be candid to what inaccuracies he may discover: particularly the repetition of the same thoughts and phrases, which in a few instances will be found; and indeed some of them could scarcely be avoided on subjects so nearly resembling, without the exclusion of the most suitable and affecting sentiments or aspirations, for which the introduction of a new or more poetic thought and phrase would not have been an equivalent. There may perhaps be some improprieties, owing to my not being able to read the author's manuscript in particular places, and being obliged, without a poetic genius, to supply those deficiencies, whereby the beauty of the stanza may be greatly defaced, though the sense is preserved.

These Hymns being originally designed for the use of a congregation of plain unlearned Christians, it cannot be expected they should entertain those, who may peruse them merely for the sake of the poetry: yet I think many of them will stand the test of a critical examination, and appear at least equal to other compositions of the like kind; and I am persuaded they will all be delightful and beneficial to those, who desire to have their devotions enlivened, their souls filled with divine love, and who are ambitious to live up to the rules of the gospel; and that they will, through the influences of the Holy Ghost, spread a spirit of fervent piety in such congregations where they may be introduced.

I have nothing to add but my earnest wishes and prayers, that they may be subservient to the glory of God, the more delightful celebration of divine ordinances, and the edification of my fellow Christians. Amen.

JOB ORTON.

Shop, January 1, 1755.

A TABLE

TO FIND OUT

ANY HYMN BY THE FIRST LINE OF IT.

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HYMNS

ON VARIOUS TEXTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HYMN I.

Enoch's piety and translation. Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.

1 Eternal God, our wondering souls
Admire thy matchless grace;
That thou wilt walk, that thou wilt dwell,
With Adam's worthless race.

2 O lead me to that happy path,
Where I my God may meet;
Though hosts of foes begird it round,
Though briers wound my feet.

3 Cheered with thy converse, I can trace
The desert with delight:
Through all the gloom one smile of thine
Can dissipate the night.

4 Nor shall I through eternal days
A restless pilgrim roam;
Thy hand, that now directs my course,
Shall soon convey me home.

5 I ask not Enoch's rapturous flight
To realms of heavenly day;
Nor seek Elijah's fiery steeds
To bear this flesh away.

6 Joyful my spirit will consent
To drop its mortal load;
And hail* the sharpest pangs of death,
That break its way to God.

HYMN II.

God's gracious approbation of a religious care of our families. Gen. xviii. 19.

1 Father of men, thy care we bless,
Which crowns our families with peace:
From thee they sprung, and by thy hand
Their root and branches are sustained.

2 To God, most worthy to be praised,
Be our domestic altars raised;
Who, Lord of heaven, scorns not to dwell
With saints in their obscurest cell.

3 To thee may each united house,
Morning and night, present its vows:
Our servants there, and rising race,
Be taught thy precepts, and thy grace.

4 O may each future age proclaim
The honours of thy glorious name;
While pleased, and thankful, we remove
To join the family above.

HYMN III.

Abraham's intercession for Sodom. Gen. xviii. 32.

1 Great God! did pious Abra'm pray
For Sodom's vile abandoned race?
And shall not all our souls be roused
For Britain to implore thy grace?

2 Base as we are, does not thine eye
Its chosen thousands here survey,
Whose souls, deep humbled, mourn the crowds
Who walk in sin's destructive way?

3 O Judge supreme, let not thy sword
The righteous with the wicked smite;
Nor bury, in promiscuous heaps,
Rebels, and saints thy chief delight.

4 For these thy children spare the land,
Avert the thunders big with death;
Nor let the seeds of latent‡ fire
Be kindled by thy flaming breath.

* Salute or welcome.

‡ Hidden, secret.

5 Oh! be not angry, mighty God,
While dust and ashes seek thy face;
But, gently bending from thy throne,
Renew, and still increase, the grace.

6 Jesus the intercessor hear,
And for his sake thy grace impart,
Which, while it stops the fiery stream,
Dissolves the most obdurate heart.

7 Sodom shall change to Zion then,
And heavenly dews be scattered round,
That plants of paradise may spring
Where baleful* poisons cursed the ground.

HYMN IV.

Jacob's vow. Gen. xxviii. 20—22.

1 O God of Jacob, by whose hand
Thine Israel still is fed,
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led.

2 To thee our humble vows we raise,
To thee address our prayer,
And in thy kind and faithful breast
Deposit all our care.

3 If thou, through each perplexing path,
Wilt be our constant guide;
If thou wilt daily bread supply,
And raiment wilt provide;

4 If thou wilt spread thy shield around,
Till these our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace:

5 To thee, as to our covenant God,
We'll our whole selves resign;
And count, that not our tenth alone,
But all we have is thine.

HYMN V.

The hand of the Lord upon the cattle. Exod. ix. 3.

1 The creatures, Lord, confess thy hand,
Through earth and sky, through sea and land.
And all their meanest orders share
Their Maker's pity and his care.

2 O look from thine exalted throne,
And hear our panting cattle moan:
Prone† o'er the untasted food they lie,
Groan out their agonies, and die.

3 What have these harmless creatures done?
To draw this sore chastisement down?
'Tis human guilt for vengeance calls,
And heavy on the herds it falls.

4 From them to us the stroke might pass,
And mow down thousands of our race;
Till desolation reigned around,
Our cities void, untilled our ground.

5 Prevent the ruin by thy grace,
And melt our hearts to seek thy face:
Blest fruit of thy correcting rod,
To lose our beasts, and find our God.

HYMN VI.

Israel and Amalek. Exod. xvii. 11.

For a Fast-day.

1 Our banner is the eternal God,
Nor will we yield to fear;
Amidst ten thousand fierce assaults,
His mighty aid is near.

2 To him the hands of faith we stretch,
And plead experienced grace:
To him the voice of prayer we raise,
Nor will he hide his face.

3 No more, proud Amalek, thy boast,
"God's arm is feeble grown:"
His sword shall lop off every hand
That dares insult his throne.

4 Awake, tremendous Judge, awake,
Our nation's cause to plead;
Nor let thine Israel's foes, and thine,
By wickedness succeed.

5 Our fainting hands, how soon they droop!
But thou the weak canst raise;
And in the mount of prayer canst leave
An altar to thy praise.

HYMN VII.

Against following a multitude to do evil.
Exod. xxiii. 2.

1 Lord, when iniquities abound,
And growing crimes appear;
We view the deluge rising round
With sorrow, and with fear.

2 Yet when its waves most fiercely beat,
And spread destruction wide,
Thy Spirit can a standard raise
To stem ‡ the roaring tide.

3 May thy triumphant arm awake,
Thy sacred cause to plead;
And let the multitude confess
That thou art God indeed

4 Their hearts shall in a moment turn,
Like water, by thy hand;

* Destructive. † Stretched out on the ground. ‡ Restrain.

One word shall bow their stubborn necks
To own thy high command.

5 Our feeble souls at least support,
And there thy power display;
Then multitudes shall strive in vain
To draw us from thy way.

HYMN VIII.

Christ's intercession typified by Aaron's breast-plate. Exod. xxviii. 29.

1 Now let our cheerful eyes survey
Our great High Priest above,
And celebrate his constant care,
And sympathetic love.

2 Though raised to a superior throne,
Where angels bow around,
And high o'er all the shining train
With matchless honours crowned;

3 The names of all his saints he bears
Deep graven on his heart;
Nor shall the meanest Christian say
That he hath lost his part.

4 Those characters shall fair abide,
Our everlasting trust,
When gems, and monuments, and crowns
Are mouldered down to dust.

5 So, gracious Saviour, on my breast
May thy dear name be worn,
A sacred ornament and guard,
To endless ages borne.

HYMN IX.

Who is on the Lord's side? Exod. xxxiii. 26.

1 What bosom moved with pious zeal
Doth for its God's dishonour feel?
What heart with generous ardour glows
To plead his cause against his foes?

2 Great God, what bosom can be cold?
What coward must not here grow bold?
While honour, interest, truth, and love,
Concur our inmost souls to move?

3 Around thy standard, Lord, we press,
Thine injured honour to redress,
And with determined voice demand
The signal of thy conquering hand.

4 Thou shalt these sacred weapons bless,
And lead through war to endless peace;
Nor death itself our souls shall dread,
For thine own arm shall raise the dead.

HYMN X.

God's presence desirable. Exod. xxxiii. 15.

1 Immense, eternal God!
How marvellous thy name!
Thy presence all abroad
Pervades* all nature's frame:
Heaven, earth, and air,
And the dark cell,
Where devils dwell
In long despair.

2 Yet thou hast chosen ways
To make thy presence known,
To favourites of thy grace,
To upright souls alone:
This glory, Lord,
My soul would see,
This grace to me,
My God, afford.

3 If thou thy lustre veil,
The charms of nature fade:
All withered, weak, and pale,
They bow their languid head:
My Father, shine;
For thou canst give
The dead to live
By beams divine.

4 Even Eden's blissful lands
Would in thine absence mourn:
But thou wild Afric's† sands
To Paradise canst turn.
If God be there
The gloom is bright;
But noon is night,
Till thou appear.

5 Come, for my spirit glows
With infinite desire!
Strong love impatient grows,
And sets my heart on fire.
My Father, come,
That presence give
On which I live,
Or call me home.

HYMN XI.

Moses's view of the divine glory. Exod. xxxiii. 18.

1 With humble pleasure, Lord, we trace
The ancient records of thy grace;
And our own consolation draw
From what thy servant Moses saw.

2 May we behold thy glory shine
With gentle beams of love divine;
And hear thy secret voice proclaim
The various wonders of thy name.

3 If feeble nature faint to endure
A voice so sweet, a ray so pure;
Its dissolution would delight,
While death would wear a form so bright.

* Penetrates through our souls.
† Africa, a part of the earth, remarkable for sandy barren deserts.

4 Death shall unveil that world above,
Where the dear children of thy love,
Attempered* all to heavenly day,
Bear and reflect the immediate ray.

HYMN XII.

The proclamation of God's name to Moses; or, Divine mercy and justice. Exod. xxxiv. 6–8.

1 Attend, my soul, the voice divine,
And mark what beaming glories shine
Around thy condescending God!
To us, to us, he still proclaims
His awful, his endearing names:
Attend, and sound them all abroad.

2 "Jehovah I, the sovereign Lord,
The mighty God, by heaven adored,
Down to the earth my footsteps bend:
My heart the tenderest pity knows,
Goodness full-streaming wide o'erflows,
And grace and truth shall never end.

3 "My patience long can crimes endure:
My pardoning love is ever sure,
When penitential sorrow mourns;
To millions, through unnumbered years,
New hope and new delight it bears;
Yet wrath against the sinner burns."

4 Make haste, my soul, the vision meet,
All-prostrate at thy Sovereign's feet,
And drink the tuneful accents in;
Speak on, my Lord, repeat the voice,
Diffuse these heart-expanding joys,
Till heaven complete the rapturous scene.

HYMN XIII.

The God of spirits sought to supply vacancies in the congregations of his people. Numb. xxxvii. 15–17.

1 Father of spirits, from thy hand,
Our souls immortal came;
And still thine energy† divine
Supports the ethereal‡ flame.

2 By thee our spirits all are known;
And each remotest thought
Lies wide expanded to his eye,
By whom their powers were wrought.

3 To thee, when mortal comforts fail,
Thy flock deserted flies;
And, on the eternal Shepherd's care,
Our cheerful hope relies.

4 When o'er thy faithful servant's dust
Thy dear assemblies mourn,
In speedy tokens of thy grace,
O Israel's God, return.

5 The powers of nature all are thine,
And thine the aids of grace;
Thine arm has borne thy churches up
Through every rising race.

6 Exert thy sacred influence here,
And here thy suppliants bless,
And change, to strains of cheerful praise,
Their accents of distress.

7 With faithful heart, with skilful hand,
May this thy flock be fed;
And with a steady growing pace,
To Zion's mountain led.

* Fitted and enabled to bear.
† Power. ‡ Heavenly.

HYMN XIV.

The Lord's people his portion. Deut. xxxii. 9.

1 Sovereign of nature, all is thine,
The air, the earth, the sea:
By thee the orbs celestial§ shine,
And cherubs live by thee.

2 Rich in thy own essential store:
Thou call'st forth worlds at will:
Ten thousand, and ten thousand more,
Would hear thy summons still.

3 What treasure wilt thou then confess?
And thy own portion call?
What by peculiar right possess,
Imperial Lord of all?

4 Thine Israel thou wilt stoop to claim,
Wilt mark them out for thine:
Ten thousand praises to thy name
For goodness so divine!

5 That I am thine, my soul would boast,
And boast its claim to thee:
Nor shall God's property be lost,
Nor God be torn from me.

HYMN XV.

The eternal God his people's refuge and support. Deut. xxxiii. 27.

1 Behold the great eternal God
Spreads everlasting arms abroad,
And calls our souls to shelter there.
Wonders of mingled power and grace
To all his Israel he displays,
Guarded from danger and from fear.

2 Thither my feeble soul shall fly,
When terrors press, and death is nigh,
And there will I delight to dwell:
On that high tower I rear my head
Serene, nor knows my heart to dread,
Amidst surrounding hosts of hell.

§ The heavenly bodies.

3 The shadow of the Almighty's wings
Composure unmolested brings,
While threatening horrors round me crowd;
In vain the storms of rattling hail
The walls of this retreat assail,
And the wild tempest roars aloud.

4 In louder strains my fearless tongue
Shall warble its victorious songs,
My Father's graces to proclaim;
He bears his infant offspring on
To glory radiant as his throne,
And joys eternal as his name.

HYMN XVI.

The happiness of God's Israel. Deut. xxxiii. 29.

1 O ISRAEL, blest beyond compare!
Unrivalled all thy glories are:
Jehovah deigns* to fill thy throne,
And calls thine interest all his own.

2 He is thy Saviour; he thy Lord;
His shield is thine; and thine his sword:
Review in ecstasy of thought
The grand redemption he has wrought.

3 From Satan's yoke he sets thee free,
Opens thy passage through the sea;
He through the desert is thy guide,
And heaven for Canaan will provide.

4 Not Jacob's sons of old could boast
Such favours to their chosen host;
Their glories which through ages shine,
Are but dim shades and types of thine.

5 Celestial Spirit, teach our tongue
Sublimer strains than Moses sung,
Proportioned to the sweeter name
Of God the Saviour, and the Lamb.

HYMN XVII.

Support in the gracious presence of God, under the loss of ministers and other useful friends. Josh. i. 2, 4, 5.

1 Now let our mourning hearts revive,
And all our tears be dry;
Why should those eyes be drowned in grief,
Which view a Saviour nigh?

2 What though the arm of conquering death
Does God's own house invade?
What though the prophet, and the priest,
Be numbered with the dead?

3 Though earthly shepherds dwell in dust,
The aged and the young,
The watchful eye in darkness closed,
And mute the instructive tongue.

* Condescends.

4 The eternal Shepherd still survives,
New comfort to impart;
His eye still guides us, and his voice
Still animates our heart.

5 "Lo, I am with you," saith the Lord,
"My church shall safe abide;
For I will ne'er forsake my own,
Whose souls in me confide."

6 Through every scene of life and death,
This promise is our trust;
And this shall be our children's song,
When we are cold in dust.

HYMN XVIII.

God insensibly withdrawn. Judges xvi. 20.

1 A PRESENT God is all our strength,
And all our joy and hope;
When he withdraws, our comforts die,
And every grace must droop.

2 But flattering trifles charm our hearts
To court their false embrace,
Till justly this neglected Friend
Averts his angry face.

3 He leaves us, and we miss him not,
But go presumptuous on;
Till baffled, wounded, and enslaved,
We learn that God is gone.

4 And what, my soul, can then remain
One ray of light to give?
Severed from him, their better life,
How can his children live?

5 Hence, all ye painted forms of joy,
And leave my heart to mourn:
I would devote these eyes to tears,
Till cheered by his return.

6 Look back, my Lord, and own the place,
Where once thy temple stood;
For lo, its ruins bear the mark
Of rich atoning blood.

HYMN XIX.

Ebenezer; or, God's helping hand reviewed and acknowledged. 1 Sam. vii. 12.

For New-year's Day.

1 My helper God! I bless his name;
The same his power, his grace the same,
The tokens of his friendly care
Open, and crown, and close the year.

2 I midst ten thousand dangers stand,
Supported by his guardian hand;
And see, when I survey my ways,
Ten thousand monuments of praise

3 Thus far his arm hath led me on;
Thus far I make his mercy known:
And, while I tread this desert land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.

4 My grateful soul, on Jordan's shore,
Shall raise one sacred pillar more:
Then bear, in his bright courts above,
Inscriptions of immortal love.

HYMN XX.

The saint encouraging himself in the Lord his God.
1 Sam. xxx. 6.

1 JEHOVAH, 'tis a glorious name,
Still pregnant with delight;
It scatters round a cheerful beam,
To gild the darkest night.

2 What though our mortal comforts fade,
And droop like withering flowers?
Nor time nor death can break that band,
Which makes Jehovah ours.

3 My cares, I give you to the wind,
And shake you off like dust;
Well may I trust my all with him,
With whom my soul I trust.

HYMN XXI.

Support in God's covenant under domestic troubles.
2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

1 My God, the covenant of thy love
Abides for ever sure,
And in his matchless grace I feel
My happiness secure.

2 What though my house be not with thee,
As nature could desire?
To nobler joys than nature gives,
Thy servants all aspire.

3 Since thou, the everlasting God,
My Father art become;
Jesus my Guardian and my Friend,
And heaven my final home;

4 I welcome all thy sovereign will,
For all that will is love;
And, when I know not what thou dost,
I wait the light above.

5 Thy covenant in the darkest gloom
Shall heavenly rays impart,
Which, when my eyelids close in death,
Shall warm my chilling heart.

HYMN XXII.

Support in God's covenant in the near views of death. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. and 5. *compared.*

1 'Tis mine, the covenant of his grace,
And every promise mine!
All sprung from everlasting love,
And sealed by blood divine.

2 On my unworthy favoured head,
Its blessings all unite;
Blessings more numerous than the stars,
More lasting and more bright.

3 Death, thou mayst tear this rag of flesh,
And sink my fainting head,
And lay my ruins in the grave,
Among my kindred dead:

4 But death and hell in vain shall strive
To break that sacred rest,
Which God's expiring children feel,
While leaning on his breast.

5 The enlarged soul thou canst not reach,
Nor rend from Christ away;
Though o'er my mouldering dust thou boast
The triumphs of a day.

6 The night is past, my morning dawns;
My covenant God descends,
And wakes that dust to join my soul
In bliss that never ends.

7 That covenant the last accents claims
Of this poor faltering tongue;
And that shall the first notes employ
Of my celestial song.

HYMN XXIII.

Rejoicing in our covenant engagements to God.
2 Chron. xv. 15.

1 O HAPPY day, that fixed my choice
On thee my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

2 O happy bond, that seals my vows
To him, who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems * fill his house,
While to that sacred shrine † I move.

3 'Tis done; the great transaction 's done:
I am my Lord's, and he is mine:
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

4 Now rest my long divided heart,
Fixed on this blissful centre rest;
With ashes who would grudge to part,
When called on angels' bread to feast?

5 High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear:
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.

* Hymns of praise. † Altar or place of worship.

HYMN XXIV.

God stirring up the spirit of Cyrus to redeem Israel. Ezra i. 1. compared with Isa. xliv. 1—4.

1 The eternal God! his name how great!
How deep his counsels! how complete!
The hearts of kings his power can sway;
His word unconscious* they obey.

2 Summoned of old in distant days
To serve his schemes, and show his praise,
Cyrus, illustrious prince, appears,
His people frees, his temple rears.

3 Through legions armed he breaks his way,
And tramples generals down like clay;
The bars of steel he cuts in twain,
And brazen gates oppose in vain.

4 But to Jehovah's accents mild
The hero, pliant as a child,
Lays the new gates of empire by,
Till Zion rise and shines on high.

5 Thus, mighty God, shall every heart,
(If thou thine influence there exert,)
Throw its own fondest schemes aside,
And follow where thy hand shall guide.

6 The foremost sons of fame shall boast
To raise thy temples from their dust;
Princes shall shout thy name aloud,
And new-born priests thine altars crowd.

HYMN XXV.

A glance from God bringing us down to the solitude of the grave. Job vii. 8.

1 Sovereign of life, before thine eye,
Lo, mortal men by thousands die!
One glance from thee at once brings down
The proudest brow that wears a crown.

2 Banished at once from human sight
To the dark grave's unchanging night,
Imprisoned in that dusty bed,
We hide our solitary head.

3 The friendly band† no more shall greet,
Accents familiar once, and sweet:
No more the well-known features trace,
No more renew the fond embrace.

4 Yet if my Father's faithful hand
Conduct me through this gloomy land,
My soul with pleasure shall obey,
And follow where he leads the way.

5 He nobler friends than here I leave,
In brighter, surer worlds can give;
Or by the beamings of his eye
A lost creation well supply.

* Without intending it. Isa. x. 7. † Company.

HYMN XXVI.

The impossibility of prospering while men harden themselves against God. Job ix. 4.

1 The great Jehovah! who shall dare
With him to tempt unequal war?
What heart of steel shall dare to oppose,
And league among his hardened foes?

2 At his command the lightnings dart,
And swift transfix‡ the rebel heart:
Earth trembles at his look, and cleaves,
And legions sink in living graves.

3 Where are the haughty monarchs now,
Who scorned his word with lowering brow?
Where are the trophies of their reigns;
Or where their ruins' last remains?

4 See Pharaoh sinking in the tide,
See Babel's tyrant, mad with pride,
Graze with the beasts! hear Herod roar,
While worms his deity devour!

5 See, from the turrets of the skies,
Tall cherubs sink, no more to rise;
And trace their rank on thrones of light,
By heavier chains, and darker night!

6 Great God! and shall this soul of mine
Presume to challenge wrath divine?
Trembling, I seek thy mercy-seat,
And lay my weapons at thy feet.

HYMN XXVII.

The great journey. Job xvi. 22.

1 Behold the path that mortals tread
Down to the regions of the dead!
Nor will the fleeting moments stay,
Nor can we measure back our way.

2 Our kindred and our friends are gone;
Know, O my soul, this doom thy own;
Feeble as theirs my mortal frame,
The same my way, my house the same.

3 From vital air, from cheerful light,
To the cold grave's perpetual night,
From scenes of duty, means of grace,
Must I to God's tribunal pass!

4 Important journey! awful view!
How great the change! the scenes how new!
The golden gates of heaven displayed,
Or hell's fierce flames, and gloomy shade!

5 Awake, my soul; thy way prepare,
And lose in this each mortal care:
With steady feet that path be trod,
Which through the grave conducts to God.

‡ Pierce through.

6 Jesus, to thee my all I trust,
And, if thou call me down to dust,
I know thy voice, I bless thy hand,
And die in smiles at thy command.

7 What was my terror is my joy;
These views my brightest hopes employ,
To go, ere many years are o'er,
Secure I shall return no more.

HYMN XXVIII.

The penitent brought back from the pit.
Job xxxiii. 27, 28.

1 The Lord, from his exalted throne,
In majesty arrayed,
Looks with a melting pity down
On all that seek his aid.

2 When, touched with penitent remorse,
Our follies past we mourn,
With what a tenderness of love
He meets our first return!

3 From heaven he sent his only Son
To ransom us with blood,
To snatch us from the burning pit,
When on its brink we stood.

4 From death and hell he leads us up
By a delightful way;
And the bright beams of endless life,
Doth round our path display.

5 Great God, we wonder and adore;
And, to exalt such grace,
We long to learn the songs of heaven,
Ere yet we reach the place.

HYMN XXIX.

Communing with our hearts. Psalm iv. 4.

1 Return, my roving heart, return,
And chase these shadowy forms no more;
Seek out some solitude to mourn,
And thy forsaken God implore.

2 Wisdom and pleasure dwell at home;
Retired and silent seek them there:
True conquest is ourselves to o'ercome,
True strength to break the tempter's snare.

3 And thou, my God, whose piercing eye
Distinct surveys each deep recess,
In these abstracted hours draw nigh,
And with thy presence fill the place.

4 Through all the mazes* of my heart
My search let heavenly wisdom guide,
And still its radiant beams impart,
Till all be searched and purified.

5 Then, with the visits of thy love,
Vouchsafe my inmost soul to cheer;
Till every grace shall join to prove
That God hath fixed his dwelling there.

* Windings, perplexities

HYMN XXX.

God's name the encouragement of our faith
Psalm ix. 10.

1 Sing to the Lord, who loud proclaims
His various and his saving names;
O may they not be heard alone,
But by our sure experience known!

2 Let great Jehovah be adored,
The eternal, all-sufficient Lord!
He through the world most high confessed,
By whom 'twas formed, and is possessed.

3 Awake our noblest powers to bless,
The God of Abraham, God of peace;
Now by a dearer title known,
Father and God of Christ his Son.

4 Through every age his gracious ear
Is open to his servants' prayer;
Nor can one humble soul complain,
That it hath sought its God in vain.

5 What unbelieving heart shall dare
In whispers to suggest a fear,
While still he owns his ancient name!
The same his power, his love the same!

6 To thee our souls in faith arise,
To thee we lift expecting eyes;
And boldly through the desert tread,
For God will guard where God shall lead.

HYMN XXXI.

Triumph in God's protection. Psalm xviii. 2.

1 Legions of foes beset me round,
While marching over this dangerous ground;
Yet in Jehovah's aid I trust,
And in his power superior boast.

2 My buckler he; his shield is spread
To cover this defenceless head:
Now let the fiercest foes assail,
Their darts I count as rattling hail.

3 He is my rock, and he my tower;
The base† how firm! the walls how sure!
The battlements how high they rise!
And hide their summits‡ in the skies.

4 Deliverances to God belong;
He is my strength, and he my song;
The horn of my salvation he,
And all my foes dispersed shall flee.

† Foundation ‡ Top

5 Through the long march my lips shall sing
My great Protector and my King,
Till Zion's mount my feet ascend,
And all my painful warfare end.

6 Raised on the shining turrets there,
Through all the prospect wide and fair,
A land of peace his hosts survey,
And bless the grace that led the way.

HYMN XXXII.

Support in death. Psalm xxiii. 4.

1 Behold the gloomy vale,
Which thou, my soul, must tread,
Beset with terrors fierce and pale,
That leads thee to the dead.

2 Ye pleasing scenes, adieu,*
Which I so long have known:
My friends, a long farewell to you,
For I must pass alone.

3 And thou, beloved clay,
Long partner of my cares,
In this rough part art torn away
With agony and tears.

4 But see, a ray of light,
With splendours all divine,
Breaks through these doleful realms of night,
And makes its horrors shine.

5 Where death and darkness reigns,
Jehovah is my stay:
His rod my trembling feet sustains,
His staff defends my way.

6 Dear Shepherd, lead me on;
My soul disdains to fear;
Death's gloomy phantoms all are flown,
Now life's great Lord is near.

HYMN XXXIII.

The good man's prospect for time and eternity.
Psalm xxiii. 6.

1 My soul, triumphant in the Lord,
Shall tell its joys abroad.
And march with holy vigour on,
Supported by its God.

2 Through all the winding maze† of life,
His hand hath been my guide,
And in that long-experienced care,
My heart shall still confide.

3 His grace through all the desert flows,
An unexhausted stream:
That grace on Zion's sacred mount
Shall be my endless theme.‡

4 Beyond the choicest joys of earth
These distant courts I love;
But O! I burn with strong desire
To view thy house above.

5 Mingled with all the shining band,
My soul would there adore;
A pillar in thy temple fixed,
To be removed no more.

HYMN XXXIV.

The goodness which God has wrought and laid up for his people. Psalm xxxi. 1.

1 Our souls with pleasing wonder view
The bounties of thy grace;
How much bestowed! how much reserved
For them that seek thy face!

2 Thy liberal hand with worldly bliss
Oft makes their cup run o'er;
And in the covenant of thy love
They find diviner store.

3 Here mercy hides their numerous sins;
Here grace their souls renews;
Here thy own reconciled face
Doth heavenly beams diffuse.

4 But O! what treasures yet unknown
Are lodged in worlds to come!
If these the enjoyments of the way,
How happy is their home!

5 And what shall mortal worms reply?
Or how such goodness own?
But 'tis our joy that, Lord, to thee,
Thy servants' hearts are known.

6 Thine eyes shall read those grateful thoughts
No language can express:
Yet, when our liveliest thanks we pay,
Our debts do most increase.

7 Since time 's too short, all-gracious God,
To utter half thy praise,
Loud to the honour of thy name
Eternal hymns we'll raise.

HYMN XXXV

Relishing the divine goodness. Psal. xxxiv. 8, 9

1 Triumphant Lord, thy goodness reigns
Through all the wide celestial plains;
And its full streams redundant flow
Down to the abodes of men below.

2 Through nature's works its glories shine:
The cares of providence are thine:
And grace erects our ruined frame
A fairer temple to thy name.

3 O give to every human heart
To taste and feel how good thou art;

* Farewell. † Wilderness ‡ Subject

With grateful love and reverent fear,
To know how blest thy children are.

4 Let nature burst into a song:
Ye echoing hills, the notes prolong:
Earth, seas, and stars, your anthems raise,
All vocal* with your Maker's praise.

5 Ye saints, with joy the theme pursue;
Its sweetest notes belong to you;
Chose by this condescending King
For ever round his throne to sing.

HYMN XXXVI.

God saying to the soul, that he is its salvation. Psalm xxxv. 3.

1 Salvation! O melodious sound
To wretched dying men!
Salvation, that from God proceeds,
And leads to God again!

2 Rescued from hell's eternal gloom,
From fiends,† and fires, and chains:
Raised to a paradise of bliss,
Where love and glory reigns!

3 But O! may a degenerate soul,
Sinful and weak as mine,
Presume to raise a trembling eye
To blessings so divine?

4 The lustre of so bright a bliss
My feeble heart o'erbears;
And unbelief almost perverts
The promise into tears.

5 My Saviour God, no voice but thine
These dying hopes can raise:
Speak thy salvation to my soul,
And turn its tears to praise.

6 My Saviour God, this broken voice
Transported shall proclaim,
And call on the angelic harps
To sound so sweet a name.

HYMN XXXVII.

God's complacency in the prosperity of his servant. Psalm xxxv. 27.

1 The Lord with pleasure views his saints,
And calls them all his own;
And low he bows to their complaints,
And pities every groan.

2 In all the joys they here possess
He takes a tender part;
And when they rise to heavenly bliss
Complacence fills his heart.

3 My God, are all my pleasures thine,
My comforts thy delight?
O be thy happiness divine
Most precious in thy sight.

4 They most in all thy bliss shall share,
Whose hearts can love thee most;
O could I vie ‡ in ardour here
With all the angelic host!

HYMN XXXVIII.

The days of the upright known to God, and their everlasting inheritance. Psalm xxxvii. 18.

1 To thee, my God, my days are known,
My soul enjoys the thought;
My actions all before thy face,
Nor are my faults forgot.

2 Each secret breath devotion vents,
Is vocal to thine ear;
And all my walks of daily life
Before thine eye appear.

3 The vacant hour, the active scene,
Thy mercy shall approve;
And every pang of sympathy,
And every care of love.

4 Each golden hour of beaming light
Is guided by thy rays;
And dark affliction's midnight gloom
A present God surveys.

5 Full in thy view through life I pass,
And in thy view I die;
And when each mortal bond is broke,
Shall find my God is nigh.

6 Stripped of its little earthly all,
My soul in smiles shall go;
And in a heavenly heritage
Its Father's bounty know.

HYMN XXXIX.

Our desire and groaning before God, when proceeding from the greatest distress. Psalm xxxviii. 9, 10.

1 My soul, the awful hour will come,
Apace it passeth on,
To bear this body to the tomb,
And thee to scenes unknown.

2 My heart, long labouring with its woes,
Shall pant and sink away;
And you, my eyelids, soon shall close
On the last glimmering ray.

3 Whence in that hour shall I receive
A cordial for my pain,

* Sounding as if endowed with speech. † Evil spirits. ‡ Endeavour to be equal

When, if earth's monarchs were my friends,
Those friends would weep in vain?

4 Great King of nature and of grace,
To thee my spirit flies,
And opens all its deep distress
Before thy pitying eyes.

5 All its desires to thee are known,
And every secret fear,
The meaning of each broken groan
Well noticed by thine ear.

6 O fix me by that mighty power
Which to such love belongs,
Where darkness veils the eyes no more,
And groans are changed to songs.

HYMN XL.

God magnified by those that love his salvation.
Psalm xl. 16.

1 God of salvation, we adore
Thy saving love, thy saving power:
And to our utmost stretch of thought
Hail the redemption thou hast wrought.

2 We love the stroke that breaks our chain,
The sword by which our sins are slain:
And while abased in dust we bow,
We sing the grace that lays us low.

3 Perish each thought of human pride:
Let God alone be magnified:
His glory let the heavens resound,
Shouted from earth's remotest bound.

4 Saints, who his full salvation know,
Saints, who but taste it here below,
Join every angel's voice to raise
Continued never-ending praise.

HYMN XLI.

The triumph of Christ in the cause of truth, meekness and righteousness. Psalm xlv. 3, 4.

1 Loud to the Prince of heaven
Your cheerful voices raise;
To him your vows be given,
And fill his courts with praise.
With conscious worth
All clad in arms,
All bright in charms,
He sallies forth.

2 Gird on thy conquering sword,
Ascend thy shining car,*
And march, Almighty Lord,
To wage thy holy war.
Before his wheels,
In glad surprise,
Ye valleys rise,
And sink, ye hills.

3 Fair truth, and smiling love,
And injured righteousness,
In thy retinue move,
And seek from thee redress.
Thou in their cause
Shalt prosperous ride,
And far and wide
Dispense thy laws.

4 Before thine awful face
Millions of foes shall fall,
The captives of thy grace,
That grace which conquers all.
The world shall know,
Great King of kings,
What wondrous things
Thine arm can do.

5 Here to my willing soul
Bend thy triumphant way;
Here every foe control,
And all thy power display.
My heart, thy throne,
Blest Jesus, see,
Bows low to thee,
To thee alone.

* Christ.

HYMN XLII.

Quietness under affliction, a proper acknowledgment of God. Psalm xlvi. 10.

1 Peace, 'tis the Lord Jehovah's hand
That blasts our joys in death;
Changes the visage once so dear,
And gathers back our breath.

2 'Tis he, the Potentate supreme
Of all the worlds above,
Whose steady counsels wisely rule,
Nor from their purpose move.

3 'Tis he whose justice might demand
Our souls a sacrifice:
Yet scatters with unwearied hand
A thousand rich supplies.

4 Our covenant God and Father he
In Christ our bleeding Lord;
Whose grace can heal the bursting heart
With one reviving word.

5 Fair garlands of immortal bliss
He weaves for every brow;
And shall tumultuous passions rise,
If he correct us now?

6 Silent I own Jehovah's name,
I kiss thy scourging hand,
And yield my comforts and my life
To thy supreme command.

HYMN XLIII.

The year crowned with the divine goodness. Psalm lxv. 11.

For New-year's Day

1 Eternal source of every joy!
Well may thy praise our lips employ,
While in thy temple we appear,
Whose goodness crowns the circling year.

2 While as the wheels of nature roll,
Thy hand supports the steady pole:
The sun is taught by thee to rise,
And darkness when to veil the skies.

3 The flowery spring at thy command
Embalms the air, and paints the land;
The summer rays with vigour shine
To raise the corn, and cheer the vine.

4 Thy hand in autumn richly pours
Through all our coasts redundant stores;
And winters, softened by thy care,
No more a face of horror wear.

5 Seasons, and months, and weeks, and days
Demand successive songs of praise;
Still be the cheerful homage paid
With opening light and evening shade.

6 Here in thy house shall incense rise,
As circling sabbaths bless our eyes;
Still will we make thy mercies known,
Around thy board, and round our own.

7 O may our more harmonious tongues
In worlds unknown pursue the songs;
And in those brighter courts adore,
Where days and years revolve no more.

HYMN XLIV.

Rebels against the supreme Sovereign admonished. Psalm lxvi. 7.

1 The Lord of glory reigns supremely great.
And o'er heaven's arches builds his royal seat.
Thro' worlds unknown his sovereign sway extends,
Nor space nor time his boundless empire ends.
His eye beholds the affairs of every nation,
And reads each thought thro' his immense creation.

2 Lightnings and storms his mighty word obey,
And planets roll where he has marked their way;
Unnumbered cherubs veiled before him stand,
At his first signal all their wings expand:
His praise gives harmony to all their voices,
And every heart through the full choir* rejoices.

3 Rebellious mortals, cease your tumults vain,
Nor longer such unequal war maintain:

* Company of singers

4 Let clay with fellow-clay in combat strive,
But dread to brave the power by which you live:
With contrite hearts fall prostrate, and adore him,
For if he frowns, ye perish all before him.

HYMN XLV.

God the happiness of his people, and their support in the extremest distress. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.

1 My God, whose all-pervading† eye
Views earth beneath, and heaven above,
Witness, if here or there thou seest
An object of mine equal love.

2 Not the gay scenes, where mortal men
Pursue their bliss, and find their woe,
Detain my rising heart, which springs
The nobler joys of heaven to view.

3 Not all the fairest sons of light,
That lead the army round thy throne,
Can bound its flight: it presseth on,
And seeks its rest in God alone.

4 Fixed near the immortal source of bliss,
Dauntless and joyous it surveys
Each form of horror and distress,
That earth, combined with hell, can raise.

5 This feeble flesh shall faint, and die;
This heart renew its pulse no more:
Even now it views the moment nigh,
When life's last movements all are o'er.

6 But come, thou vanquished king of dread,
With thy own hand thy power destroy;
'Tis thine to bear my soul to God,
My portion, and eternal joy.

HYMN XLVI.

The rage of enemies restrained, and overruled to the divine glory. Psalm lxxvi. 10.

Thanksgiving for the suppression of the Rebellion, 1746

1 Accept, great God, thy Britain's songs,
While grateful joy unites our tongues,
To own the work thy hand hath done:
Thy hand hath crushed our cruel foes,
When in rebellious troops they rose,
And swore to tread our glory down.

2 With hell confederate on their side,
People and prince their rage defied,
And in proud hope devoured us all:
Thy hand its banner hath displayed,
Beckoned its hero to our aid,
And in one day their legions fall.

3 Thus shalt thou still maintain thy throne,
And prove, that thou art God alone,
Though earth and hell new efforts try:

† All seeing

'Midst all the tumults they can raise,
Envenomed wrath exalts thy praise,
Till hushed at thy rebuke it die.

5 So swell the surges* of the sea,
And roar in their impetuous way,
As they would deluge earth again:
So strike they on the unshaken rock,
Dashed by the fierceness of their shock,
And foam to feel their fury vain.

HYMN XLVII.

God furnishing a table in the wilderness. Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20.

1 Parent of universal good,
We own thy bounteous hand,
Which does so rich a table spread
Even in this desert land.

2 Struck by thy power, the flinty rocks
In gushing torrents flow;
The feathered wanderers of the air
Thy guiding instinct know.

3 The pregnant clouds, at thy command,
Rain down delicious bread;
And by light drops of pearly dew
Are numerous armies fed.

4 Supported thus, thine Israel marched
The promised land to gain;
And shall thy children now begin
To seek their God in vain?

5 Are all thy stores exhausted now?
Or does thy mercy fail?
That faith should languish in our breasts,
And anxious cares prevail?

6 Ye base unworthy fears, be gone,
And wide disperse in air;
Then may I feel my Father's rod,
When I suspect his care.

HYMN XLVIII.

God speaketh peace to his people. Psalm lxxxv. 8.

1 Unite, my roving thoughts, unite
In silence soft and sweet:
And thou, my soul, sit gently down
At thy great Sovereign's feet.

2 Jehovah's awful voice is heard.
Yet gladly I attend;
For lo! the everlasting God
Proclaims himself my friend.

3 Harmonious accents to my soul
The sounds of peace convey.
The tempest at his word subsides
And winds and seas obey.

4 By all its joys, I charge my heart,
To grieve his love no more;
But, charmed by melody divine,
To give its follies o'er.

HYMN XLIX.

The church the birth-place of the saints, and God's care of it. Psalm lxxxvii. 5.

On opening a new place of worship.

1 And will the great eternal God
On earth establish his abode?
And will he from his radiant throne
Avow our temples for his own?

2 We bring the tribute of our praise,
And sing that condescending grace,
Which to our notes will lend an ear,
And call us sinful mortals near.

3 Our Father's watchful care we bless
Which guards our synagogues in peace,
That no tumultuous foes invade,
To fill our worshippers with dread.

4 These walls we to thy honour raise;
Long may they echo with thy praise;
And thou descending fill the place
With choicest tokens of thy grace.

5 Here let the great Redeemer reign
With all the graces of his train;
While power divine his word attends
To conquer foes, and cheer his friends.

6 And in the great decisive day,
When God the nations shall survey,
May it before the world appear,
That crowds were born to glory here.

HYMN L.

The Gospel jubilee. Psalm lxxxix. 15. *compared with* Lev. xxv. *and* Isa. lxi. 2.

1 Loud let the tuneful trumpet sound,
And spread the joyful tidings round;
Let every soul with transport hear,
And hail the Lord's accepted year.

2 Ye debtors, whom he gives to know
That you ten thousand talents owe,
When humbled at his feet ye fall,
Your gracious Lord forgives them all.

3 Slaves, that have borne the heavy chain
Of sin and hell's tyrannic reign,
To liberty assert your claim,
And urge the great Redeemer's name.

* Great waves.

4 The rich inheritance you lost,
Restored, improved, you now may boast
Fair Salem your arrival waits,
To golden streets, and pearly gates.

5 Her blest inhabitants no more
Bondage and poverty deplore:
No debt, but love immensely great,
Whose joy still rises with the debt.

6 O happy souls, that know the sound!
God's light shall all their steps surround;
And show that jubilee begun,
Which through eternal years shall run.

HYMN LI.

God the dwelling-place of his people through all generations. Psalm xc. 1.

1 Thou, Lord, through every changing scene,
Hast to thy saints a refuge been:
Through every age, eternal God,
Their pleasing home, their safe abode.

2 In thee our fathers sought their rest;
In thee our fathers still are blest;
And while the tomb confines their dust,
In thee their souls abide, and trust.

3 Lo, we are risen, a feeble race,
A while to fill our fathers' place;
Our helpless state with pity view,
And let us share their refuge too.

4 Through all the thorny paths we trace
In this uncertain wilderness,
When friends desert, and foes invade,
Revive our heart, and guard our head.

5 So when this pilgrimage is o'er,
And we must dwell in flesh no more,
To thee our separate souls shall come,
And find in thee a surer home.

6 To thee our infant race we leave:
Them may their fathers' God receive;
That voices yet unformed may raise
Succeeding hymns of humble praise.

HYMN LII.

Reflections on our waste of years. Psalm xc. 9.

For New-years Day.

1 Remark, my soul, the narrow bounds
Of the revolving year!
How swift the weeks complete their rounds!
How short the months appear!

2 So fast eternity comes on,
And that important day,
When all that mortal life has done
God's judgment shall survey.

3 Yet like an idle tale we pass
The swift advancing year;
And study artful ways to increase
The speed of its career.

4 Waken, O God, my trifling heart
Its great concern to see;
That I may act the Christian part,
And give the year to thee.

5 So shall their course more grateful roll,
If future years arise;
Or this shall bear my smiling soul
To joy, that never dies.

HYMN LIII.

Joy and prosperity from the presence and blessing of God. Psalm xc. 17.

1 Shine on our souls, eternal God,
With rays of beauty shine:
O let thy favour crown our days,
And all their round be thine.

2 Did we not raise our hands to thee,
Our hearts might toil in vain;
Small joy success itself could give,
If thou thy love restrain.

3 With thee let every week begin,
With thee each day be spent,
For thee each fleeting hour improved,
Since each by thee is lent.

4 Thus cheer us through this desert road,
Till all our labours cease;
And heaven refresh our weary souls
With everlasting peace.

HYMN LIV.

The mutability of the creation, and the immutability of God. Psalm cii. 25—28.

1 Great Former of this various frame,
Our souls adore thine awful name;
And bow and tremble, while they praise
The Ancient of eternal days.

2 Thou, Lord, with unsurprised survey,
Sawest nature rising yesterday,
And, as to-morrow, shall thine eye
See earth and stars in ruin lie.

3 Beyond an angel's vision bright,
Thou dwellest in self-existent light;
Which shines with undiminished ray,
While suns and worlds in smoke decay.

4 Our days a transient period run,
And change with every circling sun;
And in the firmest state we boast
A moth can crush us into dust.

5 But let the creatures fall around:
Let death consign us to the ground:
Let the last general flame arise,
And melt the arches of the skies.

6 Calm as the summer's ocean, we
Can all the wreck* of nature see,
While grace secures us an abode,
Unshaken as the throne of God.

HYMN LV.

The frailty of human nature, and God's gracious regard to it. Psalm ciii. 14.

1 LORD, we adore thy wondrous name,
And make that name our trust,
Which raised at first this curious frame
From mean and lifeless dust.

2 By dust supported, still it stands,
Wrought up to various forms,
Prepared by thy creating hands
To nourish mortal worms.

3 Awhile these frail machines endure,
The fabric of a day;
Then know their vital powers no more,
But moulder back to clay.

4 Yet, Lord, whate'er is felt or feared,
This thought is our repose,
That he, by whom this frame was reared,
Its various weakness knows.

5 Thou viewest us with a pitying eye,
While struggling with our load:
In pains and dangers thou art nigh,
Our Father, and our God.

6 Gently supported by thy love,
We tend to realms of peace;
Where every pain shall far remove,
And every frailty cease.

HYMN LVI.

God adored for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men. Psalm cvii. 31.

1 Ye sons of men, with joy record
The various wonders of the Lord,
And let his power and goodness sound
Through all your tribes the earth around.

2 Let the high heavens your songs invite,
Those spacious fields of brilliant light,
Where sun, and moon, and planets roll,
And stars, that glow from pole to pole.

3 Sing earth in verdant robes arrayed,
Its herbs and flowers, its fruit and shade;
Peopled with life of various forms,
Fishes and fowl, and beasts and worms.

1 View the broad sea's majestic plains
And think how wide its Maker reigns!
That band remotest nations joins,
And on each wave his goodness shines.

5 But O! that brighter world above,
Where lives and reigns incarnate love!
God's only Son in flesh arrayed,
For man a bleeding victim† made.

6 Thither, my soul, with rapture soar;
There in the land of praise adore;
This theme demands an angel's lay,
Demands an undeclining day.

HYMN LVII.

The holy soul returning to its rest in a grateful sense of divine bounties. Psalm cxvi. 7.

1 RETURN, my soul, and seek thy rest
Upon thy heavenly Father's breast:
Indulge me, Lord, in that repose
The soul which loves thee only knows.

2 Lodged in thine arms, I fear no more
The tempest's howl, the billows' roar:
Those storms must shake the Almighty's seat,
Which violate the saint's retreat.

3 Thy bounties, Lord, to me surmount
The power of language to recount;
From morning dawn, the setting sun
Sees but my work of praise begun.

4 The mercies all my moments bring,
Ask an eternity to sing;
What thanks those mercies can suffice,
Which through eternity shall rise?

5 Rich in ten thousand gifts possessed,
In future hopes more richly blessed,
I'll sit and sing till death shall raise
A note of more proportioned praise.

HYMN LVIII.

Deliverance celebrated. Psalm cxvi. 8.

1 Look back, my soul, with grateful love
On what thy God has done
Praise him for his unnumbered gifts,
And praise him for his Son.

2 How oft hath his indulgent hand
My flowing eye-lids dried,
And rescued from impending death,
When I in danger cried!

3 When on the bed of death I lay,
With sickness sore oppressed,
How oft hath he assuaged my grief,
And lulled my eyes to rest!

* Destruction.

† Sacrifice.

4 Back from destruction's yawning pit
At his command I came.
He fed the expiring lamp anew,
And raised its feeble flame.

5 My broken spirit he hath cheered,
When torn with inward grief;
And when temptations pressed me sore
Hath brought me swift relief.

6 My soul from everlasting death
Is by his mercy brought,
To tell in Zion's sacred gates
The wonders he hath wrought.

7 Still will I walk before his face,
While he this life prolongs;
Till grace shall all its work complete,
And teach me heavenly songs.

HYMN LIX.

Deliverance celebrated, and good resolutions formed. Psalm cxvi. 8, 9.

1 Great source of life, our souls confess
The various riches of thy grace;
Crowned with thy mercy we rejoice,
And in thy praise exalt our voice.

2 By thee heaven's shining arch was spread;
By thee were earth's foundations laid,
And all the charms of men's abode
Proclaim the wise, the gracious God.

3 Thy tender hand restores our breath,
When trembling on the verge of death;
Gently it wipes away our tears,
And lengthens life to future years.

4 These lives are sacred to the Lord;
Kindled by him, by him restored;
And while our hours renew their race,
Still would we walk before his face.

5 So when by him our souls are led
Through unknown regions of the dead,
With joy triumphant shall they move
To seats of nobler life above.

HYMN LX.

Praise for recovery from sickness. Psalm cxviii. 18, 19.

1 Sovereign of life, I own thy hand
In every chastening stroke;
And while I smart beneath thy rod,
Thy presence I invoke.

2 To thee in my distress I cried,
And thou hast bowed thine ear;
Thy powerful word my life pronounced
And brought salvation near.

3 Unfold, ye gates of righteousness,
That, with the pious throng,
I may record my solemn vows,
And tune my grateful song.

4 Praise to the Lord, whose gentle hand
Renews our labouring breath:
Praise to the Lord, who makes his saints
Triumphant even in death.

5 My God, in thine appointed hour
Those heavenly gates display,
Where pain and sin, and fear and death,
For ever flee away.

6 There, while the nations of the blessed
With raptures bow around,
My anthems to delivering grace
In sweeter strains shall sound.

HYMN LXI.

Regard to Scripture pressed upon young persons that they may cleanse their way. Psalm cxix. 9.

1 Intelligent God, with pitying eye
The sons of men survey,
And see how youthful sinners sport
In a destructive way.

2 Ten thousand dangers lurk around
To bear them to the tomb;
Each in an hour may plunge them down,
Where hope can never come.

3 Reduce, O Lord, their wandering minds,
Amused with airy dreams,
That heavenly wisdom may dispel
Their visionary schemes.

4 With holy caution may they walk,
And be thy word their guide;
Till each, the desert safely passed,
On Zion's hill abide.

HYMN LXII.

Desires of being quickened by the word of God. Psalm cxix. 25.

1 With pity, Lord, thy servant view,
As in the dust I lie,
Nor while I raise my plaintive voice,
Disdain the broken cry.

2 Fain would I mount on eagle's wings,
And view thy lovely face;
But cumbrous burthens drag me down
From thine adored embrace.

3 Thy quickening energy diffuse
O'er all my inmost frame;
And animate these languid lips
To celebrate thy name.

4 Thy living word has wonders wrought
Those wonders here renew;
And pour fresh vigour through my soul,
While I its glories view.

5 From thee, great ever-flowing spring,
Let vital streams descend;
And cheer me to begin these songs,
Which death shall never end.

HYMN LXIII.

Human perfection no where to be found. Psalm cxix. 96.

1 Perfection! 'tis an empty name,
Nor can repay our cares;
And he that seeks it here below,
Must end the search with tears.

2 Great David, on his royal throne,
The beauteous, and the strong,
Rich in the spoils of conquered foes,
Amidst the applauding throng;

3 With all the mind's capacious powers,
Pursued the shade in vain;
Nor heard it his melodious voice,
Or harp's angelic strain.

4 From public to domestic scenes
The impatient monarch turns;
The friend, the husband, and the sire*
In sad succession mourns.

5 At length thy law, eternal God,
He through his tears descries,†
And wrapt amidst those sacred folds,
He finds the heavenly prize.

6 There will I seek perfection too,
Where David's God is known;
Nor envy, with this volume blest,
His treasures and his throne.

HYMN LXIV.

Beholding transgressions with grief. Psalm cxix. 136, 158.

1 Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise;
To torrents melt my streaming eyes;
And thou, my heart, with anguish feel
Those evils, which thou canst not heal.

2 See human nature sunk in shame;
See scandals poured on Jesus' name;
The Father wounded through the Son,
The world abused, the soul undone.

3 See the short course of vain delight
Closing in everlasting night;
In flames that no abatement know,
Though briny tears for ever flow.

4 My God, I feel the mournful scene,
My bowels yearn o'er dying men;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.

5 But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep, where most it loves;
Thy own all-saving arm employ,
And turn these drops of grief to joy.

HYMN LXV.

The wandering sheep recovered. Psal. cxix. 176

1 Lord, we have wandered from the way,
Like foolish sheep, we've gone astray;
Our pleasant pastures we have left,
And of their guard our souls bereft.;

2 Exposed to want, exposed to harm,
Far from our gentle Shepherd's arm:
Nor will these fatal wanderings cease,
Till thou reveal the paths of peace.

3 O seek thy thoughtless servants, Lord,
Nor let us quite forget thy word;
Our erring souls do thou restore,
And keep us, that we stray no more.

HYMN LXVI.

The weeping seed-time, and joyful harvest. Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6.

1 The darkened sky, how thick it lowers!
Troubled with storms, and big with showers.
No cheerful gleam of light appears,
But nature pours forth all her tears.

2 Yet let the sons of grace revive;
God bids the soul that seeks him live:
And from the gloomiest shade of night
Calls forth a morning of delight.

3 The seeds of ecstasy unknown,
Are in these watered furrows sown:
See the green blades, how thick they rise,
And with fresh verdure bless our eyes.

4 In secret foldings they contain
Unnumbered ears of golden grain;
And heaven shall pour its beams around,
Till the ripe harvest load the ground.

5 Then shall the trembling mourner come,
And find his sheaves, and bear them home:
The voice long broke with sighs shall sing,
Till heaven with hallelujahs ring.

HYMN LXVII.

Thanks to God for his ever-enduring goodness.
Psalm cxxxvi. 1.

For New-year's Day.

1 House of our God, with cheerful anthems ring,
While all our lips and hearts his graces sing

* Father. † Discerns.

The opening year his graces shall proclaim.
And all its days be vocal with his name.
The Lord is good, his mercy never ending:
His blessings in perpetual showers descending.

2 The heaven of heavens he with his bounty fills:
Ye seraphs bright on ever-blooming hills,
His honours sound: you to whom good alone,
Unmingled, ever-growing, has been known.
Through your immortal life, with love increasing,
Proclaim your Maker's goodness never ceasing.

3 Thou earth, enlightened by his rays divine,
Pregnant with grass, and corn, and oil, and wine,
Crowned with his goodness, let thy nations meet,
And lay their crowns at his paternal feet:
With grateful love that liberal hand confessing,
Which through each heart diffuseth every blessing.

4 Zion, enriched with his distinguished grace,
Blest with the rays of thine Emanuel's face,
Zion, Jehovah's portion, and delight,
Graven on his hands, and hourly in his sight,
In sacred strains exalt that grace excelling,
Which makes thy humble hill his chosen dwelling.

5 His mercy never ends: the dawn, the shade
Still see new bounties through new scenes displayed:
Succeeding ages bless this sure abode,
And children lean upon their fathers' God.
The deathless soul through its immense duration,
Drinks from this source immortal consolation.

6 Burst into praise, my soul; all nature join;
Angels and men in harmony combine:
While human years are measured by the sun,
And while eternity its course shall run,
His goodness, in perpetual showers descending,
Exalt in songs, and raptures never ending.

HYMN LXVIII.

God strengthening the souls of his praying people.
Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

1 My soul, review the trembling days,
In which my God I sought:
I cried aloud for aid divine,
And aid divine he brought.

2 Through all my weak and fainting heart
His secret strength he spread,
And clasped me in his arms of love,
And raised my drooping head.

3 He called himself my covenant God,
His promises he showed;
And wide displayed their solemn seal
In the great Surety's blood.

4 I heard his people shout around,
And joined their cheerful song;
And saw from far the shining seats
Which to his saints belong.

5 My God, what inward strength thou giv'st,
I to thy service vow;
And in thy strength would upward march,
Till at thy throne I bow.

HYMN LXIX.

Singing in the ways of God. Psalm cxxxviii. 5.

1 Now let our voices join
To form one pleasant song:
Ye pilgrims in Jehovah's ways,
With music pass along.

2 How straight the path appears!
How open, and how fair!
No lurking gins to entrap our feet;
No fierce destroyer there.

3 But flowers of paradise
In rich profusion spring;
The sun of glory gilds the path,
And dear companions sing.

4 See Salem's golden spires
In beauteous prospect rise;
And brighter crowns than mortals wear,
Which sparkle through the skies.

5 All honour to his name,
Who drew the shining trace,
To him, who leads the wanderers on,
And cheers them with his grace.

6 Reduce the nations, Lord,
Teach all their kings thy ways,
That earth's full choir the notes may swell,
And heaven resound the praise.

HYMN LXX.

The innumerable mercies of God thankfully acknowledged. Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.

1 In glad amazement, Lord, I stand,
Amidst the bounties of thy hand.
How numberless those bounties are!
How rich, how various, and how fair!

2 But oh! what poor returns I make!
What lifeless thanks I pay thee back!
Lord, I confess with humble shame,
My offerings scarce deserve the name.

3 Fain would my labouring heart devise
To bring some nobler sacrifice:
It sinks beneath the mighty load:
What shall I render to my God?

4 To him I consecrate my praise,
And vow the remnant of my days:
Yet what at best can I pretend
Worthy such gifts from such a friend?

5 In deep abasement, Lord, I see
My emptiness and poverty

Enrich my soul with grace divine,
And make it worthier to be thine.

6 Give me at length an angel's tongue,
That heaven may echo with my song:
The theme, too great for time, shall be
The joy of long eternity.

HYMN LXXI.

Praising God through the whole of our existence. Psalm cxlvi. 2.

1 God of my life, through all its days
My grateful powers shall sound thy praise;
The song shall wake with opening light,
And warble to the silent night.

2 When anxious cares would break my rest,
And griefs would tear my throbbing breast,
Thy tuneful praises raised on high,
Shall check the murmur and the sigh.

3 When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all its powers of language fail,
Joy through my swimming eyes shall break,
And mean the thanks I cannot speak.

4 But O, when that last conflict 's o'er,
And I am chained to flesh no more,
With what glad accents shall I rise,
To join the music of the skies!

5 Soon shall I learn the exalted strains,
Which echo o'er the heavenly plains;
And emulate, with joy unknown,
The glowing seraphs round thy throne.

6 The cheerful tribute will I give,
Long as a deathless soul can live;
A work so sweet, a theme so high,
Demands, and crowns eternity.

HYMN LXXII.

The meek beautified with salvation. Psal. cxlix. 4.

1 Ye humble souls, rejoice,
And cheerful triumphs sing;
Wake all your harmony of voice:
For Jesus is your King.

2 That meek and lowly Lord,
Whom here your souls have known,
Pledges the honour of his word
To avow you for his own.

3 He brings salvation near,
For which his blood was paid
How beauteous shall your souls appear
Thus sumptuously arrayed!

4 Sing, for the day is nigh,
When near your Leader's seat
The tallest sons of pride shall lie,
The footstool of your feet.

5 Salvation, Lord, is thine:
And all thy saints confess,
The royal robes, in which they shine,
Were wrought by sovereign grace.

HYMN LXXIII.

The reproofs of wisdom mingled with promises and threatenings, to reclaim wandering sinners. Prov. i. 23.

1 Hark! for 'tis Wisdom's voice
That breaks in gentle sound:
Listen, ye sons of earth and sin,
And gather all around.

2 What though she speak rebukes,
That pierce the soul with smart;
True love through all her chastenings runs,
By pain to mend the heart.

3 "Ye that have wandered long
In sin's destructive ways,
Turn, turn," the heavenly charmer cries,
"And seize the offered grace.

4 "I know your souls are weak,
And mortal efforts vain
To grapple with the prince of hell,
And break his cursed chain.

5 "But I 'll my Spirit pour
In torrents from above,
To arm you with superior strength,
And melt your hearts in love.

6 "Come, while these offers last,
Ye sinners, and be wise;
He lives who hears this friendly call,
But he that slights it, dies."

HYMN LXXIV.

The voice of Christ addressed to the children of men. Prov. viii. 4.

1 Now let the listening world around
In silent reverence hear;
While from on high the Saviour's voice
Thus strikes the attentive ear.

2 "To you, O sons of men, I call,
And from my lofty throne,
Reclined in gentle pity, bow
To bring salvation down.

3 "Ye thoughtless sinners, hear my voice
Attend my words and live;
My words conduct to solid joys,
And endless blessings give.

4 "Each faithful minister is sent
This message to proclaim:
In every various providence
The language is the same.

5 "And could the pale forgotten dead,
Though deep in dust they lie,
Arise in visionary crowds,
They 'd join the solemn cry.

6 "Forgetful mortals, yet be wise,
While o'er the grave ye stand;
Lest long-neglected love provoke
The vengeance of my hand.

7 "In glad submission bow ye down,
Nor steel that stubborn heart;
Till mine inexorable voice
Pronounce the word, Depart."

8 Blest Jesus, may thy Spirit breathe
On souls which else must die;
For, till thy grace reflect the sound,
Thy word in vain will cry.

HYMN LXXV.

The encouragement young persons have to seek and to love Christ. Prov. viii. 17.

1 Ye hearts, with youthful vigour warm,
In smiling crowds draw near,
And turn from every mortal charm,
A Saviour's voice to hear.

2 He, Lord of all the worlds on high,
Stoops to converse with you;
And lays his radiant glories by,
Your friendship to pursue.

3 "The soul, that longs to see my face,
Is sure my love to gain;
And those that early seek my grace,
Shall never seek in vain."

4 What object, Lord, my soul should move,
If once compared with thee?
What beauty should command my love,
Like what in Christ I see?

5 Away, ye false delusive toys,
Vain tempters of the mind!
'Tis here I fix my lasting choice,
And here true bliss I find.

HYMN LXXVI.

The house and feast of wisdom. Prov. ix. 1—6.

1 See the fair structure Wisdom rears,
Her messengers attend,
And charmed by her persuasive voice,
To her your footsteps bend.

2 "Hear me, ye simple ones, (she cries,)
That lured * by folly stray,
And languish to eternal death
In her detested way.

* Seduced.

3 "Enter my hospitable gate,
And all my banquet share;
For heavenly wine surrounds my board.
And angels' food is there.

4 "Freely of every dainty taste;
Taste, and for ever live;
And mingle with your joys the hopes
Of all a God can give.

5 "But if, seduced by Folly's arts,
Ye seek her poisonous food;
Know, that the dreadful moment hastes,
Which pays the feast with blood."

HYMN LXXVII.

The excellency of the righteous with regard to their temper. Prov. xii. 26. Part I.

1 How glorious, Lord, art thou!
How bright thy splendours shine!
Whose rays reflected gild thy saints
With ornaments divine.

2 With lowliness and love,
Wisdom and courage meet;
The grateful heart, the cheerful eye,
How reverend and how sweet!

3 In beauties such as these
Thy children now are drest;
But brighter habits shall they wear
In regions of the blest.

4 In nature's barren soil,
Who could such glories raise?
We own, O God, the work is thine,
And thine be all the praise.

HYMN LXXVIII.

The excellency of the righteous with regard to their relations, employments, pleasures, and hopes. Prov. xii. 26. Part II.

1 O Israel, thou art blest;
Who may with thee compare?
Thine excellences stand confessed;
How bright thy glories are!

2 O God of Israel, hear,
And make this bliss our own;
Make us the children of thy care,
The members of thy Son.

3 Thus honoured, thus employed,
By these great motives fired,
Be paradise on earth enjoyed,
And brighter hopes inspired.

4 Thy people, Lord, we love;
Their God our souls embrace;
So may we find in worlds above
Among thy saints a place.

HYMN LXXIX.

Walking with God; or being in his fear all the day long. Prov. xxiii. 17.

1 Thrice happy souls, who born from heaven,
While yet they sojourn here,
Thus all their days with God begin,
And spend them in his fear!

2 So may our eyes with holy zeal
Prevent the dawning day;
And turn the sacred pages* o'er,
And praise thy name, and pray.

3 'Midst hourly cares may love present
Its incense to thy throne;
And while the world our hands employs,
Our hearts be thine alone.

4 As sanctified to noblest ends
Be each refreshment sought;
And by each various providence
Some wise instruction brought.

5 When to laborious duties called,
Or by temptations tried,
We 'll seek the shelter of thy wings,
And in thy strength confide.

6 As different scenes of life arise,
Our grateful hearts would be
With thee, amidst the social band,
In solitude with thee.

7 At night we lean our weary heads
On thy paternal breast;
And safely folded in thine arms,
Resign our powers to rest.

8 In solid pure delights, like these,
Let all my days be past:
Nor shall I then impatient wish,
Nor shall I fear the last.

HYMN LXXX.

The obstinate sinner alarmed. Prov. xxix. 1

1 Now let the sons of Belial † hear
The thunders of the Lord:
Unfold their long rebellious ear,
And tremble at his word.

2 Now let the iron sinew bow,
And take his easy yoke;
Lest sudden vengeance lay it low
By one resistless stroke.

3 Though yet the great Physician wait,
And healing balm be found,
One hour may seal their endless fate,
And fix a deadly wound.

4 Swift may thy mercy, Lord, arise,
Ere justice stop their breath:
And lighten those deluded eyes,
That sleep the sleep of death.

HYMN LXXXI.

God's reasonable expectations from his vineyard. Isa. v. 1—7.

1 The vineyard of the Lord, how fair!
Planted by his peculiar care;
Behold its branches spread, and fill
The borders of his sacred hill.

2 His eye hath marked the chosen ground;
His mighty hand hath fenced it round;
His servants by his order wait,
To watch and aid its tender state.

3 But when the vintage he demands
For all the labour of their hands,
What clusters doth his vine produce?
The grapes are wild, and sour the juice.

4 Well might he tear its fence away,
And leave it to the beasts of prey,
Might give it to the wild again,
And charge his clouds to cease their rain.

5 But spare our land, our churches spare,
Thy vengeance long-provoked forbear;
Let the true vine its influence give,
And bid our withering branches live.

HYMN LXXXII.

Isaiah's obedience to the heavenly vision. Isa. vi. 8.

1 Our God ascends his lofty throne,
Arrayed in majesty unknown;
His lustre all the temple fills,
And spreads o'er all the ethereal ‡ hills.

2 The holy, holy, holy Lord,
By all the seraphim adored,
And while they stand beneath his seat,
They veil their faces and their feet.

3 And can a sinful worm endure
The presence of a God so pure!
Or these polluted lips proclaim
The honours of so grand a name!

4 O for thine altar's glowing coal
To touch my lips, to fire my soul,
To purge the sordid dross away,
And into crystal turn my clay!

5 Then, if a messenger thou ask,
A labourer for the hardest task;
Through all my weakness and my fear,
Love shall reply, "Thy servant 's here."

* The Holy Scriptures. † Disobedient, rebellious. ‡ Heavenly.

6 Nor should my willing soul complain,
Though all its efforts seemed in vain;
Its ample recompence shall be,
But to have wrought, my God, for thee.

HYMN LXXXIII.

The stupidity of Israel and of Britain lamented. Isa. vi. 9—12.

For a Fast day.

1 LORD, when thine Israel we survey,
We in their crimes discern our own;
And if thou turn our prayer away,
Our misery must, like theirs, be known.

2 To us thy prophets have been sent
With words of terror and of love;
But not the vengeance nor the grace
Ten thousand stubborn hearts will move.

3 Our eyes are blind, and deaf our ears;
Our hearts are hardened into stone;
As we would bar thy mercy out,
And leave a way for wrath alone.

4 Justly our God might give us up
To plague, and famine, and the sword;
Till towns and cities, rich and fair,
Lay desolate without a lord.

5 O'er bleeding wounds of slaughtered friends
Rivers of helpless grief might flow,
Till the fierce conqueror's haughty rage
Dragged us to chains and slaughter too.

6 But spare a nation long thy own,
And show new miracles of grace;
'Tis thine to heal the deaf and blind,
And wake the dead to life and praise.

HYMN LXXXIV.

Confederate nations defied by those who sanctify God. Isa. viii. 9—14.

For a Fast day.

1 GREAT God of hosts, attend our prayer,
And make the British isles thy care:
To thee we raise our suppliant cries,
When angry nations round us rise.

2 Fain would they tread our glory down,
And in the dust dethe our crown,
Deluge our houses with our blood,
And burn the temples of our God.

3 But 'midst the thunders of their rage,
We thy protection would engage:
O raise thy saving arm on high,
And bring renewed deliverance nigh.

4 May Britain, as one man, be led
To make the Lord her fear and dread;
Our souls no other fear shall know,
Though earth were leagued with hell below.

5 Give ear, ye countries from afar:
Ye proud associate nations hear;
While fixed on him, who rules the sky,
Our hearts your threatened war defy.

6 Ye people, gird yourselves in vain,
Your scattered force unite again;
Again shall all that force be broke,
When God with us shall deal the stroke.

7 Now he records our humble tears,
With ardent vows for future years,
And destines for approaching days
Victorious shouts, and songs of praise.

8 Emanuel's land shall safe remain,
Blest with its Saviour's gentle reign;
Till every hostile rumour cease
In the fair realms of perfect peace.

HYMN LXXXV.

Christ the steward of God's family. Isa. xxii. 22—24. *compared with* Rev. iii. 7.

1 WITH what delight I raise my eyes,
And view the courts where Jesus dwells!
Jesus, who reigns beyond the skies,
And here below his grace reveals.

2 Of David's royal house the key
Is borne by that majestic hand;
Mansions and treasures there I see,
Subjected all to his command.

3 He shuts, and worlds might strive in vain
The mighty obstacle to move;
He looses all their bars again,
And who shall shut the gates of love!

4 Fixed in omnipotence he bears
The glories of his Father's name,
Sustains his people's weighty cares,
Through every changing age the same.

5 My little all I there suspend,
Where the whole weight of heaven is hung:
Secure I rest on such a Friend,
And into rapture wake my tongue.

HYMN LXXXVI.

The rich provision and happy effects of the Gospel. Isa. xxv. 6—9.

1 BEHOLD our God, he owns his name;
Jehovah all our songs proclaim
With shouts of wonder and of joy:
Long have we waited for his grace,
No longer now his love delays
For Zion his own arm to employ

2 We charge our souls the joy to feel;
We charge our tongues his praise to tell:
The Almighty Saviour! This is he!
He pours his streams of grace abroad,
Till all the earth confess the God,
And lands remote his glory see.

3 Dainties how rich his stores afford!
How pure the wine that crowns his board!
While welcome nations flock around;
He takes the veil of grief away;
Through thickest shades he darts the day,
And not one weeping eye is found.

4 All-conquering death, no longer boast
O'er millions humbled in the dust;
Our God with scorn thy triumph sees:
Soon as he aims one shaft * at thee,
Swallowed and lost in victory,
Thine empire and thy name shall cease.

HYMN LXXXVII.

The peaceful state of the soul that trusteth in God. Isa. xxvi. 3.

1 Weary, and weak, and faint,
I cast mine eyes around;
My joints all tremble, and my feet
Sink deep in miry ground.

2 Despairing help below,
To heaven I raise my cries;
God hears, and his almighty arm
Out-stretches from the skies.

3 I on that arm repose,
And all my fears are o'er;
New strength diffused through all my soul
Attests its vital power.

4 My mind in perfect peace
Thy guardian care shall keep:
I'll yield to gentle slumbers now,
For thou canst never sleep.

5 Happy the souls alone
On thee securely stayed!
Nor shall they be in life alarmed,
Nor be in death dismayed.

HYMN LXXXVIII.

Israel's obstinacy under God's lifted hand. Isa. xxvi. 11.

1 Lord, when thy hand is lifted up,
The wicked will not see;
But they shall see with glowing shame,
Though they obdurate be.

2 How few the weighty stroke regard,
And seek their Maker's face!
In vain may providence correct,
If not enforced by grace.

3 Exert thy mighty influence, Lord,
And melt the stony breast;
Then shall thy justice be adored,
Thy mercy stand confessed.

4 The scorner then shall mourn in dust,
And put his sins away,
No more resist his Maker's hands,
But lift his own to pray.

HYMN LXXXIX.

God quickening the dead. Isa. xxvi. 19.

1 The ever-living God
The expiring church shall raise;
Our hearts his promises receive,
And wake a shout of praise.

2 Death shall not always reign,
Where grace hath fixed his throne;
His soft compassion views the dust
He once hath called his own.

3 "Yes," saith the God of truth,
"My dead shall live again;
The foe shall see their Leader's breath
Reanimate the slain.

4 "The dew of heaven shall fall
In rich abundance round,
And a redundant harvest rise
To clothe the teeming ground.

5 "Now from your dust awake,
And burst into a song;
Then spurn the earth, and mount the skies
In a triumphant throng."

6 Thy Zion, Lord, believes
A promise so divine,
And looks through all her flowing tears
To see the glory shine.

HYMN XC.

The godly man's ark. Isa. xxvi. 20.

1 It is my Father's voice,
And O how sweet the sound!
It makes my inmost powers rejoice,
My trembling heart rebound.

2 "Mark, the black tempest lowers,
And gathers round the sky;
Retire, and shun the sweeping showers
Of indignation nigh.

3 "Come, my dear children, come,
And seek your Father's arms;
There is your shelter, there your home
'Midst all these dire alarms.

4 "Enter at his command;
Close in your ark remain,

* Arrow.

And wait the signal of his hand
To call you forth again.

5 "The moments to beguile,
A cheerful song begin;
Nor let the roaring thunders spoil
The harmony within.

6 "Ere long the sky shall clear,
The clouds be chased away,
And grace shall shine in radiance fair
Through an eternal day."

HYMN XCI.

Laying hold on God's strength, that we may be at peace with him. Isa. xxvii. 5.

1 Thus saith Jehovah, from his seat,
"Who shall presume my wrath to meet?
What rebel men or angels dare
To wage with me unequal war?

2 "Close let the thorns and briers stand,
In thick array on either hand;
Forth shall my flaming terrors fly;
At once they kindle, blaze, and die.

3 "Presumptuous sinners, yet be wise
Ere this o'erwhelming ruin rise;
Your vain tumultuous efforts cease,
And seek in suppliant crowds for peace."

4 Great God, we bless the gentle sound
And bow submissive to the ground,
Thy prostrate foes let pity raise,
And form a people to thy praise.

5 His thundering storms are silent now;
Calm are the terrors of his brow,
Since Jesus makes the Father known,
Our guardian shield, our cheering sun.

HYMN XCII.

The divine goodness in moderating afflictions. Isa. xxvii. 8.

1 Great Ruler of all nature's frame,
We own thy power divine:
We hear thy breath in every storm,
For all the winds are thine.

2 Wide as they sweep their sounding way,
They work thy sovereign will;
And awed by thy majestic voice,
Confusion shall be still.

3 Thy mercy tempers* every blast
To them that seek thy face;
And mingles with the tempest's roar
The whispers of thy grace.

* Moderates.

4 Those gentle whispers let me hear,
Till all the tumult cease;
And gales of paradise shall lull
My weary soul to peace.

HYMN XCIII.

God waiting to be gracious. Isa. xxx. 18.

1 Wait on the Lord, ye heirs of hope,
And let his word support your soul:
Well can he bear your courage up,
And all your foes and fears control.

2 He waits his own well-chosen hour
The intended mercy to display;
And his paternal bowels move,
While wisdom dictates the delay.

3 With mingled majesty and love
At length he rises from his throne;
And while salvation he commands,
He makes his people's joy his own.

4 Blest are the humble souls that wait,
With sweet submission to his will;
Harmonious all their passions move,
And in the midst of storms are still.

5 Still, till their Father's well-known voice
Wakens their silence into songs;
Then earth grows vocal with his praise,
And heaven the grateful shout prolongs.

HYMN XCIV.

The different views of good and bad men, in times of public danger. Isa. xxxiii. 14–17.

1 See, the destruction is begun,
And heaps of ruin spread the ground;
With hasty strides it marches on,
And scatters consternation round.

2 Sinners in Zion take the alarm,
The hypocrites astonished cry,
Who with devouring flames can dwell?
Who in eternal burnings lie?

3 God's gracious voice the saints revives;
How sweet the heavenly accents sound!
"Dwell thou on high, my child, (he says,)
Where rocks shall guard thee all around.

4 "There shall my hand thy wants supply,
Thy water and thy bread are sure;
There shall my visits make thee glad,
While these alarming scenes endure.

5 "Then, led in joyous triumph forth,
Thine eyes the distant land shall view,
Shall see thy King in beauty drest,
And share his royal honours too."

6 My soul the oracle receives,
And feels its energy to cheer;

A promised heaven, a present God,
Forbids my grief, forbids my fear.

HYMN XCV.

God the defence of his people from invading enemies. Isa. xxxiii. 21–23.

1 The glorious Lord! his Israel's hope!
How well he bears their courage up!
How wide his saving power extends!
His princely titles will we sing,
Our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King,
He guards his subjects as his friends.

2 Around the mountain where they dwell,
Lo, at his word new waters swell
To deluge the invading foe!
Opened by him that rules the skies,
Mark the broad rivers how they rise,
And with what rapid strength they flow!

3 To gain the well-defended shores
In vain the galley spreads its oars,
And the proud ship her sails displays:
The sails are rent, the masts are broke,
The shattered oars all drop their stroke,
And lightnings through the tacklings blaze.

4 Shout your Hosaunahs to the Lord:
Thus shall he still his Zion guard,
Till the last foe be trampled down:
High as the heavens exalt his praise:
High as the heavens his hand shall raise
The soul that here his grace hath known.

HYMN XCVI.

The high way to Zion. Isa. xxxv. 8–10.

1 Sing, ye redeemed of the Lord,
Your great Deliverer sing:
Pilgrims for Zion's city bound,
Be joyful in your King.

2 See the fair way his hand hath raised;
How holy, and how plain!
Nor shall the simplest travellers err,
Nor ask the track in vain.

3 No ravening lion shall destroy,
Nor lurking serpent wound;
Pleasure and safety, peace and praise,
Through all the path are found.

4 A hand divine shall lead you on
Through all the blissful road:
Till to the sacred mount you rise,
And see your smiling God.

5 There garlands of immortal joy
Shall bloom on every head;
While sorrow, sighing, and distress,
Like shadows all are fled.

6 March on in your Redeemer's strength;
Pursue his footsteps still;
And let the prospect cheer your eye,
While labouring up the hill.

HYMN XCVII.

The greatness and majesty of God, and the meanness of the creatures. Isa. xl. 15–17.

1 Ye weak inhabitants of clay,
Ye trifling insects of a day,
Low in your native dust bow down
Before the Eternal's awful throne.

2 With trembling heart, with solemn eye,
Behold Jehovah seated high;
And search, what worthy sacrifice
Your hands can give, your thoughts devise.

3 Let Lebanon her cedars bring,
To blaze before the sovereign King;
And all the beasts that on it feed,
As victims at his altar bleed.

4 Loud let ten thousand trumpets sound,
And call remotest nations round,
Assembled on the crowded plains,
Princes and people, kings and swains.

5 Joined with the living, let the dead
Rising the face of earth o'erspread;
And while his praise unites their tongues,
Let angels echo back the songs.

6 The drop that from the bucket falls,
The dust that hangs upon the scales,
Is more to sky, and earth, and sea,
Than all this pomp, O God, to thee.

HYMN XCVIII.

The timorous saint encouraged by the assurance of the divine presence and help. Isa. xli. 10.

1 And art thou with us, gracious Lord,
To dissipate our fear?
Dost thou proclaim thyself our God,
Our God for ever near?

2 Doth thy right hand, which formed the earth,
And bears up all the skies,
Stretch from on high its friendly aid,
When dangers round us rise?

3 Dost thou a father's bowels feel
For all thy humble saints;
And in such tender accents speak
To soothe their sad complaints?

4 On this support my soul shall lean,
And banish every care;
The gloomy vale of death must smile,
If God be with me there.

7 While I his gracious succour prove
'Midst all my various ways,
The darkest shades through which I pass
Shall echo with his praise.

HYMN XCIX.

The humiliation and exaltation of God's Israel Isa. xli. 14, 15.

1 Amazing grace of God on high!
And will the Lord look down
On sinners, while in dust they lie,
And dread his awful frown?

2 Weaker than worms, O Lord, are we,
And viler far than they;
Yet in these reptiles,* weak and vile,
Dost thou thy power display.

3 Jehovah's sovereign voice is heard,
The worm lifts up its head,
And mountains, that would crush it down,
Before the worm are fled.

4 Thou Holy One, thine Israel's King,
Thou our Redeemer art;
Nor shall the blessings of thy hand
From thy redeemed depart.

5 Thy love shall its own work fulfil,
And grace shall rise on grace,
Till worms of earth around thy throne
With angels find a place.

HYMN C.

The wilderness transformed, or the effects of the gospel. Isa. xli. 18, 19. *compared with* xxxv. 1, 2; ix. 6—9; lv. 13, &c.

1 Amazing, beauteous change!
A world created new!
My thoughts with transport range
The lovely scene to view;
In all I trace,
Saviour divine,
The work is thine,
Be thine the praise.

2 See crystal fountains play
Amidst the burning sands;
The river's winding way
Shines through the thirsty lands;
New grass is seen,
And o'er the meads
Its carpet spreads
Of living green.

3 Where pointed brambles grew
Entwined with horrid thorn,
Gay flowers for ever new
The painted fields adorn;
The blushing rose,
And lily there,
In union fair
Their sweets disclose.

4 Where the bleak mountain stood,
All bare and disarrayed,
See the wide-branching wood
Diffuse its grateful shade;
Tall cedars nod,
And oaks and pines,
And elms and vines,
Confess the God.

5 The tyrants of the plain
Their savage chase give o'er:
No more they rend the slain,
And thirst for blood no more:
But infant hands
Fierce tigers stroke,
And lions yoke
In flowery bands.

6 O when, Almighty Lord,
Shall these glad scenes arise;
To verify thy word,
And bless our wondering eyes!
That earth may raise,
With all its tongues,
United songs
Of ardent praise.

HYMN CI.

The blind and weak led and supported in God's way Isa. xlii. 16.

1 Praise to the radiant source of bliss,
Who gives the blind their sight,
And scatters round their wondering eyes
A flood of sacred light.

2 In paths unknown he leads them on
To his divine abode,
And shows new miracles of grace
Through all the heavenly road.

3 The ways all rugged and perplexed
He renders smooth and straight,
And strengthens every feeble knee
To march to Zion's gate.

4 Through all the path I 'll sing his name,
Till I the mount ascend,
Where toils and storms are known no more
And anthems never end.

HYMN CII.

God calling his Israel by name, and leading them through water and fire. Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

1 Let Jacob to his Maker sing,
And praise his great redeeming King

* Creeping things.

Called by a new, a gracious name,
Let Israel loud his God proclaim.

2 He knows our souls in all their tears,
And gently wipes our falling tears,
Forms trembling voices to a song,
And bids the feeble heart be strong.

3 Then let the rivers swell around,
And rising floods o'erflow the ground;
Rivers and floods and seas divide,
And homage pay to Israel's guide.

4 Then let the fires their rage display,
And flaming terrors bar the way;
Unburnt, unsinged, he leads them through,
And makes the flames refreshing too.

5 The fires but on their bonds shall prey,*
The floods but wash their stains away,
And grace divine new trophies† raise
Amidst the deluge and the blaze.

HYMN CIII.

The riches of pardoning grace celebrated. Isa. xliv. 22, 32.

1 Let heaven burst forth into a song;
Let earth reflect the joyful sound;
Ye mountains, with the echo ring,
And shout, ye forests, all around.

2 The Lord his Israel hath redeemed,
Hath made his mourning people glad,
And the rich glories of his name
In their salvation hath displayed.

3 Unnumbered sins like sable clouds,
Veiled every cheerful ray of joy,
And thunders murmured through the gloom,
While lightnings pointed to destroy.

4 He spoke, and all the clouds dispersed,
And heaven unveiled its shining face;
The whole creation smiled anew,
Decked in the golden beams of grace.

5 Israel, return with humble love,
Return to thy Redeemer's breast,
And charmed by his melodious voice,
Compose thy weary powers to rest.

HYMN CIV.

The little success which attended the personal ministry of Christ. Isa. xlix. 4.

1 And doth the Son of God complain,
"Lo, I have spent my strength in vain,
And stretched my hands whole days and years
To those who slight my words and tears!"

2 O stubborn hearts, that could withstand
Such efforts from a Saviour's hand!
O gracious Saviour, who wouldst bleed,
When words and tears could not succeed!

3 Fall down, my soul, in humble woe,
That thou hast wronged his goodness so;
Now let his grace resistless move
To melt the stubborn flint to love.

4 All-glorious Lord, march forth and reign,
And reap the fruit of all thy pain;
And, till a nobler scene appear,
Begin the happy conquest here.

HYMN CV.

God's captives released; applied to spiritual deliverances. Isa. li. 14, 15.

1 Captives of Israel, hear,
Who now as exiles‡ mourn,
See your Almighty God appear
To hasten your return.

2 Jehovah is his name,
Lord of celestial hosts;
Let heaven that saving power proclaim
In which his Israel trusts.

3 Though helpless now ye lie,
As in a dungeon thrown,
When parched with painful thirst ye cry,
And when your bread is gone.

4 Deliverance comes apace;
Ye shall not there expire;
Prepare to sing redeeming grace
With his triumphant choir.

5 He smote the raging sea,
Midst its tumultuous roar,
And paved his chosen troops a way
Safe to its distant shore.

6 In him let Israel hope,
At whose supreme command
Graves yield their breathless captives up,
And seas become dry land

HYMN CVI.

The cup of fury exchanged for the cup of blessing. Isa. li. 22.

1 The Lord, our Lord, how rich his grace!
What stores of sovereign love
For humble souls, that seek his face,
And to his footstool move!

2 He pleads the cause of all his saints
When foes against them rise;
He listens to their sad complaints,
And wipes their streaming eyes.

* Allusion to the story in Dan. iii. 19, &c. † Monuments of [illegible]

‡ Babylonish captives

3 He takes away that dreadful cup
Of fury and of plagues,
Which justice sentenced them to drink,
And wring the bitter dregs.

4 He gave it to their Saviour's hand,
And filled it to the brim;
Their Saviour drank the liquid death,
That they might live by him.

5 "Now take the cup of life, (he cries,)
Where heavenly blessings flow:
Drink deep, nor fear to drain the spring,
To which the draught ye owe."

6 We drink, and feel our life renewed,
And all our woes forget:
We drink, till that transporting hour,
When we our Lord shall meet.

HYMN CVII.

The holy city purified and guarded. Isa. liii. 1, 2.

1 Triumphant Zion, lift thy head
From dust, and darkness, and the dead:
Though humbled long, awake at length,
And gird thee with thy Saviour's strength.

2 Put all thy beauteous garments on,
And let thy various charms be known;
The world thy glories shall confess,
Decked in the robes of righteousness.

3 No more shall foes unclean invade,
And fill thy hallowed walls with dread;
No more shall hell's insulting host
Their victory and thy sorrows boast.

4 God from on high thy groans will hear,
His hand thy ruins shall repair;
Reared and adorned by love divine,
Thy towers and battlements shall shine.

5 Grace shall dispose my heart and voice
To share, and echo back her joys;
Nor will her watchful Monarch cease
To guard her in eternal peace.

HYMN CVIII.

God's government, Zion's joy. Isa. lii. 7

1 Ye subjects of the Lord, proclaim
The royal honours of his name:
Jehovah reigns, be all our song.
'Tis he, thy God, O Zion reigns,
Prepare thy most harmonious strains
Glad hallelujahs to prolong.

2 Ye princes, boast no more your crowns,
But lay the glittering trifles down
In lowly honour at his feet;
A span your narrow empire bounds,
He reigns beyond created rounds,
In self-sufficient glory great.

3 Tremble, ye pageants of a day,
Formed like your slaves of brittle clay,
Down to the dust your sceptres bend:
To everlasting years he reigns,
And undiminished pomp maintains,
When kings, and suns, and time shall end.

4 So shall his favoured Zion live:
In vain confederate nations strive
Her sacred turrets to destroy;
Her Sovereign sits enthroned above,
And endless power, and endless love,
Ensure her safety, and her joy.

HYMN CIX.

Divine mercies and judgment compared. Is. liv.

1 In thy rebukes, all-gracious God,
What soft compassion reigns!
What gentle accents of thy voice
Assuage thy children's pains!

2 "When I correct my chosen sons,
A father's bowels move:
One transient moment bounds my wrath,
But endless is my love."

3 Our faith shall look through every tear,
And view thy smiling face,
And hope amidst our sighs shall tune
An anthem to thy grace.

4 Gather at length my weary soul
To join thy saints above,
For I would learn a song of praise
Eternal as thy love.

HYMN CX.

Divine teachings, and their happy consequences. Isa. liv. 13.

1 Bright source of intellectual rays,
Father of spirits, and of grace,
O dart with energy unknown
Celestial beamings from thy throne.

2 Thy sacred book we would survey,
Enlightened with that heavenly day,
And ask thy Spirit, with the word,
To teach our souls to know the Lord.

3 So shall our children learn the road,
That leads them to their fathers' God;
And, formed by lessons so divine,
Shall infant minds with knowledge shine.

4 So shall the haughtiest soul submit,
With children placed at Jesus' feet:
The noisy swell of pride shall cease,
And thy sweet voice be heard in peace.

HYMN CXI.

Fruitful showers, emblems of the salutary effects of the gospel. Isa. lv. 10–12.

1 Mark the soft-falling snow,
And the diffusive rain:
To heaven from whence it fell,
It turns not back again;
But waters earth
Through every pore,
And calls forth all
Its secret store.

2 Arrayed in beauteous green
The hills and valleys shine,
And man and beast is fed
By Providence divine;
The harvest bows
Its golden ears,
The copious seed
Of future years.

3 "So," saith the God of grace,
"My gospel shall descend
Almighty to effect
The purpose I intend;
Millions of souls
Shall feel its power,
And bear it down
To millions more.

4 "Joy shall begin your march,
And peace protect your ways,
While all the mountains round
Echo melodious praise:
The vocal groves
Shall sing the God,
And every tree
Consenting nod."

HYMN CXII.

Comfort for pious parents, who have been bereaved of their children. Isa. lvi. 4, 5.

1 Ye mourning saints, whose streaming tears
Flow o'er your children dead,
Say not, in transports of despair,
That all your hopes are fled.

2 While cleaving to that darling dust,
In fond distress ye lie,
Rise, and with joy and reverence view
A heavenly Parent nigh.

3 Though, your young branches torn away,
Like withered trunks ye stand,
With fairer verdure shall ye bloom,
Touched by the Almighty's hand.

4 "I 'll give the mourner," saith the Lord,
"In my own house a place
No names of daughters and of sons
Could yield so high a grace.

5 "Transient and vain is every hope
A rising race can give;
In endless honour and delight
My children all shall live."

6 We welcome, Lord, those rising tears,
Through which thy face we see,
And bless those wounds, which through our hearts
Prepare a way for thee.

HYMN CXIII.

The stranger entertained in God's house of prayer. Isa. lvi. 6. 7. *compared with* Matt. xxi. 13. *and* Eph. ii. 19.

1 Great Father of mankind,
We bless that wondrous grace,
Which could for Gentiles find
Within thy courts a place.
How kind the care
Our God displays,
For us to raise
A house of prayer!

2 Though once estranged far,
We now approach the throne;
For Jesus brings us near,
And makes our cause his own:
Strangers no more,
To thee we come,
And find our home,
And rest secure.

3 To thee our souls we join
And love thy sacred name;
No more our own, but thine,
We triumph in thy claim:
Our Father-king,
Thy covenant grace
Our souls embrace,
Thy titles sing.

4 Here in thy house we feast
On dainties all divine:
And, while such sweets we taste,
With joy our faces shine.
Incense shall rise
From flames of love,
And God approve
The sacrifice.

5 May all the nations throng
To worship in thy house;
And thou attend the song,
And smile upon their vows:
Indulgent still,
Till earth conspire
To join the choir
On Zion's hill.

HYMN CXIV.

Peace proclaimed, and the fruit of the lips created, by a gracious God. Isa. lvii. 19.

1 Hark! for the great Creator speaks:
In silence let the earth attend;
And, when his words of grace are heard,
In grateful adoration bend.

2 "'Tis I create the fruit of praise,
And give the broken heart to sing;
Peace, heavenly peace, my lips proclaim,
Pleased with the happy news they bring."

3 Receive the tidings with delight,
Ye Gentile nations from afar;
And you, the children of his love,
Whom grace hath brought already near.

4 To these, to those, his sovereign hand
Its healing energy imparts:
Peace, peace, be echoed from your tongues,
And echoed from consenting hearts.

5 Enjoy the health which God hath wrought:
Nor let the daily tribute cease,
Till changed for more exalted songs
In regions of eternal peace.

HYMN CXV.

The duty of remonstrating against sin, when judgments are threatened. Isa. lviii. 1.

1 Thy judgments cry aloud,
O ever-righteous God,
And in the sight of all our land
Thou liftest up thy rod.

2 Aloud thy servants cry,
Commissioned from thy throne,
And like a trumpet raise their voice
To make thy judgments known.

3 But who that cry attends,
And makes his safety sure?
Rocked by the tempest they should flee,
They sleep the more secure.

4 Another trumpet, Lord,
The stupid slumberers need;
Nor will they hear a feebler voice
Than that which wakes the dead.

HYMN CXVI.

Unsuccessful fasts accounted for. Isa. lviii. 3. *compared with* 1–8.

For a Fast-day.

1 Oh! where is sovereign mercy gone?
Whither is Britain's God withdrawn?
That through long years she should complain,
She fasts, and mourns, and cries in vain!

2 Hast thou not seen her suppliant hands
Through all her coasts extend their hands?
Or has their oft-repeated prayer
Escaped thine ever-listening ear?

3 Thine ear hath heard, thine eye hath seen
But guilt hath spread a cloud between;
And rising still before thy face,
Averts thy long-entreated grace.

4 Dispel that cloud by rays divine,
And cause thy cheering face to shine;
Our isle shall shout from shore to shore,
And dread encroaching foes no more.

5 Our light shall like the morning spring;
Healing and joy our God shall bring;
Justice shall in our front appear,
And glory gather up our rear.

HYMN CXVII.

The standard of the Spirit lifted up. Isa. lix. 19.

1 God of the ocean, at whose voice
The threatening floods are heard no more,
Behold their madness and their noise,
And silence the tumultuous roar.

2 Her streams of poisonous error swell;
There rages vice in every form;
They join their tide, led on by hell,
And Zion trembles at the storm.

3 Almighty Spirit, raise thine arm,
And lift the Saviour's standard high;
Thy people's hearts with vigour warm,
And call thy chosen legions nigh.

4 Waked by thy well-known voice they come,
And round the sacred banner throng;
Zion prepare the Conqueror room,
While triumph bursts into a song.

5 "The Lord on high, when billows roar,
Superior majesty displays,
And, by one breath of sovereign power,
Hushes the noise of foaming seas."

HYMN CXVIII.

The glory of the church in the latter day. Isa. lx. 1.

1 O Zion, tune thy voice,
And raise thy hands on high;
Tell all the earth thy joys,
And boast salvation nigh.
Cheerful in God,
Arise and shine,
While rays divine
Stream all abroad.

2 He gilds thy mourning face
With beams that cannot fade;
His all-resplendent grace
He pours around thy head.

The nations round
Thy form shall view,
With lustre new
Divinely crowned.

3 In honour to his name
Reflect that sacred light;
And loud that grace proclaim,
Which makes thy darkness bright:
Pursue his praise,
Till sovereign love
In worlds above
The glory raise.

4 There on his holy hill
A brighter sun shall rise,
And with his radiance fill
Those fairer, purer skies;
While round his throne
Ten thousand stars
In nobler spheres*
His influence own.

HYMN CXIX.

God the everlasting light of the saints above. Isa. lx. 20.

1 Ye golden lamps of heaven,† farewell,
With all your feeble light:
Farewell, thou ever-changing moon,
Pale empress of the night.

2 And thou, refulgent orb of day,‡
In brighter flames arrayed,
My soul, that springs beyond thy sphere,
No more demands thine aid.

3 Ye stars are but the shining dust
Of my divine abode,
The pavement of those heavenly courts,
Where I shall reign with God.

4 The Father of eternal light
Shall there his beams display;
Nor shall one moment's darkness mix
With that unvaried day.

5 No more the drops of piercing grief
Shall swell into mine eyes;
Nor the meridian§ sun decline
Amidst those brighter skies.

6 There all the millions of his saints
Shall in one song unite,
And each the bliss of all shall view
With infinite delight.

HYMN CXX.

God entreated for Zion. Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

For a Fast-day, or a day of prayer for the revival of religion.

1 Indulgent Sovereign of the skies,
And wilt thou bow thy gracious ear!

* Orbs, or paths in which the stars move.
† The stars. ‡ The sun § Noon-day

While feeble mortals raise their cries,
Wilt thou, the great Jehovah, hear!

2 How shall thy servants give thee rest,
Till Zion's mouldering walls thou raise!
Till thy own power shall stand confessed,
And make Jerusalem a praise!

3 For this, a lowly suppliant crowd
Here in thy sacred temple wait:
For this, we lift our voices loud,
And call, and knock, at mercy's gate.

4 Look down, O God, with pitying eye,
And view the desolation round;
See what wide realms in darkness lie,
And hurl their idols to the ground.

5 Loud let the gospel trumpet blow,
And call the nations from afar;
Let all the isles their Saviour know,
And earth's remotest ends draw near.

6 Let Babylon's proud altars shake,
And light invade her darkest gloom;
The yoke of iron bondage break,
The yoke of Satan, and of Rome.

7 With gentle beams on Britain shine,
And bless her princes, and her priests;
And, by thine energy divine,
Let sacred love o'erflow their breasts.

8 Triumphant here let Jesus reign,
And on his vineyard sweetly smile;
While all the virtues of his train
Adorn our church, adorn our isle.

9 On all our souls let grace descend,
Like heavenly dew, in copious showers,
That we may call our God our friend,
That we may hail salvation ours.

10 Then shall each age and rank agree
United shouts of joy to raise:
And Zion, made a praise by thee,
To thee shall render back the praise.

HYMN CXXI.

A nation born in a day; or the rapid progress of the Gospel desired. Isa. lxvi. 8.

1 Behold with pleasing ecstasy
The gospel standard lifted high,
That all the nations from afar
May in the great salvation share.

2 Why then, Almighty Saviour, why
Do wretched souls in millions die!
While wide the infernal tyrant reigns
O'er spacious realms in ponderous‖ chains.

3 And shall he still go on to boast
Thy cross its energy hath lost!

‖ Heavy

And shall thy servants still complain,
Their labours and their tears are vain?

4 Awake, all-conquering arm, awake,
And hell's extensive empire shake;
Assert the honours of thy throne,
And call the ruined world thy own.

5 Thine all-successful power display;
Produce a nation in a day;
For at thy word this barren earth
Shall travail with a general birth.

6 Swift let thy quickening Spirit breathe
On these abodes of sin and death;
That breath shall bow ten thousand minds,
Like waving corn before the winds.

7 Scarce can our glowing hearts endure
A world, where thou art known no more;
Transform it, Lord, by conquering love;
Or bear us to the realms above.

HYMN CXXII.

Backsliding Israel invited to return to God.
Jer. iii. 12, 13.

1 Backsliding Israel, hear the voice
Of thy forgiving God,
Nor force such goodness to exert
The terrors of the rod.

2 Thus saith the Lord, "My mercy flows
An unexhausted stream,
And, after all its millions saved,
Its sway is still supreme.

3 "One moment's wrath with weighty crush
Might sink you quick to hell;
Yet mercy points the happy path,
Where life and glory dwell.

4 "Own but the follies thou hast done,
And mourn thy sins in dust,
And soon thy trembling heart shall learn
To hope, and love, and trust."

5 All-gracious God, thy voice we own;
And, prostrate at thy feet,
Our souls in humble silence wait
A pardon there to meet.

HYMN CXXIII.

The goodness of God acknowledged in giving pastors after his own heart. Jer. iii. 15.

At the Settlement of a Minister.

1 Shepherd of Israel, thou dost keep
With constant care thy humble sheep;
By thee elected pastors rise
To feed our souls, and bless our eyes.

2 To all thy churches such impart,
Modelled by thy own gracious heart;
Whose courage, watchfulness, and love
Men may attest, and God approve.

3 Fed by their active tender care,
Healthful may all thy sheep appear,
And, by their fair example led,
The way to Zion's pastures tread.

4 Here hast thou listened to our vows,
And scattered blessings on thy house.
Thy saints are succoured, and no more
As sheep without a guide deplore.

5 Completely heal each former stroke,
And bless the shepherd and the flock;
Confirm the hopes thy mercies raise,
And own this tribute of our praise.

HYMN CXXIV.

God's gracious methods of adopting love.
Jer. iii. 19.

1 Amazing plan of sovereign love!
And doth our God look down
On rebels whom his wrath might doom
To perish at his frown?

2 Doth he project a wondrous scheme
In such a way to save,
That justice, majesty, and grace,
May one joint triumph have?

3 One look the stubborn heart subdues
And at his feet they fall;
They own their Father with delight,
And he receives them all.

4 Numbered amongst his dearest sons,
The pleasant land they share;
On earth secured by power divine,
Till crowned with glory there.

5 Father, in thine embraces lodged,
Our heaven begun we feel,
And wait the hour, which thou shalt mark
Thy counsels to fulfil.

HYMN CXXV.

Creatures vain, and God the salvation of his people.
Jer. iii. 23.

1 How long shall dreams of creature bliss
Our flattering hopes employ,
And mock our fond deluded eyes
With visionary joy?*

2 Why from the mountains and the hills
Is our salvation sought,
While our eternal Rock 's forsook,
And Israel's God forgot?

3 The living spring neglected flows
Full in our daily view,

* The Author [illegible]

Yet we with anxious fruitless toil
Our broken cisterns hew.

4 These fatal errors, gracious God,
With gentle pity see:
To thee our roving eyes direct,
And fix our souls on thee.

HYMN CXXVI.

Invitation to return to the Lord, and put away abominations. Jer. iv. 1, 2.

1 It is the Lord of glory calls,
O let his Israel hear:
"Stop, ye revolters, in your course,
And hearken, and come near.

2 "What though in sin's delusive paths
Ye from your youth have strayed;
What though my messages of love
Have been with scorn repaid;

3 "At last return, and grace divine
Your wanderings shall forget,
If loyal zeal and love dethrone
Each idol from its seat.

4 "Return, and dwell secure on earth,
As in your Lord's embrace,
Till in the land of perfect joy
Ye find a nobler place."

5 Father of mercies, lo, we come,
Subdued by such a call;
O let the hand of grace divine
Reduce and bless us all!

6 So will we teach the world that love
Which we are made to see:
And wanderers shall with us return,
And bless themselves in thee.

HYMN CXXVII.

Misimproved privileges, and disappointed hopes Jer. viii. 20.

1 Alas, how fast our moments fly!
How short our months appear!
How swift through various seasons hastes
The still revolving year.

2 Seasons of grace, and days of hope,
While Jesus waiting stands,
And spreads the blessings of his love
With wide-extended hands.

3 But O how slow our stupid souls
These blessings to secure!
Blessings, which through eternal years
Unwithering shall endure.

4 Beneath the word of life we die;
We starve amidst our store
And what salvation should impart
Heightens our ruin more.

5 Pity this madness, God of love,
And make us truly wise:
So from the pregnant seeds of grace
Shall glorious harvests rise.

HYMN CXXVIII.

Glorying in God alone. Jer. ix. 23, 24.

1 The righteous Lord, supremely great,
Maintains his universal state:
O'er all the earth his power extends;
All heaven before his foot-stool bends.

2 Yet justice still with power presides,
And mercy all his empire guides;
Such works are pleasing in his sight,
And such the men of his delight.

3 No more, ye wise, your wisdom boast;
No more, ye strong, your valour trust:
Nor let the rich survey his store,
Elate* with heaps of shining ore.

4 Glory, my soul, in this alone,
That God, thy God, to thee is known,
That thou hast owned his sovereign sway,
That thou hast felt his cheering ray.

5 My wisdom, wealth, and power I find
In one Jehovah all combined!
On him I fix my roving eyes,
Till all my soul in rapture rise.

6 All else, which I my treasure call,
May in one fatal moment fall;
But what his happiness can move,
Whom God the blessed deigns† to love?

HYMN CXXIX.

Jeremiah's tears over the captive flock. Jer. xiii. 15–17.

1 Flow on, my tears, in rising streams,
Ye briny fountains, flow;
While haughty sinners steel their hearts,
Nor will Jehovah know.

2 The flock of God is captive led
In Satan's heavy chains;
Led to the borders of the pit,
Where endless horror reigns.

3 Look back, ye captives, and invoke
Jehovah's saving aid;
Give him the glory of his name,
Whose hand your nature made.

4 O turn, ere yet your erring feet
On death's dark mountain fall,
Cry, and your gentle Shepherd's ear
Will hearken to your call.

* Exult. † Condescends.

5 Then shall those hearts with pleasure spring
Which now in sorrow melt;
And deep repentance yield a joy
Proud guilt hath never felt.

6 Almighty grace, exert thy power,
And turn these slaves of sin;
And, when they bring thy tribute due,
Shall their own bliss begin.

HYMN CXXX.

Giving glory to God, before darkness comes upon us. Jer. xiii. 16

1 The swift declining day,
How fast its moments fly!
While evening's broad and gloomy shade
Gains on the western sky.

2 Ye mortals, mark its pace,
And use the hours of light;
And know, its Maker can command
An instantaneous night.

3 His word blots out the sun
In its meridian blaze;
And cuts from smiling vigorous youth
The remnant of its days.

4 On the dark mountain's brow
Your feet shall quickly slide;
And from its airy summit dash
Your momentary pride.

5 Give glory to the Lord,
Who rules the whirling sphere:
Submissive at his footstool bow,
And seek salvation there.

6 Then shall new lustre break
Through horror's darkest gloom,
And lead you to unchanging light
In a celestial home.

HYMN CXXXI.

The fatal consequences of forsaking the hope of Israel. Jer. xvii. 13, 14

1 Great object of thine Israel's hope,
Its Saviour, and its praise,
Attend, while we to thee devote
The remnant of our days.

2 How wretched they that leave the Lord
And from his word withdraw
That lose his gospel from their sight
And wander from his law!

3 O thou eternal spring of good,
Whence living waters flow,
Let not our thirsty erring souls
To broken cisterns go.

4 Like characters inscribed in dust
Are sinners borne away,
And all the treasures they can boast,
The portion of a day.

5 But, Lord, to thee my heart shall turn
To heal it, and to save;
The joys, that from thy favour flow,
Shall bloom beyond the grave.

HYMN CXXXII.

Christ the Lord our righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6

1 Saviour divine, we know thy name,
And in that name we trust;
Thou art the Lord our righteousness,
Thou art thine Israel's boast.

2 Guilty we plead before thy throne,
And low in dust we lie,
Till Jesus stretch his gracious arm
To bring the guilty nigh.

3 The sins of one most righteous day
Might plunge us in despair;
Yet all the crimes of numerous years
Shall our great Surety clear.

4 That spotless robe, which he hath wrought
Shall deck us all around;
Nor by the piercing eye of God
One blemish shall be found.

5 Pardon, and peace, and lively hope
To sinners now are given;
Israel and Judah soon shall change
Their wilderness for heaven.

6 With joy we taste that manna now,
Thy mercy scatters down!
We seal our humble vows to thee,
And wait the promised crown.

HYMN CXXXIII.

The efficacy of God's word. Jer. xxiii. 29

1 With reverend awe, tremendous Lord,
We hear the thunders of thy word;
The pride of Lebanon it breaks:
Swift the celestial fire descends,
The flinty rocks in pieces rends,
And earth to its deep centre shakes.

2 Arrayed in majesty divine,
Here sanctity and justice shine,
And horror strikes the rebel through;
While loud this awful voice makes known
The wonders which thy sword hath done,
And what thy vengeance yet shall do.

3 So spread the honours of thy name:
The terrors of a God proclaim;
Thick let the pointed arrows fly

Till sinners, humbled in the dust
Shall own the execution just,
And bless the hand by which they die.

4 Then clear the dark tempestuous day,
And radiant beams of love display;
Each prostrate soul let mercy raise:
So shall the bleeding captives feel,
Thy word, which gave the wound, can heal,
And change their groans to songs of praise.

HYMN CXXXIV.

The possibility of dying this year. Jeremiah xxviii. 16.

For New-year's Day.

1 God of my life, thy constant care
With blessings crowns each opening year;
This guilty life dost thou prolong,
And wake anew mine annual song.

2 How many precious souls are fled
To the vast regions of the dead,
Since from this day the changing sun
Through his last yearly period run!

3 We yet survive; but who can say,
Or through the year, or month, or day,
"I will retain this vital breath;
Thus far at least in league with death?"*

4 That breath is thine, eternal God;
'Tis thine to fix my soul's abode;
It holds its life from thee alone,
On earth, or in the world unknown.

5 To thee our spirits we resign,
Make them and own them still as thine;
So shall they smile, secure from fear,
Though death should blast the rising year.

6 Thy children, eager to be gone,
Bid time's impetuous tide roll on,
And land them on that blooming shore,
Where years and death are known no more.

HYMN CXXXV.

God's complacency in his thoughts of peace towards his people. Jer. xxix. 11.

1 Viler than dust, O Lord, are we;
And doth thine anger cease?
And doth thy gracious heart o'erflow
With purposes of peace?

2 And dost thou with delight reflect
On what thy grace shall do?
And with complacency of soul
Enjoy the distant view?

3 And can thy often injured love
So kind a message send,

* Isaiah xxxvi. 18.

Lest thou to all our lengthened woe
Wilt give the expected end?

4 Why droop our hearts? why flow our eyes
While such a voice we hear?
Why rise our sorrows and our fears,
While such a friend is near?

5 To all thy other favours add
A heart to trust thy word,
And death itself shall hear us sing,
While resting on the Lord.

HYMN CXXXVI.

The impudent rebellion of the Jewish refugees at Pathros. Jer. xliv. 16, 17, 28.

1 Whose words against the Lord are stout
Or who presume to say,
"That sovereign law which God proclaims,
I dare to disobey."

2 Ten thousand actions every where
The impious language speak:
Yet power omnipotent stands by,
Nor do its thunders break.

3 But oh! the dreadful day draws near,
When God's avenging hand
Shall show if feeble mortals' breath,
Or God's own word, shall stand.

4 My soul, with prostrate reverence fall
Before the voice divine;
And all those interest and thy powers
To its command resign.

5 Speak, mighty Lord, thy servant waits
The purport of thy will:
My heart with secret ardour glows
Its mandates † to fulfil.

6 Let the vain sons of Belial boast,
Their tongues and thoughts are free;
My noblest liberty I own,
When subject most to thee.

HYMN CXXXVII.

Asking the way to Zion, in order to join in covenant with God. Jer. l. 5.

1 Inquire, ye pilgrims, for the way
That leads to Zion's hill;
And thither set your steady face
With a determined will.

2 Invite the strangers all around
Your pious march to join;
And spread the sentiments you feel
Of faith and love divine.

3 Come, let us to his temple haste
And seek his favour there.

* [illegible]

Before his footstool humbly bow,
And pour out fervent prayer.

4 Come, let us join our souls to God
In everlasting bands,
And seize the blessings he bestows
With eager hearts and hands.

5 Come, let us seal without delay
The covenant of his grace;
Nor shall the years of distant life
Its memory efface.*

6 Thus may our rising offspring haste
To seek their fathers' God,
Nor e'er forsake the happy path
Their youthful feet have trod.

HYMN CXXXVIII.

Searching and trying our ways. Lam. iii. 40

1 Thy piercing eye, O God, surveys
The various windings of our ways;
Teach us their tendency to know,
And judge the paths in which we go.

2 How wild, how crooked have they been!
A maze of foolishness and sin!
With all the light we vainly boast,
Leaving our guide, our souls are lost.

3 Had not thy mercy been our aid,
So fatally our feet had strayed,
Stern justice had its prisoners led
Down to the chambers of the dead.

4 O turn us back to thee again,
Or we shall search our ways in vain;
Shine, and the path of life reveal,
And bear us on to Zion's hill.

5 Roll on, ye swift revolving years,
And end this round of sins and cares;
No more a wanderer would I roam,
But near my Father fix at home.

HYMN CXXXIX.

The breath of our nostrils taken in the pits of the enemy; applied to Christ. Lam. iv. 20

1 Blest Saviour, to my heart more dear
Than balmy gales of vital air;
Were thy soul-cheering presence gone,
What use of breath, unless to groan?

2 Thy Father's royal hand hath shed,
In rich profusion on thy head,
Ten thousand graces: thou alone
Canst share, and canst adorn his throne.

3 But see the sovereign Captive led,
Snared in the pit which traitors made,
Fettered with ignominious bands
And murdered by rebellious hands.

4 Ye saints, to your expiring King
Your tributary sorrows bring;
In loyal crowds assemble round,
And bathe in tears each precious wound.

5 But from the caverns of the grave
He springs omnipotent to save;
The captive King ascends and reigns,
And drags his conquered foes in chains.

6 Beneath his shade our souls shall live,
In all the rapture heaven can give;
Where Zion never shall deplore,
And heathens vex his church no more.

HYMN CXL.

Of lamenting national sins. Ezek. ix. 4—6.

For a Fast day.

1 O righteous God, thou judge supreme,
We tremble at thy dreadful name;
And all our crying guilt we own
In dust and tears before thy throne.

2 So manifold our crimes have been,
Such crimson tinctore dyes our sin,
That, could we all its horrors know,
Our streaming eyes with blood might flow.

3 Britain, the land thine arm hath saved,
That arm most impiously hath braved;†
Britain, the isle its God hath loved,
A rebel to that love hath proved.

4 Estranged from reverential awe,
We trample on thy sacred law:
And though such wonders grace had done,
Anew we crucify thy Son.

5 Justly might this polluted land
Prove all the vengeance of thy hand;
And, bathed in heaven,‡ thy sword might come
To drink our blood, and seal our doom.

6 Yet hast thou not a remnant here,
Whose souls are filled with pious fear?
O bring thy wonted mercy nigh,
While prostrate at thy feet they lie.

7 Behold their tears, attend their moan,
Nor turn away their secret groan:
With these we join our humble prayer,
Our nation shield, our country spare.

8 But if the sentence be decreed,
And our dear native land must bleed,
By thy sure mark may we be known,
And save in life or death thy own.

* Deut. xxvi. 17.

† Isaiah xxxvi. 7.

HYMN CXLI

The iniquity of sacrificing God's children: or, the evil of a bad or neglected education. Ezek. xvi 20, 21.*

1 Behold, O Israel's God,
From thine exalted throne,
And view the desolate abode,
Thou once hast called thy own.

2 The children of thy flock,
By early covenant thine,
See how they pour their bleeding souls
On every idol's shrine! †

3 To indolence and pride
What piteous victims made!
Crushed in their parents' fond embrace,
And by their care betrayed.

4 By pleasure's polished dart
What numbers here are slain!
What numbers there for slaughter bound
In Mammon's golden chain!

5 O let thine arm awake,
And dash the idols down:
O call the captives of their power
Thy treasure and thy crown.

6 Thee let the fathers own,
And thee the sons adore,
Joined to the Lord by solemn vows,
To be forgot no more.

HYMN CXLII.

The humility and submission of a penitent. Ezek. xvi. 63.

1 O injured Majesty of heaven
Look from thy holy throne,
While prostrate rebels own with grief
What treasons they have done.

2 Thy grace, when sin abounded most,
Reigns with superior sway;
And pardons, bought with Jesus' blood,
To rebels doth display.

3 While love its grateful anthems tunes,
Tears mingle with the song;
My heart with tender anguish bleeds,
That I such grace should wrong.

4 How shall I lift these guilty eyes
To mine offended Lord?
Or how, beneath his heaviest strokes,
Pronounce one murmuring word?

5 Remorse and shame my lips have sealed:
But O, my Father, speak!
And all the harmony of heaven
Shall through the silence break.

* Alluding to the cruel custom among some heathen nations of sacrificing their children to their gods, to which there is frequent allusion in Scripture.

† 420r

HYMN CXLIII.

God bringing his people into the covenant under the rod. Ezek. xx. 37.

1 How gracious and how wise
Is our chastising God!
And O! how rich the blessings are,
Which blossom from his rod!

2 He lifts it up on high
With pity in his heart,
That every stroke his children feel
May grace and peace impart.

3 Instructed thus they bow,
And own his sovereign sway;
They turn their erring footsteps back
To his forsaken way.

4 His covenant love they seek,
And seek the happy bands,
That closer still engage their hearts
To honour his commands.

5 Dear Father, we consent
To discipline divine;
And bless the pains, that make our souls
Still more completely thine.

HYMN CXLIV.

God's condescension in becoming the shepherd of men. Ezek. xxxiv. 31

1 And will the Majesty of heaven
Accept us for his sheep?
And with a shepherd's tender care
Such worthless creatures keep?

2 And will he spread his guardian arms
Round our defenceless head?
And cause us gently to lie down
In his refreshing shade?

3 And will he lead our weary souls
To that delightful scene,
Where rivers of salvation flow
Through pastures ever green?

4 What thanks can mortal man repay
For favours great as thine?
Or how can tongues of feeble clay
Proclaim such love divine?

5 Eternal God, how mean are we!
How richly gracious thou!
Our souls, o'erwhelmed with humble joy
In silent transports bow.

HYMN CXLV

Seeking to God for the communication of the Spirit. Ezek. xxxvi. 37

1 Hear, gracious Sovereign, from thy throne
And send thy various blessings down:

While by thine Israel thou art sought,
Attend the prayer thy word hath taught

2 Come, sacred Spirit, from above,
And fill the coldest heart with love;
Soften to flesh the rugged stone,
And let thy godlike power be known

3 Speak thou, and from the haughtiest eyes
Shall floods of pious sorrow rise.
While all their glowing souls are borne
To seek that grace which now they scorn.

4 O let a holy flock await,
Numerous around thy temple gate,
Each pressing on with zeal to be
A living sacrifice to thee.

5 In answer to our fervent cries,
Give us to see thy church arise;
Or, if that blessing seem too great,
Give us to mourn its low estate.

HYMN CXLVI

Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

1 Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye;
See Adam's race in ruin lie;
Sin spreads its trophies o'er the ground,
And scatters slaughtered heaps around.

2 And can these mouldering corpses live?
And can these perished bones revive?
That, mighty God, to thee is known;
That wondrous work is all thy own.

3 Thy ministers are sent in vain
To prophesy upon the slain;
In vain they call, in vain they cry,
Till thine almighty aid is nigh.

4 But if thy Spirit deign to breathe,
Life spreads through all the realms of death;
Dry bones obey thy powerful voice;
They move, they waken, they rejoice.

5 So when thy trumpet's awful sound
Shall shake the heavens, and rend the ground,
Dead saints shall from their tombs arise,
And spring to life beyond the skies.

HYMN CXLVII.

*The waters of the sanctuary healing the dead sea.** Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9.

1 Great source of being and of love,
Thou waterest all the worlds above
And all the joys we mortals know,
From thine exhaustless fountain flow

2 A sacred spring, at thy command,
From Zion's mount, in Canaan's land,
Beside thy temple, cleaves the ground,
And pours its limpid stream around.

3 The limpid stream with sudden force
Swells to a river in its course;
Through desert realms its windings play,
And scatter blessings all the way.

4 Close by its banks in order fair,
The blooming trees of life appear.
Their blossoms fragrant odours give,
And on their fruit the nations live.

5 To the dead sea the waters flow,
And carry healing as they go.
Its poisonous dregs their power confess,
And all its shores the fountain bless.

6 Flow, wondrous stream, with glory crowned,
Flow on to earth's remotest bound;
And bear us on thy gentle wave
To him, who all thy virtues gave.

* The sea, or lake, where Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. had stood, was now pastoral and picturesque, and ancient writers say that on its south bank

HYMN CXLVIII

Tekel, or, The sinner weighed in God's balances, and found wanting. Dan. v. 27.

1 Raise, thoughtless sinner, raise thine eye,
Behold God's balance lifted high:
There shall his justice be displayed,
And there thy hope and life be weighed.

2 See in one scale his perfect law;
Mark with what force its precepts draw
Wouldst thou the awful test sustain,
Thy works how light! thy thoughts how vain

3 Behold the hand of God appears,
To trace these dreadful characters;
"Tekel, thy soul is wanting found,
And wrath shall smite thee to the ground."

4 Let sudden fear thy nerves unbrace;
Let horror shake thy tottering knees;†
Through all thy thoughts let anguish roll,
And deep repentance melt thy soul.

5 One only hope may yet prevail!
Christ hath a weight to turn the scale:
Still doth the gospel publish peace,
And show a Saviour's righteousness.

6 Great God, exert thy power to save,
Deep on the heart these truths engrave
The ponderous load of guilt remove,
That trembling lips may sing thy love.

† Compare verse 6.

HYMN CXLIX.

The backslider recollecting himself in his affliction. Hosea ii. 6, 7.

1 The Lord, how kind are all his ways
When most they seem severe!

He frowns, and scourges, and rebukes,
That we may learn his fear.

2 With thorns he fences up our path,
And builds a wall around,
To guard us from the death, that lurks
In sin's forbidden ground.

3 When other lovers, sought in vain,
Our fond address despise,
He opens his indulgent arms
With pity in his eyes.

4 Return, ye wandering souls, return,
And seek his tender breast;
Call back the memory of the days
When there you found your rest.

5 Behold, O Lord, we fly to thee,
Though blushes veil our face,
Constrained our last retreat to seek
In thy much injured grace.

HYMN CL

The advantages of seeking the knowledge of God. Hosea vi. 3.

1 Shine forth, eternal source* of light,
And make thy glories known;
Fill our enlarged adoring sight
With lustre all thy own.

2 Vain are the charms, and faint the rays
The brightest creatures boast;
And all their grandeur and their praise
Is in thy presence lost.

3 To know the Author of our frame
Is our sublimest skill:
True science is to read thy name,
True life to obey thy will.

4 For this I long, for this I pray,
And following on pursue,
Till visions of eternal day
Fix and complete the view.

HYMN CLI

Inconstancy in religion. Hosea vi. 4.

1 Perpetual source of light and grace,
We hail thy sacred name
Through every year's revolving round
Thy goodness is the same.

2 On us, all worthless as we are,
Its wondrous mercy pours;
Sure as the heaven's established course,
And plenteous as the showers.

3 Inconstant service we repay,
And treacherous vows renew;
False as the morning's scattering cloud
And transient as the dew.

4 In flowing tears our guilt we mourn,
And loud implore thy grace,
To bear our feeble footsteps on
In all thy righteous ways.

5 Armed with this energy divine,
Our souls shall steadfast move,
And with increasing transports press
On to thy courts above.

6 So by thy power the morning sun
Pursues his radiant way,
Brightens each moment in his race,
And shines to perfect day.

HYMN CLII

Gratitude the spring of true religion. Hosea xi. 4.

1 My God, what silken cords are thine!
How soft, and yet how strong!
While power, and truth, and love combine
To draw our souls along.

2 Thou sawest us crushed beneath the yoke
Of Satan and of sin;
Thy hand the iron bondage broke
Our worthless hearts to win.

3 The guilt of twice ten thousand sins
One moment takes away,
And grace, when first the war begins,
Secures the crowning day.

4 Comfort through all this vale of tears
In rich profusion flows,
And glory of unnumbered years
Eternity bestows.

5 Drawn by such cords we onward move,
Till round thy throne we meet;
And captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Conqueror's feet.

HYMN CLIII

The relentings of God's heart over his backsliding people. Hosea xi. 7, 8, 9.

1 Ye sinners, on backsliding bent,
God's gracious call attend;
Shall not compassion so divine
Each stubborn spirit bend?

2 "How shall I give mine Israel up
To ruin and despair!
How pour down showers of flaming wrath,
And make a Sodom there!

3 "My bowels strong relentings feel,
My heart is pained within
I will not all my wrath exert,
Nor visit all their sin.

* Fountain, or origin?

4 "The mercy of a God restrains
The thunders of his hand:
Come, seek protection from that power,
Which you can ne'er withstand."

5 With trembling haste, O God, to thee
Let sinners wing their flight;
As doves, when birds of prey pursue,
Down on their windows light.

6 Father, we seek thy gracious arm,
All melted at thy voice:
O may thy heart, that feels our woes,
In our return rejoice.

HYMN CLIV.

God's controversy by fire, Amos iv. 11.

On occasion of a dreadful Fire.

1 Eternal God, our humbled souls
Before thy presence bow:
With all thy magazines of wrath,
How terrible art thou!

2 Fanned by thy breath, whole sheets of flame
Do like a deluge pour;
And all our confidence of wealth
Lies mouldered in an hour.

3 Led on by thee in horrid pomp,
Destruction rears its head;
And blackened walls, and smoking heaps,
Through all the street are spread.

4 Lord, in the dust we lay us down,
And mourn thy righteous ire;*
Yet bless the hand of guardian love,
That snatched us from the fire.

5 O that the hateful dregs of sin
Like dross had perished there,
That in fair lines our purged souls
Might thy bright image bear.

6 So shall we view with dauntless eyes
The last tremendous day,
When earth and seas, and stars and skies,
In flames shall melt away.

HYMN CLV.

Britain unreformed by remarkable deliverances.
Amos iv. 11.

For a Fast-day.

1 Yes, Britain seemed to ruin doomed,
Just like a burning brand;
Till snatched from hence surrounding flames
By God's indulgent hand.

2 "Once more (he says) I will suppress
The wrath, that sin would wake;
Once more my patience shall attend,
And call my Britain back."

3 But who this clemency reverses?
Or feels this melting grace?
Who stirs his languid spirit up
To seek thine awful face?

4 On days like these we pour our cries
And at thy feet we mourn;
Then rise to tempt thy wrath again,
And to our sins return.

5 Our nation far from God remains,
Far, as in distant years;
And the small remnant that is found,
A dying aspect wears.

6 Chastened and rescued thus in vain,
Thy righteous hand severe
Into the flames might hurl us back,
And quite consume us there.

7 So, by the light our burning gives,
Might neighbouring nations read,
How terrible thy judgments are,
And learn our guilt to dread.

8 Yet 'midst the cry of sins like ours,
Incline thy gracious ear;
And thy own children's feeble cry
With soft compassion hear.

9 O by the sacred Spirit's breath
Kindle a holy flame;
Refine the land thou mightst destroy,
And magnify thy name.

HYMN CLVI.

Preparing to meet God. Amos iv. 12, 13.

1 He comes, thy God, O Israel, comes;
Prepare thy God to meet:
Meet him in battle's force arrayed,
Or humbled at his feet.

2 He formed the mountains by his strength;
He makes the winds to blow;
And all the secret thoughts of man
Must his Creator know.

3 He shades the morning's opening rays:
He shakes the solid world;
And stars and angels from their seats
Are by his thunder hurled.

4 Eternal Sovereign of the skies,
And shall thine Israel dare
In mad rebellion to arise,
And tempt the unequal war?

5 Lo, nations tremble at thy frown,
And faint beneath thy rod;
Crushed by its gentle movement down,
They fall, tremendous God.

* Ange

6 Avert the terrors of thy wrath.
And let thy mercy shine;
While humble penitence and prayer
Approve us truly thine.

HYMN CLVII.

Jonah's faith recommended. Jonah ii. 4.

1 LORD, we have broke thy holy laws,
And slighted all thy grace;
And justly thy vindictive* wrath
Might cast us from thy face.

2 Yet while such precedents appear
Marked in thy sacred book,
We from these depths of guilt and fear
Will to thy temple look.

3 To thee, in our Redeemer's name,
We raise our humble cries;
May these our prayers, perfumed by him,
Like grateful incense rise.

4 O never may our hopeless eyes
An absent God deplore,
Where the dear temples of thy love
Shall stand revealed no more.

5 Far from those regions of despair
Appoint our souls a place,
Where not a frown through endless years
Shall veil thy lovely face.

HYMN CLVIII.

God's controversy with Britain stated and pleaded.
Micah vi. 1—3.

For a Fast-day.

1 LISTEN, ye hills; ye mountains, hear;
Jehovah vindicates his laws:
Trembling in silence at his bar,
Thou earth, attend thy Maker's cause.

2 Israel, appear; present thy plea;
And charge the Almighty to his face;
Say, if his rules oppressive be;
Say, if defective be his grace.

3 Eternal Judge, the action cease;
Our lips are sealed in conscious shame;
'Tis ours, in sackcloth to confess,
And thine, the sentence to proclaim.

4 Ten thousand witnesses arise,
Thy mercies, and our crimes appear,
More than the stars that deck the skies,
And all our dreadful guilt declare.

5 How shall we come before thy face,
And in thine awful presence bow?
What offers can secure thy grace,
Or calm the terrors of thy brow?

6 Thousands of rams in vain might bleed
Rivers of oil might blaze in vain,
Or the first-born's devoted head
With horrid gore thine altar stain.

7 But thy own Lamb, all gracious God,
Whom impious sinners dared to slay,
Hath sovereign virtue in his blood
To purge the nation's guilt away.

8 With humble faith to that we fly;
With that be Britain sprinkled o'er;
Trembling no more in dust we lie,
And dread thy hand and bar no more.

HYMN CLIX.

Hearing the voice of God's rod. Micah vi. 9.

1 ATTEND, my soul, with reverent awe,
The dictates of thy God;
Silent and trembling hear the voice
Of his appointed rod.

2 Now let me search and try my ways,
And prostrate seek his face,
Conscious of guilt before his throne
In dust my soul abase.

3 Teach me, my God, what 's yet unknown,
And all my crimes forgive;
Those crimes would I no more repeat,
But to thy honour live.

4 My withered joys too plainly show,
That all on earth is vain;
In God my wounded heart confides
True rest and bliss to gain.

5 Father, I wait thy gracious call,
To leave this mournful land,
And bathe in rivers of delight,
That flow at thy right hand.

HYMN CLX.

God's incomparable mercy celebrated. Micah vii. 18, 19, 20.

1 SEE! LORD, in mercy, who shall dare
With thy compassion to compare?
For thy own sake wilt thou forgive,
And bid the trembling sinner live.

2 Millions of our transgressions past
Cancelled behind thy back are cast;
Thy grace, a sea without a shore,
O'erflows them, and they rise no more.

3 And lest new legions should invade
And make the pardoned souls afraid,
Our inbred lusts thou wilt subdue
And form degenerate hearts anew.

* Avenging.

1 Our leader God, our songs proclaim:
We lift our banners in his name;
With songs of triumph forth we go,
And level the gigantic foe.

5 His truth to Jacob shall prevail;
His oath to Abraham cannot fail:
The hope of saints in ancient days,
Which ages yet unborn shall praise.

HYMN CLXI.

The impoverished saint rejoicing in God. Hab. iii. 17, 18.

1 So firm the saint's foundations stand,
Nor can his hopes remove;
Sustained by God's almighty hand,
And sheltered in his love.

2 Fig-trees and olive-plants may fail,
And vines their fruit deny,
Famine through all his fields prevail,
And flocks and herds may die.

3 God is the treasure of his soul,
A source of sacred joy;
Which no affliction can control,
Nor death itself destroy.

4 Lord, may we feel thy charming beams,
And taste thy saints' repose,
We will not mourn the perished streams,
While such a fountain flows.

HYMN CLXII.

God's afflicted poor trusting in his name. Zeph. iii. 12.

1 Praise to the Sovereign of the sky,
Who from his lofty throne
Looks down on all that humble lie,
And calls such souls his own.

2 The haughty sinner he disdains,
Though gems his temples crown;
And from the seat of pomp and pride
His vengeance hurls him down.

3 On his afflicted pious poor
He makes his face to shine:
He fills their cottages of clay
With lustre all divine.

4 Among the meanest of thy flock
There let my dwelling be,
Rather than under gilded roofs,
If absent, Lord, from thee.

5 Poor and afflicted though we are,
In thy strong name we trust;
And bless the hand of sovereign love,
Which lifts us from the dust.

HYMN CLXIII.

God comforting and rejoicing over Zion. Zeph. iii. 16, 17.

1 Yes, 'tis the voice of love divine!
And O! how sweet the accents sound!
Afflicted Zion, rise and shine,
Fair mourner, prostrate on the ground.

2 The mighty God, thy glorious King,
Tender to pity, strong to save,
Hath sworn he will salvation bring,
Though sorrow press me to the grave.

3 He all a father's pleasure knows
To fold thee in his dear embrace:
His heart with secret joy o'erflows,
And cheerful smiles adorn his face.

4 At length the inward ecstasy
In heavenly music breaks its way;*
Jehovah leads the harmony,
And angels teach their harps the lay.†

5 Fain would my lips the chorus‡ join,
And tell the listening world my joys,
But condescension so divine
In silence swallows up my voice.

HYMN CLXIV.

Practical reflections on the state of our fathers Zech. i. 5.

1 How swift the torrent rolls,
That bears us to the sea!
The tide that bears our thoughtless souls
To vast eternity!

2 Our fathers, where are they,
With all they called their own?
Their joys and griefs, and hopes and cares
And wealth and honour gone.

3 But joy or grief succeeds
Beyond our mortal thought,
While the poor remnant of their dust
Lies in the grave forgot.

4 There, where the fathers lie,
Must all the children dwell;
Nor other heritage possess,
But such a gloomy cell.

5 God of our fathers, hear,
Thou everlasting Friend!
While we, as on life's utmost verge,§
Our souls to thee commend.

6 Of all the pious dead
May we the footsteps trace,
Till with them in the land of light
We dwell before thy face.

* See the marginal reading. † Song.
‡ Company of singers. § Edge or border.

HYMN CLXV.

Joshua the high priest's change of raiment, applied to Christian privileges. Zech. iii. 4.

1 Eternal King, thy robes are white
In spotless rays of heavenly light;
Adoring angels round are seen,
Yet in thy presence are not clean.

2 What then are we, the sons of earth,
That draw pollution from our birth?
Our fleshly garments, Lord, how mean!
O'erspread with hateful spots of sin.

3 Hail to that condescending grace,
Which shows a Saviour's righteousness!
Eternal honours to that name,
Which covers all our guilt and shame!

4 His blood, an overflowing sea,
Shall purge our deepest stains away:
Our souls, renewed by grace divine,
Shall in their Lord's resemblance shine.

5 Yet, while these rags of flesh we wear,
Pollution will again appear:
Come, death, and ease me of the load;
Come, death, and bear my soul to God.

6 The King of heaven will there bestow
A richer robe than monarchs know;
Dress all his saints in glittering white;
Not Joshua's mitre shone so bright.

7 The grave its trophies shall resign,
Christ will the mouldering dust refine;
And death, the last of foes, shall be
Swallowed and lost in victory.

8 My faith, on towering pinions borne,
Anticipates that glorious morn;
And, with celestial raptures strong,
Gives mortal lips the immortal song.

HYMN CLXVI.

Joshua the high priest's zeal and fidelity rewarded with a station among the angels. Zech. iii. 6, 7.

For the Ordination of a Minister

1 Great Lord of angels, we adore
The grace, that builds thy courts below,
And through ten thousand sons of light,
Stoops to regard what mortals do.

2 Amidst the wastes of time and death
Successive pastors thou dost raise,
Thy charge to keep, thy house to guide,
And form a people for thy praise.

3 The heavenly natives with delight
Hover around the sacred place;
Nor scorn to learn from mortal tongues
The wonders of redeeming grace.

4 At length, dismissed from feeble clay,
Thy servants join the angelic band;
With them through distant worlds they fly,
With them before thy presence stand.

5 O glorious hope! O blest employ!
Sweet lenitive* of grief and care!
When shall we reach those radiant courts,
And all their joy and honour share!

6 Yet while these labours we pursue,
Thus distant from thy heavenly throne,
Give us a zeal and love like theirs,
And half their heaven shall here be known.

HYMN CLXVII.

The completing of the spiritual temple. Zech. iv. 7.

1 Sing to the Lord above,
Who deigns on earth to raise
A temple to his love,
A monument of praise.
Ye saints around,
Through all its frame,
The builder's name
Harmonious sound.

2 He formed the glorious plan,
And its foundation laid,
That God might dwell with man,
And mercy be displayed.
His Son he sent,
Who, great and good,
Made his own blood
The sweet cement.

3 Beneath his eye and care
The edifice shall rise
Majestic, strong, and fair,
And shine above the skies.
There shall he place
The polished stone,
Ordained to crown
This work of grace.

HYMN CLXVIII.

The error of despising the day of small things. Zech. iv. 10.

1 "What haughty scorner," saith the Lord,
"Shall humble things despise,
When he beholds them with delight,
Who reigns beyond the skies!

2 "I from a chaos dark and wild
Made heavens bright host appear:
I from the small unnoticed seeds
The loftiest cedars rear.

3 "From Eden's dust I Adam formed,
The noblest human frame:

* What easeth or assuageth. * Genesis i. 1-7.

And in his humble sons display
The honours of my name.

4 "From fishermen, in number few,
In human arts untaught,
All the wild realms my church can boast,
My potent hand hath brought.

5 "The pious poor, by men despised,
In dearest bonds are mine;
Once hardly drest in humble weeds,*
They now like angels shine."

6 Lord, if such trophies raised from dust
Thy sovereign glory be,
Here in my heart thy power may find
Materials fit for thee.

HYMN CLXIX.

Prisoners delivered from the pit by the blood of the covenant. Zech. ix. 11.

1 Ye prisoners, who in bondage lie,
In darkness and the pit,
Behold the grace that sets us free,
And to that grace submit.

2 The tidings of deliverance hear,
Confess the covenant good,
And bless the ransom God hath found
In our Emanuel's blood.

3 Justice no more asserts its claim
Your forfeit lives to take;
But smiling mercy quick descends
Your heavy chains to break.

4 We walk at large, and sing the hand,
To which we freedom owe;
And drink those rivers with delight,
Which through this desert flow.

5 He, that hath liberty bestowed,
Will give a kingdom too;
He, that hath loosed the bonds of death,
The path of life will show.

HYMN CLXX.

The fountain of life. Zech. xiii. 1.

1 Hail, everlasting spring!
Celestial fountain, hail!
Thy streams salvation bring,
The waters never fail;
Still they endure,
And still they flow,
For all our woe
A sovereign cure.

2 Blest be his wounded side,
And blest his bleeding heart,
Who all in anguish died
Such favours to impart.

His sacred blood
Shall make us clean
From every sin,
And fit for God.

3 To that dear source of love
Our souls this day would come:
And thither from above,
Lord, call the nations home;
That Jew and Greek
With rapturous songs
On all their tongues
Thy praise may speak.

HYMN CLXXI.

God's name profaned when his table is treated with contempt. Mal. i. 12.

Applied to the Lord's Supper

1 My God, and is thy table spread?
And does thy cup with love o'erflow?
Thither be all thy children led,
And let them all its sweetness know.

2 Hail, sacred feast, which Jesus makes!
Rich banquet of his flesh and blood!
Thrice happy he, who here partakes
That sacred stream, that heavenly food!

3 Why are its dainties all in vain
Before unwilling hearts displayed?
Was not for you the victim slain?
Are you forbid the children's bread?

4 O let thy table honoured be,
And furnished well with joyful guests,
And may each soul salvation see,
That here its sacred pledges taste.

5 Let crowds approach with hearts prepared,
With hearts inflamed let all attend;
Nor, when we leave our Father's board,
The pleasure or the profit end.

6 Revive thy dying churches, Lord,
And bid our drooping graces live;
And more that energy afford,
A Saviour's blood alone can give.

HYMN CLXXII.

God's gracious regard to active attempts to revive religion. Mal. iii. 16, 17.

1 The Lord on mortal worms looks down,
From his celestial throne;
And, when the wicked swarm around,
He well discerns his own.

2 He sees the tender hearts, that mourn
The scandals of the times;
And join their efforts to oppose
The wide prevailing crimes.

3 Low to the social band he bows
His still attentive ear;

* Garments.

And, while his angels sing around,
Delights their voice to hear.

4 The chronicles of heaven shall keep
Their words in transcript fair,
In the Redeemer's book of life
Their names recorded are.

5 "Yes, (saith the Lord,) the world shall know
These humble souls are mine:
These, when my jewels I produce
Shall in full lustre shine.

6 "When deluges of fiery wrath
My foes away shall bear,
That hand, which strikes the wicked through,
Shall all my children spare."

HYMN CLXXIII.

Christ the Sun of righteousness. Mal. iv. 2.

1 To thee, O God, we homage pay,
Source of the light that rules the day;
Who, while he gilds all nature's frame,
Reflects thy rays, and speaks thy name.

2 In louder strains we sing that grace,
Which gives the Sun of righteousness;
Whose noble light salvation brings,
And scatters healing from his wings.

3 Still on our hearts may Jesus shine:
With beams of light and love divine;
Quickened by him our souls shall live,
And cheered by him shall grow and thrive.

4 O may his glories stand confessed
From north to south, from east to west:
Successful may his gospel run,
Wide as the circuit of the sun.

5 When shall that radiant scene arise,
When fixed on high in purer skies,
Christ all his lustre shall display
On all his saints through endless day!

HYMNS

ON VARIOUS TEXTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

HYMN CLXXIV.

The axe laid to the root of unfruitful trees. Matt. iii. 13.

1 The Lord into his vineyard comes
Our various fruit to see:
His eye, more piercing than the light,
Examines every tree.

2 Tremble, ye sinners, at his frown,
If barren still ye stand;
And fear that keenly-wounding axe,
Which arms his awful hand.

3 Close to the root behold it laid,
To make destruction sure:
Who can resist the mighty stroke
Or who the fire endure?

4 Lord, we adore thy sparing love,
Thy long-expecting grace:
Else had we low in ruin fallen,
And known no more our place.

5 Succeeding years thy patience waits;
Nor let it wait in vain;
But form in us abundant fruit,
And still this fruit maintain.

HYMN CLXXV.

The light of good examples, the means of leading others to glorify God. Matt. v. 16.

1 Great Teacher of thy church below
Thy precepts all divinely wise:
O may thy mighty power be shown
To fix them still before our eyes.

2 Deep on our hearts thy law engrave,
And fill our breasts with heavenly zeal,
That, while we trust thy power to save,
We may that sacred law fulfil.

3 Adorned with every heavenly grace,
May our examples brightly shine,
And the sweet lustre of thy face
Reflected beam from each of them.

4 These lineaments,* divinely fair,
Our heavenly Father shall proclaim;
And men, that view his image there,
Shall join to glorify his name.

HYMN CLXXVI.

Providential bounties surveyed and improved. Matt. v. 45.

1 Father of Lights, we sing thy name,
Who kindlest up the lamp of day;†
Wide as he spreads his golden flame,
His beams thy power and love display.

2 Fountain of good, from thee proceed
The copious drops of genial‡ rain,
Which through the hills, and through the meads,
Revive the grass, and swell the grain.

3 Through the wide world thy bounties spread;
Yet millions of our guilty race,
Though by thy daily bounty fed,
Affront thy law, and spurn thy grace.

4 Not so may our forgetful hearts
O'erlook the tokens of thy care;
But, what thy liberal hand imparts,
Still own in praise, still ask in prayer.

5 So shall our suns more grateful shine,
And showers in sweeter drops shall fall,
When all our hearts and lives are thine,
And thou, our God, enjoyed in all.

6 Jesus, our brighter sun, arise;
In plenteous showers thy Spirit send;
Earth then shall grow a paradise,
And in the heavenly Eden end.

HYMN CLXXVII.

Secret prayer. Matt. vi. 6.

1 Father divine, thy piercing eye
Shoots through the darkest night;
In deep retirement thou art nigh;
With heart-discerning sight.

2 There shall that piercing eye survey
My duteous homage paid,
With every morning's dawning ray,
And every evening's shade.

3 O may thy own celestial fire
The incense still inflame:
While my warm vows to thee aspire,
Through my Redeemer's name.

4 So shall the visits of thy love
My soul in secret bless;
So shalt thou deign in worlds above
Thy suppliant to confess.

* Lineaments. † The sun. ‡ Making fruitful.

HYMN CLXXVIII.

Seeking first the kingdom of God, &c. Matt. vi.

1 Now let a true ambition rise,
And ardour fire our breast,
To reign in worlds above the skies,
In heavenly glories drest.

2 Behold Jehovah's royal hand
A radiant crown display,
Whose gems with vivid lustre shine,
While stars and suns decay.

3 Away, each grovelling anxious care,
Beneath a Christian's thought;
I spring to seize immortal joys,
Which my Redeemer bought.

4 Ye hearts with youthful vigour warm,
The glorious prize pursue;
Nor shall ye want the goods of earth,
While heaven is kept in view.

HYMN CLXXIX.

Pardon spoken by Christ. Matt. ix. 2

1 My Saviour, let me hear thy voice,
Pronounce these words of peace;
And all my warmest powers shall join
To celebrate the grace.

2 With gentle smiles call me thy child,
And speak my sins forgiven;
The accents mild shall charm mine ear
All like the harps of heaven.

3 Cheerful, where'er thy hand shall lead
The darkest path I'll tread;
Cheerful I'll quit these mortal shores,
And mingle with the dead.

4 When dreadful guilt is done away,
No other fears we know;
That hand, that scatters pardons down,
Shall crowns of life bestow.

HYMN CLXXX.

The relapsing demoniac. Matt. xii. 43–45.

1 Sovereign of heaven, thine empire spreads
O'er all the worlds on high:
And at thy frowns the infernal powers
In wild confusion fly.

2 Like lightning from his glittering throne
The great arch-traitor fell,
Driven with enormous ruin down
To infamy and hell.

3 Permitted now to range at large,
And traverse§ earth and air,
O'er captive human souls he reigns,
And boasts his kingdom there.

§ Wander through.

4 Yet thence thy grace can drive him out
With one Almighty word:
O send thy potent sceptre forth,
And reign victorious, Lord.

5 Let wretched prisoners be released
The smiling light to view;
Nor let the vanquished foe return,
Their bondage to renew.

6 May grace complete that wondrous work,
Which thy own power begun,
And fill, from Satan's gloomy realms,
The kingdom of thy Son.

HYMN CLXXXI.

The faith of the Syrophœnician woman recommended. Matt. xv. 26, 27.

1 All-conquering faith, how high it rose,
When heaven itself might seem to oppose!
All-gracious Lord, who didst appear
Most merciful, when most severe!

2 Thus at thy feet our souls would fall
And loudly thus for mercy call,
"Thou Son of David, pity show,
And save us from the infernal foe."

3 Though viler than the brutes we be,
Our longing eyes would wait on thee;
Who dost to dogs this grace afford,
To taste thy crumbs beneath thy board.

4 But thou the humble soul wilt raise,
And all its sorrows turn to praise,
Each self-abasing broken heart,
Shall with thy children share a part.

HYMN CLXXXII.

The church built on a rock, and secured against the gates of hell. Matt. xvi. 18.

1 Now let the gates of Zion sing,
And challenge all her spiteful foes;
She triumphs in her Saviour-king,
In him, who from the dead arose.

2 He is the rock, on whom we rest,
And firm on that foundation stand,
Divine compassion fills his breast,
His word is sure, and strong his hand.

3 Hell and its host may rage in vain;
Vain are their counsels and their power;
Grim death may marshal all his train,
And boast the conquest of an hour.

4 Breathless and pale his servants lie,
And know their former place no more;
Their children raise his praises high,
And o'er their fathers' dust adore.

5 Their fathers' dust the Lord shall raise,
And burst the barriers of the grave;
Parents and children join his praise,
Who through eternity can save.

HYMN CLXXXIII.

Christ's transfiguration. Matt. xvii. 1.

1 When at this distance, Lord, we trace
The various glories of thy face,
What transport pours o'er all our breast,
And charms our cares and woes to rest!

2 With thee in the obscurest cell
On some bleak mountain would I dwell,
Rather than pompous courts behold,
And share their grandeur and their gold.

3 Away, ye dreams of mortal joy!
Raptures divine my thoughts employ!
I see the King of glory shine,
And feel his love, and call him mine.

4 On Tabor* thus his servants viewed
His lustre, when transformed he stood:
And, bidding earthly scenes farewell,
Cried, "Lord, 'tis pleasant here to dwell."

5 Yet still our elevated eyes
To nobler visions long to rise;
That grand assembly would we join,
Where all thy saints around thee shine.

6 That mount how bright! those fields how fair!
'Tis good to dwell for ever there:
Come death, dear envoy† of my God,
And bear me to that blest abode.

HYMN CLXXXIV.

The grace of Christ is sufficient for us, and shines for us. Matt. xx. 28.

1 Saviour, of mercy, and Lord of love,
How sweet thy gracious name
With joy that errand we review,
On which thy mercy came.

2 While all thy own angelic bands
Stood waiting on the wing,
Charmed with the honour to obey
The word of such a King,

3 For us mean, wretched, sinful men
Thou hadst that glory lay,
First in our mortal flesh to serve
Then in that flesh to die.

4 Bought with thy service and thy blood
We doubly, Lord, are thine;
To thee our lives we would devote,
To thee our death resign.

* The mount on which Christ was transfigured.
† Messenger or ambassador.

4 Blest man, who in thy cause consumes
His vigorous days with zeal!
Then with the last slow ebb of blood
Is called thy truth to seal!

HYMN CLXXXV.

Christ's compassionate readiness to gather souls. Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

1 See how the Lord of mercy spreads
His gentle hands abroad;
And warns us of the circling foes,
That thirst to drink our blood!

2 "Fly to the shelter of mine arms,
And dwell secure from fear;
Nor earth nor hell shall pluck you thence,
Or reach and wound you there."

3 With anxious heart the parent-bird
Thus calls her offspring round,
When horrid vultures beat the air,
And slaughter stains the ground.

4 The trembling brood, by nature taught,
Fly to the known retreat,
Beneath her downy wings are safe,
And find the shelter sweet.

5 But men, alas! more thoughtless men,
Refuse to lend an ear;
Their only refuge madly fly,
And rather die than hear.

6 They spurn the Saviour's offered grace,
Till they his wrath inflame;
Then desolation lays them low
In agony and shame.

HYMN CLXXXVI.

The abounding of iniquity, and coldness of Christ's love. Matt. xxiv. 12.

Isa's Fast day.

1 Alas for Britain, and her sons!
What hath she not to fear!
The sins, that ruined Sodom once,
O how triumphant here!

2 Alas the strong o'erflowing tide!
How fiercely doth it rage!
And each foreboding symptom joins
In terrible presage.

3 Yet who hath eyes that can discern!
Or who an ear to hear!
Whose heart is trembling for the ark!
Or for his country dear!

4 Cold is the love of Christian breast
If Christian breasts remain;
And dying the last sparks of zeal
Or its last efforts vain.

5 O Britain, oft chastised and saved,
What shall the end be found?
Shall not the sword, that waves so long,
Inflict the deeper wound?

6 O stay thine arm, all-gracious God,
Thy Spirit largely pour;
He can the streams of guilt restrain,
And dying love restore.

HYMN CLXXXVII.

The final sentence, and happiness of the righteous. Matt. xxv. 34.

1 Attend, mine ear, my heart, to hear,
While Jesus from his throne,
Begirt with all the angelic hosts,
Makes his last sentence known.

2 When sinners, cursed from his face,
To raging flames are driven,
His voice, with melody divine,
Thus calls his saints to heaven.

3 "Blest of my Father, all draw near,
Receive the large reward;
And rise with raptures to possess
The kingdom love prepared.

4 "Ere earth's foundations first were laid,
This sovereign purpose wrought,
And reared those palaces divine,
To which you now are brought.

5 "There shall you reign unnumbered years
Protected by my power,
While sin and hell, and pains and cares
Shall vex your souls no more."

6 Come, dear majestic Saviour, come,
This jubilee proclaim,
And teach us accents fit to praise
So great, so dear a name.

HYMN CLXXXVIII.

Redeeming Christ to his poor saints. Matt. xxv. 40.

1 Jesus, my Lord, how rich thy grace!
Thy bounties how complete!
How shall I count the matchless sum!
How pay the mighty debt!

2 High on a throne of radiant light
Dost thou exalted shine;
What can my poverty bestow,
When all the worlds are thine!

3 But thou hast brethren here below,
The partners of thy grace,
And wilt confess their humble names
Before thy Father's face.

4 In them thou mayst be clothed and fed,
And visited and cheered.

And in their accents of distress
My Saviour's voice is heard

5 Thy face with reverence and with love
I in thy poor would see:
O, rather let me beg my bread,
Than hold it back from thee.

HYMN CLXXXIX.

The final sentence and misery of the wicked. Matt. xxv. 41.

1 And will the Judge descend?
And must the dead arise?
And not a single soul escape
His all-discerning eyes?

2 And from his righteous lips
Shall such a sentence sound?
And through the millions of the damned
Spread black despair around?

3 "Depart from me, accursed,
To everlasting flame,
For rebel angels first prepared,
Where mercy never came."

4 How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When earth and heaven before his face
Astonished shrink away?

5 But ere that trumpet shakes
The mansions of the dead,
Hark! from the gospel's gentle voice
What joyful tidings spread!

6 Ye sinners, seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there.

7 So shall that curse remove
By which the Saviour bled,
And the last awful day shall pour
His blessings on your head.

HYMN CXC.

Christ's submission to his Father's will. Matt. xxvi. 42.

1 "Father divine," (the Saviour cried,
While horrors pressed on every side,
And prostrate on the ground he lay,)
"Remove this bitter cup away.

2 "But if these pangs must still be borne,
Or helpless man be left forlorn,
I bow my soul before thy throne,
And say, Thy will, not mine, be done.'

3 Thus our submissive souls would bow,
And, taught by Jesus, lie as low;
Our hearts, and not our lips alone,
Would say, Thy will, not ours, be done.

4 Then, though like him to dust we be,
We'll view the blissful moment nigh,
Which, from our portion in his pains,
Calls to the joy in which he reigns.

HYMN CXCI.

Reflections on the disciples forsaking Christ when he was betrayed. Matt. xxvi. 56.

1 Behold the Son of God's delight
His smiles how sweet! his rays how bright!
A friend of tenderness unknown:
To the last breath he loved his own.

2 But lo, his friends, his brethren dear,
Fled, when they saw his danger near;
And not one generous heart remains
To shield his life, or share his pains.

3 So frail is man; so frail are we,
When unsupported, Lord, by thee;
Thus shrinks our faith; thus droops our love;
And thus our vows abortive prove.

4 Blest Jesus, thy own power impart,
And bind in cords of love my heart
The fugitive no more shall flee,
But keep through death its hold on thee.

HYMN CXCII.

Christ's complaint of his Father's forsaking him on the cross. Matt. xxvii. 46.

1 What doleful accents do I hear?
What piercing cry invades mine ear!
Loaded with shame, and bathed in blood,
Who calls to a forsaking God?

2 Amazing and heart-rending sight!
'Tis his own darling and delight,
Who once in his embraces lay,
Dearer than all the sons of day!

3 Yet when this Jesus died for me,
Distended on the cursed tree,
God stood afar, nor would afford
One pitying look, one cheering word.

4 What then, my soul, must there have felt,
If pressed with all thy load of guilt,
Beneath whose weight the Saviour cries,
Who formed the earth, and built the skies?

5 But in that dark tremendous hour
Unconquered faith exerts its power;
My God, my Father, cried aloud,
And heaven the endearing name avowed.

6 From death, from earth, he raised his Son,
And gave him for his cross a throne;
Triumphant there the sufferer reigns,
And reaps the harvest of his pains.

7 Eternal raptures there are known
Nor flows the joy on him alone,
But for his sake the Lord hath sworn
To leave the meanest saint no more.

HYMN CXCIII.

The same. Matt. xxvii. 40.

1 My Saviour, didst thou die for me
For me send forth that bitter cry?
With bleeding heart thy wounds I see,
Prepared at thy command to die.

2 By all thine anguish on the cross,
When God thy Father stood afar,
Rich in thy temporary loss,
Thy church is brought for ever near.

3 From far the beamings of thy throne
Revived my sympathizing heart
Thy love made sinners' griefs thy own
Mine in thy joys must take its part.

4 Midst all the splendours of thy reign
Think on the sorrows thou hast felt;
Nor let a mourner weep in vain,
For whom thy precious blood was spilt.

5 While through earth's darkest gloom I trace,
Dart to my soul a cheering ray;
And on the confines of the dead,
Thy power, as Lord of life, display.

HYMN CXCIV.

The angel's reply to the women that sought Christ.
Matt. xxvii. 5, 6.

1 Ye humble souls, that seek the Lord,
Chase all your fears away,
And bow with pleasure down to see
The place where Jesus lay.

2 Thus low the Lord of life was brought
Such wonders love can do;
Thus cold in death that bosom lay,
Which throbbed and bled for you.

3 A moment give a loose to grief
Let grateful sorrows rise,
And wash the bloody stains away
With torrents from your eyes.

4 Then raise your eyes, and tune your songs
The Saviour lives again,
Not all the bolts and bars of death
The Conqueror could detain.

5 High o'er the angelic bands he soars
His once dishonoured head;
And through unnumbered years he reigns
Who dwelt among the dead.

6 With joy like his shall every saint
His empty tomb survey;
There rise with his ascending Lord
Through all his shining way.

HYMN CXCV.

Christ ever present with his ministers and churches.
Matt. xxviii. 20.

1 While o'er all worlds the Saviour reigns
Unmoved his power and Love remains;
And on his arm his church shall rest
Fair Zion, joyful in her King,
Through every changing age shall sing
With his perpetual presence blest.

2 Tyrannic death, in vain thy rage,
Thy triumphs new in every age,
O'er the first heroes of his host;
Conscious of more than mortal aid,
Our bleeding hearts are not dismayed
But an immortal Leader boast.

3 Though buried deep in dust they lie,
Whose tuneful voices raised on high
Led the sweet anthems to his name;
The children learn the fathers' song,
And unformed tongues shall still prolong
The ever-present Saviour's fame.

4 The present Saviour, he shall give
Millions of future saints to live,
And crowd the temples of his grace:
The present Saviour, lo, he comes
To call whole legions from their tombs,
And teach their dust sublimer praise.

HYMN CXCVI.

Departed saints asleep. Mark v. 39.

1 "Why flow these torrents of distress?"
(The gentle Saviour cries;)
"Why are my sleeping saints surveyed
With unbelieving eyes?

2 "Death's feeble arm shall never boast
A friend of Christ is slain;
Not e'en their meanest part in dust
A lasting power retain.

3 "I come, on wings of love I come,
The slumberers to awake;
My voice shall reach the deepest tomb,
And all its bonds shall break.

4 "Touched by my hand in smiles they rise
They rise to sleep no more;
But robed with light, and crowned with joy
To endless day they soar."

5 Jesus, our faith receives thy word;
And, though fond nature weep,
Grace learns to hail the pious dead
And emulate their sleep.

6 Our willing souls thy summons wait
With them to rest and praise;
So let thy much loved presence cheer
These separating days.

HYMN CXCVII.

The struggle between faith and unbelief. Mark ix. 24.

1 JESUS, our souls' delightful choice,
In thee believing we rejoice;
Yet still our joy is mixed with grief
While faith contends with unbelief.

2 Thy promises our hearts revive,
And keep our fainting hopes alive;
But guilt, and fears, and sorrows rise
And hide the promise from our eyes.

3 O let not sin and Satan boast,
While saints lie mourning in the dust;
Nor see that faith to ruin brought,
Which thy own gracious hand hath wrought.

4 Do thou the dying spark inflame;
Reveal the glories of thy name;
And put all anxious doubts to flight,
As shades dispersed by opening light.

HYMN CXCVIII.

Christ's condescending regard to little children.
Mark x. 14.

1 SEE Israel's gentle Shepherd stand
With all-engaging charms;
Hark how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms!

2 "Permit them to approach, he cries;
Nor scorn their humble name;
For 'twas to bless such souls as these,
The Lord of angels came."

3 We bring them, Lord, in thankful hands,
And yield them up to thee:
Joyful, that we ourselves are thine,
Thine let our offspring be.

4 Ye little flock, with pleasure hear,
Ye children, seek his face;
And fly with transports to receive
The blessings of his grace.

5 If orphans they are left behind,
Thy guardian care we trust;
That care shall heal our bleeding hearts
If weeping o'er their dust.

HYMN CXCIX.

Christian watchfulness. Mark xiii. 37.

1 AWAKE, my drowsy soul, awake,
And view the threatening scene:
Legions of foes encamp around,
And treachery lurks within.

2 'Tis not this mortal life alone
These enemies assail
All thine eternal hopes are lost
If their attempts prevail.

3 Now to the work of God awake
Behold thy Master near;
The various arduous task pursue
With vigour and with fear.

4 The awful register goes on,
The account will surely come,
And opening day, or closing night,
May bear me to my doom.

5 Tremendous thought! how deep it strikes!
Yet like a dream it flies,
Till God's own voice the slumbers chase
From these deluded eyes.

HYMN CC.

The nativity of Christ. Luke ii. 10, 12.

1 HAIL, progeny of divine!
Heal, virgin's wondrous son!
Who, for that humble shrine,
Didst quit the Almighty's throne.
The infant Lord,
Our voices sing,
And be the King
Of grace adored.

2 Ye princes, disappear
And boast your crowns no more,
Lay down your sceptres here,
And in the dust adore:
Where Jesus dwells,
The manger bare
In lustre far
Your pomp excels.

3 With Bethlehem's shepherds mild
The angels bow their head;
And round the sacred child
Their guardian wings they spread;
They knew, that where
Their Sovereign lies
In his disguise,
Heaven's court is there.

4 Thither, my soul, repair,
And earthly homage pay
To thy Redeemer's cradle,
As on his natal day.
I kiss thy feet,
And, Lord, would be
A child like thee,
Whom thus I greet.

HYMN CCI.

The angels' song at Christ's birth. Luke ii. 13, 14.

1 Hush! let us swell our tuneful notes
And join the angelic throng;
For angels no such love have known
To awake a cheerful song.

2 Good will to sinful men is shown
And peace on earth is given;
For lo, the incarnate Saviour comes
With messages from heaven.

3 Justice and grace with sweet accord
His rising beams adorn;
Let heaven and earth in concert join,
Now such a child is born.

4 Glory to God in highest strains
In highest worlds be paid;
His glory by our lips proclaimed,
And by our lives displayed.

5 When shall we reach those blissful realms,
Where Christ exalted reigns,
And learn of the celestial choir
Their own immortal strains?

HYMN CCII.

Simeon's song and declaration to the Virgin Mary. Luke ii. 30—35.

1 Our eyes salvation see,
Prepared by grace divine:
How wide its splendours are diffused!
How bright its glories shine!

2 Through distant heathen lands
It darts a vivid* ray,
And to the realms where Satan reigned
Imparts celestial day.

3 The Israel of the Lord
In Christ their glory boast,
And on the honours of his name
Their whole salvation trust.

4 By him shall millions rise
To an immortal crown,
And millions, that his grace despise,
Shall sink in ruin down.

5 Our reckoning is begun,
And on the account will go
Till closed in everlasting joy
Or never ending woe.

HYMN CCIII.

Christ's messenger. Luke iv. 18, 19.

1 Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

2 On him the Spirit largely poured,
Exerts its sacred fire;
Wisdom and might, and zeal and love,
His holy breast inspire.

3 He comes the prisoners to release
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

4 He comes from thickest films of vice
To clear the mental ray,
And on the eye-balls of the blind,
To pour celestial day.

5 He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor.

6 His silver trumpets publish loud
The jubilee of the Lord;†
Our debts are all remitted now,
Our heritage restored.

7 Our glad Hosannas, Prince of peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

HYMN CCIV.

The recovered demoniac, an emblem of a [illegible] sinner. Luke viii. 35.

1 Jesus, we own thy saving power,
And thy victorious hand;
Hell's legions tremble at thy feet,
And fly at thy command.

2 O'er souls, by passion's uproar filled
With anarchy; unknown,
The nobler powers restored by thee,
Ascend their peaceful throne.

3 No more they rend their clothing off;
No more their wounds repeat;
But gentle and composed they wait
Attentive at thy feet.

4 O'er thousands more, where Satan rules,
May we such triumphs see;
And be their rescued souls and ours
Devoted, Lord, to thee.

HYMN CCV.

The good Samaritan. Luke x. 30—37.

1 Father of mercies, send thy grace,
All-powerful from above,
To form in our obedient souls
The image of thy love.

* Lucas.

† Or acceptable year of the Lord, i. e. the year of Divine favour. Lord xiv. 19. Deuteronomy and Isaiah lxi.

2 O may our sympathizing breasts
That generous pleasure know,
Kindly to share in others' joy
And weep for others' woe!

3 When the most helpless sons of grief
In low distress are laid,
Soft be our hearts their pains to feel
And swift our hands to aid.

4 So Jesus looked on dying men,
When throned above the skies,
And 'midst the embraces of his God,
He felt compassion rise.

5 On wings of love the Saviour flew
To ease us from the ground,
And made the richest of his blood
A balm for every wound.

HYMN CCVI

The care of the soul the one thing needful. Luke x. 42.

1 Why will ye lavish out your years
Amidst a thousand trifling cares?
While in this various range of thought
The one thing needful is forgot?

2 Why will ye chase the fleeting wind
And famish an immortal mind,
While angels with regret look down
To see you spurn a heavenly crown?

3 The eternal God calls from above,
And Jesus pleads his bleeding love:
Awakened conscience gives you pain;
And shall they join their pleas in vain?

4 Not so your dying eyes shall view
Those objects, which you now pursue:
Not so shall heaven and hell appear,
When the decisive hour is near.

5 Almighty God, thy power impart
To fix convictions on the heart:
Thy power unveils the blindest eyes,
And makes the haughtiest sinner wise.

HYMN CCVII

Mary's choice of the better part. Luke x. 42.

1 Beset with snares on every hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand:
Saviour divine, diffuse thy light
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

2 Engage this roving treacherous heart
To fix on Mary's better part,
To scorn the trifles of a day
For joys that none can take away.

3 Then let the wildest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies,
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,
But all my treasures with me bear.

4 If thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.

HYMN CCVIII

Christ's little flock comforted with the views of his kingdom. Luke xii. 32.

1 Ye little flock, whom Jesus feeds,
Dismiss your anxious cares;
Look to the Shepherd of your souls
And smile away your fears.

2 Though wolves and lions prowl around
His staff is your defence:
Midst sands and rocks your Shepherd knows
Calls streams and pastures thence.

3 Your Father will a kingdom give,
And give it with delight;
His feeblest child his love shall call
To triumph in his sight.

4 Ten thousand praises, Lord, we bring
For sure supports like these:
And o'er the grave should we sing
Thy living promises.

5 For all we hope, and they enjoy,
We bless a Saviour's name;
Nor shall that stroke disturb the song,
Which breaks this mortal frame.

HYMN CCIX

Preaching how that men must die. Luke xii. 20.

1 Fierce mortal joys, how soon they fade!
How swift they pass away!
The dying flower reclines its head,
The beauty of a day!

2 The bags are rent, the treasures lost,
We fondly called our own:
Scarce could we the possession boast,
And strait we found it gone.

3 But there are joys that cannot die,
Which God laid up in store;
Treasure beyond the changing sky,
Brighter than golden ore.

4 To that my rising heart aspires,
Sooner to soar its rest,
And glories in each wish desires
Of all their wish possessed.

5 The seeds, which piety and love
Have scattered here below,
In the fair fertile fields above
To ample harvests grow.

6 The more my willing hands can give,
At Jesus' feet I lay;
Grace shall the humble gift receive,
And heaven at large repay.

HYMN CCX.

The active Christian. Luke xii. 35–38

1 Ye servants of the Lord,
Each in his office wait,
Observant of his heavenly word
And watchful at his gate.

2 Let all your lamps be bright,
And trim the golden flame;
Gird up your loins, as in his sight,
For awful is his name.

3 Watch, 'tis your Lord's command!
And while we speak, he 's near:
Mark the first signal of his hand,
And ready all appear.

4 O happy servant he
In such a posture found!
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crowned.

5 Christ shall the banquet spread
With his own royal hand,
And raise that favourite servant's head
Amidst the angelic band.

HYMN CCXI.

Room at the gospel feast. Luke xiv. 22.

1 The King of heaven his table spreads,
And dainties crown the board;
Not paradise with all its joys
Could such delight afford.

2 Pardon and peace to dying men,
And endless life are given,
And the rich blood that Jesus shed,
To raise the soul to heaven.

3 Ye hungry poor, that long have strayed
In sin's dark mazes, come:
Come from the hedges and highways,
And grace shall find you room.

4 Millions of souls, in glory now,
Were fed and feasted here;
And millions more, still on the way,
Around the board appear.

5 Yet is his house and heart so large,
That millions more may come:
Nor could the wide assembling world
O'er fill the spacious room.

6 All things are ready; come away,
Nor weak excuses frame;
Crowd to your places at the feast,
And bless the founder's name.

HYMN CCXII.

The present and future state of the saint and sinner compared. Luke xvi. 25.

1 In what confusion earth appears!
God's dearest children bathed in tears
While they, who heaven itself deride,
Riot in luxury and pride.

2 But patient let my soul attend
And, ere I censure, view the end:
That end, how different, who can tell!
The wide extremes of heaven and hell.

3 See the red flames around him twine
Who did in gold and purple shine!
Nor can his tongue one drop obtain
To allay the scorching of his pain.

4 While round the saint, so poor below,
Full rivers of salvation flow:
On Abraham's breast he leans his head,
And banquets on celestial bread.

5 Jesus, my Saviour, let me share
The meanest of thy servants' fare;
May I at last approach to taste
The blessings of thy marriage feast.

HYMN CCXIII.

Rebels against Christ executed. Luke xix. 27.

1 He comes, the royal Conqueror comes;
His legions fill the sky;
Angelic trumpets rend the tombs,
And loud proclaim him nigh.

2 Ye rebel hosts, how vain your rage
Against this sovereign Lord!
What madness bears you on to engage
The terrors of his sword!

3 "Bring forth (he cries) those sons of pride,
That scorned my gentle sway,
To prove the arm they once defied
Omnipotent to slay."

4 Tremendous scene of wrath divine
How wide the vengeance spreads!
His pointed darts of lightning shine
Round their defenceless heads.

5 Now let the rebels seek that face,
From which they cannot flee!
And thou, my soul, adore the grace
That sweetly conquered thee.

HYMN CCXIV.

The Redeemer's tears wept over lost souls. Luke xix. 41, 42.

1 What venerable sight appears!
The Son of God dissolved in tears!
Trace, O my soul, with sad surprise,
The sorrows of a Saviour's eyes.

2 For whom, blest Jesus, we would know
Doth such a sacred torrent flow?
What brother, or what friend of thine,
Is graced and mourned with drops divine

3 Not brother, there, nor friend I see,
But sons of pride and cruelty
Who like rapacious tigers stood
Insatiate panting for thy blood.

4 Dear Lord, and did thy gushing eyes
Thus stream o'er dying enemies?
And can thy tenderness forget
The sinner humbled at thy feet?

5 With deep remorse our bowels move
That we have wronged such matchless love.
Thy gentle pity, Lord, display,
And smile these trembling fears away.

6 Give us to shine before thy face,
Eternal trophies of thy grace;
Where songs of praise thy saints employ,
And mingle with a Saviour's joy.

HYMN CCXV.

Departed saints living to God. Luke xx. 38.

1 Thrice happy state, where saints shall live
Around their Father's throne,
In every joy, that heaven can give,
And live to God alone!

2 Unnumbered bands of kindred minds,
That dwelt in feeble clay,
Us and our woes have left behind
To reign in endless day.

3 Immortal vigour now they breathe,
And all the air is peace;
They chide our tears, that mourn the death,
Which brought their souls release.

4 Thus shall the grace of Christ prevail,
Till all his chosen meet;
And not the meanest servant fail
His household to complete.

5 To that blest goal* with ardent haste
Our active souls would tend;
Nor feel their sorrows, as they passed
To such a blissful end.

HYMN CCXVI.

Christ's admonition to, and care of, Peter, under his approaching trials. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

1 How keen the tempter's malice is!
How artful and how great!
Though not one grain shall be destroyed,
Yet will he sift the wheat.

2 But God can all his power control,
And gather in his chain;
And, where he seems to triumph most,
The captive soul regain.

3 There is a Shepherd kind and strong,
Still watchful for his sheep;
Nor shall the infernal lion rend,
Whom he vouchsafes to keep.

4 Blest Jesus, intercede for us,
That we may fall no more;
O raise us, when we prostrate lie,
And comfort lost restore.

5 Thy secret energy impart,
That faith may never fail
But midst whole showers of fiery darts
That tempered shield prevail.

6 Secured ourselves by grace divine,
We'll guard our brethren too;
And, taught their frailty by our own,
Our care of them renew.

HYMN CCXVII.

Christ's prayer for his enemies. Luke xxiii. 34.

1 Around I sing the wondrous grace
Christ to his murderers bare;
Which made the tottering cross its throne,
And hung its trophies there.

2 Father, forgive, his mercy cried
With his expiring breath,
And drew eternal blessings down
On those who wrought his death.

3 How may I hope for pardon, Lord,
Though I have pierced the Lord,
Blest Jesus, in my favour speak
That all-prevailing word.

4 I knew not what my madness did
While I remained thy foe:
Soon as I saw the wounds were mine
My tears began to flow.

5 Melted by goodness so divine,
I would (in humble trust)
And, while beneath thy cross I stand,
My forced foes embrace.

HYMN CCXVIII.

The resurrection of Christ. Luke xxiv. 5.

1 Yes, the Redeemer rose:
The Saviour left the dead,
And o'er our hellish foes
High raised his conquering head.
In wild dismay
The guards around
Fell to the ground,
And sank away.

2 Lo, the angelic bands
In full assembly wait,
To wait his high commands,
And worship at his feet.

Joyful they come,
And wing their way
From realms of day
To such a tomb.

3 Then back to heaven they fly,
And the glad tidings bear;
Hark! as they soar on high,
What music fills the air!
Their anthems say,
"Jesus who bled
Hath left the dead,
He rose to-day."

4 Ye mortals, catch the sound,
Redeemed by him from hell,
And send the echo round
The globe on which you dwell:
Transported cry,
"Jesus who bled
Hath left the dead;
No more to die."

5 All hail, triumphant Lord,
Who savest us with thy blood!
Wide be thy name adored,
Thou rising, reigning God!
With thee we rise,
With thee we reign,
And empires gain
Beyond the skies.

HYMN CCXIX.

The gospel first preached at Jerusalem. Luke xxiv. 47.

1 "Go, (saith the Lord,) proclaim my grace
To all the sons of Adam's race,
Pardon for every crimson sin,
And at Jerusalem begin.

2 "There, where my blood, not fully dry,
Stands warm upon mount Calvary:
That blood shall purge away their guilt,
By whom so lately it was spilt.

3 "Now let the daring rebels turn,
And o'er their bleeding Sovereign mourn;
Their bleeding Sovereign shall forgive,
And bid the rebels look and live."

4 Is this thy voice, all gracious Lord?
And did the rebels hear thy word?
And did they fall beneath thy feet,
And on their knees forgiveness meet?

5 Then may I hope for mercy too,
Such love can my hard heart subdue,
And give this guilty soul a place,
Among these captives of thy grace.

6 Here be it daily mine employ
To bathe thy wounds with tears of joy,
Till 'midst the new Jerusalem
In one full choir we sing thy name.

HYMN CCXX.

God's love to the world in sending Christ for our redemption. John iii. 16.

1 Sing to the Lord a new melodious song;
Assist the choir, ye tribes of every tongue:
Wide as the world his sovereign mercy reigns
Wide as the world resound his rapturous strains.
Ye angels, join the joyful acclamation,
And sing the love that brings to men salvation.

2 His gracious eye beheld in full survey
Where Adam's race in mingled ruin lay:
No human aid the danger could avert;
No angel's hand could soothe the raging smart:
In his own breast divine compassion rises,
And the grand scheme the court of heaven surprises.

3 God's only Son, with peerless* glories bright,
His Father's fairest image and delight,
Justice and grace the victim have decreed,
To wear our flesh, and in that flesh to bleed.
Prostrate in dust, ye sinners, all adore him,
And tremble, while your hearts rejoice before him.

4 The wondrous work is done; the covenant stood,
And Jesus expiates human guilt with blood;
Nailed to the tree he bows his sacred head;
A mangled corpse he sojourns with the dead;
Rising, the gospel sends through every nation:
Sinners believe, and gain complete salvation.

5 Father of grace, accept our humble praise;
O let it run through everlasting days!
And thou, blest Saviour, spotless Lamb of God,
Accept the souls dear-ransomed with thy blood.
And to those songs form all our feeble voices,
In which the choir round thy bright throne rejoices.

HYMN CCXXI.

The Spirit's influence compared to living water. John iv. 10.

1 Blest Jesus, source of grace divine,
What soul-refreshing streams are thine!
O bring these healing waters nigh,
Or we must droop, and fall, and die.

2 No traveller through desert lands,
'Midst scorching suns, and burning sands,
More eager longs for cooling rain,
Or pants the current to obtain.

3 Our longing souls aloud would sing,
Spring up, celestial fountain, spring:
To a redundant river flow,
And cheer this thirsty land below.

* Unequalled.

1 May this blest torrent near my side
Through all the desert gently glide
Then in Emanuel's land above
Spread to a sea of joy and love

HYMN CCXXII.

The Christian's sacred feast. John iv. 32

1 We praise the Lord, for heavenly bread
With which immortal souls are fed:
We praise thee for that heavenly feast,
Which Jesus with delight could taste.

2 He, while he sojourned here below,
Had meat, which strangers could not know
That meat he to his people gives,
And he that tastes the banquet lives.

3 So let me live, sustained by grace,
Regaled with fruits of righteousness
Enter my heart, all-gracious Lord,
And sup with me, and deck thy board.

4 Devotion, faith, and zealous love,
And hope, that bears the soul above,
Be these my dainties, till I rise,
And taste the joys of paradise.

HYMN CCXXIII.

The paralytic at Bethesda. John v. 6

1 Behold the great Physician stands,
Whose skill is ever sure;
And loud he calls to dying men,
And free he offers cure.

2 And will ye hear his gracious voice,
While sore diseased ye lie?
Or will ye all his grace despise,
And trifle till ye die?

3 Blest Jesus, speak the healing word,
And inward vigour give:
Then, raised by energy divine,
Shall helpless mortals live.

4 With cheerful pace our trembling feet
In thy blest paths shall run,
Till Zion's healthful hill they gain,
Where no complaint is known.

HYMN CCXXIV.

God's purposes effectual, and Christ's invitation sincere. John vi. 37

1 Is there a sight in earth or heaven
Can such delight impart,
As Jesus' wide-extended arms
And softly-melting heart?

2 "All that my heavenly Father gives
Shall come, (the Saviour cries,)
And every weakest soul, that comes,
Find favour in mine eyes

3 "I 'll not reject him with disdain,
Nor hurl him down to hell;
But folded in my kind embrace,
He safe and blest shall dwell."

4 Hearken, ye dying sinners all;
All hasten, while ye hear;
For crowds of wretched souls at once
May find their refuge there.

5 I hear thy voice, and I obey;
Low at thy feet I fall;
Nor shall the tempter's voice prevail
Against the Saviour's call.

HYMN CCXXV.

Christ's invitation to thirsty souls. John vii. 37.

1 The Lord of life exalted stands,
Aloud he cries, and spreads his hands:
He calls ten thousand sinners round,
And sends a voice from every wound.

2 "Attend, ye thirsty souls, draw near,
And satiate all your wishes here:
Behold the living fountain flows
In streams as various as your woes.

3 "An ample pardon here I give,
And bid the sentenced rebel live,
Show him my Father's smiling face,
And lodge him in his dear embrace.

4 "I purge from sin's detested stain
And make the crimson white again,
Lead to celestial joys refined,
And lasting as the deathless mind.

5 "Must I know my pity prove?
Witness the words of melting love,
The gushing tear, the labouring breath,
And all these scars of bleeding death."

6 Blest Saviour, I can doubt no more;
I hear, and wonder, and adore:
Panting I seek that fountain-head,
Whence waters so divine proceed.

7 Clear spring of life, flow on, and roll
With growing swell from pole to pole,
Till flowers and fruits of paradise
Round all the winding current rise.

8 Still near thy stream may I be found,
Long as I tread this earthly ground,
Cheer with thy wave each thirsty soul
Then through the fields of Canaan [illegible]

HYMN CCXXVI.

True liberty given by Christ. John viii. 32

1 Hark! the [illegible] Son [illegible] sounds
To life and liberty;

Transported fall before his feet.
Who makes the prisoners free.

2 The cursed bonds of sin he breaks,
And breaks old Satan's chain:
Smiling he deals those pardons round,
Which free from endless pain.

3 Into the captive heart he pours
His Spirit from on high;
We lose the terrors of the slave,
And Abba, Father, cry.

4 Shake off your bonds, and sing his grace:
The sinner's friend proclaim;
And call on all around to seek
True freedom by his name.

5 Walk on at large, till you attain
Your Father's house above!
There shall you wear immortal crowns,
And sing redeeming love.

HYMN CCXXVII.

The same. John viii. 36.

1 And shall we still be slaves,
And in our fetters lie,
When summoned by a voice divine
To assert our liberty.

2 Did the great Saviour bleed
Our freedom to obtain,
That we should trample on his blood,
And glory in our chain?

3 Alas, the sordid mind!
How all its powers are broke!
Proud of a tyrant's haughty sway,
And practised to the yoke!

4 Divine Redeemer, hear,
Thy sovereign power impart,
And let thy generous Spirit wake
True ardour in our heart.

5 Then shall the sons of death,
That in the dungeon lie,
Spring to the throne of pardoning grace,
And Abba, Father, cry.

HYMN CCXXVIII.

Christ the door. John x. 9

1 Awake, our souls, and bless his name,
Whose mercies never fail;
Who opens wide a door of hope
In Achor's gloomy vale.*

2 Behold the portal wide displayed,
The buildings strong and fair:
Within are pastures fresh and green
And living streams are there.

* Hosea ii. 15.

3 Enter, my soul, with cheerful haste,
For Jesus is the door;
Nor fear the serpent's wily arts,
Nor fear the lion's roar.

4 O may thy grace the nations lead,
And Jews and Gentiles come;
All travelling through one beauteous gate,
To one eternal home.

HYMN CCXXIX.

Abundant life by Christ our Shepherd. John x. 10

1 Praise to our Shepherd's gracious name,
Who on so kind an errand came;
Came, that by him his flock might live,
And more abundant life receive.

2 Hail, great Emanuel from above,
High seated on thy throne of love!
O pour the vital torrent down,
Thy people's joy, their Lord's renown.

3 Scarce half alive we sigh and cry;
Scarce raise to thee our languid eye!
Kind Saviour, let our dying state
Compassion in thy heart create.

4 The Shepherd's blood the sheep must heal;
O may we all its influence feel;
Till inward deep experience show,
Christ can begin a heaven below.

HYMN CCXXX.

Christ's sheep described. John x. 27

1 Thy flock, with what a tender care,
Blest Jesus, dost thou keep!
Fain would my weak, my wandering soul
Be numbered with thy sheep.

2 Gentle, and tractable, and plain
My heart would ever be,
Averse to harm, propense to help,
And faithful still to thee.

3 The gentle accents of thy voice
My listening soul would hear;
And, by the signals of thy will,
I all my course would steer.

4 I follow where my Shepherd leads,
And mark the path he drew;
My Shepherd's feet mount Zion treads,
And I shall reach it too.

HYMN CCXXXI.

The happiness and security of Christ's sheep. John x. 28

1 My soul, with joy attend,
While Jesus silence breaks:

No angel's harp such music yields,
As what my Shepherd speaks.

2 "I know my sheep, (he cries,)
My soul approves them well:
Vain is the treacherous world's disguise
And vain the rage of hell.

3 "I freely feed them now
With tokens of my love,
But richer pastures I prepare,
And sweeter streams above.

4 "Unnumbered years of bliss
I to my sheep will give:
And, while my throne unshaken stands,
Shall all my chosen live.

5 "This tried almighty hand
Is raised for their defence,
Where is the power shall reach them there?
Or what shall force them thence?"

6 Enough, my gracious Lord,
Let faith triumphant cry,
My heart can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die.

HYMN CCXXXII.

Christ's sheep given by the Father, and guarded by Omnipotence. John x. 29, 30.

1 In one harmonious cheerful song,
Ye happy saints, combine;
Loud let it sound from every tongue,
The Saviour is divine.

2 The least, the feeblest of the sheep
To him the Father gave;
Kind is his heart the charge to keep,
And strong his arm to save.

3 In Christ the Almighty Father dwells,
And Christ and he are one;
The rebel power which Christ assails,
Attacks the eternal throne.

4 That hand, which heaven and earth sustains,
And bars the gates of hell,
And rivets Satan down in chains,
Shall guard his chosen well.

5 Now let the infernal lion roar,
How vain his threats appear!
When he can match Jehovah's power,
I will begin to fear.

HYMN CCXXXIII.

The attractive influence of a crucified Saviour.
John xii. 32.

1 Behold the amazing sight,
The Saviour lifted high!
Behold the Son of God's delight
Expire in agony!

2 For whom, for whom, my heart,
Were all these sorrows borne?
Why did he feel that piercing smart,
And meet that various scorn?

3 For love of us he bled,
And all in torture died;
'Twas love that bowed his fainting head,
And oped his gushing side.

4 I see, and I adore
In sympathy of love!
I feel the strong attractive power
To lift my soul above.

5 Drawn by such cords as these,
Let all the earth combine
With cheerful ardour to confess
The energy divine.

6 In thee our hearts unite,
Nor share thy griefs alone,
But from thy cross pursue their flight
To thy triumphant throne.

HYMN CCXXXIV.

Christ's mysterious conduct to be unfolded hereafter.
John xiii. 7.

1 Jesus, we own thy sovereign hand,
Thy faithful care we own:
Wisdom and love are all thy ways,
When most to us unknown.

2 By thee the springs of life were formed,
And by thy breath are broke,
And good as every awful word
Our gracious Lord hath spoke.

3 To thee we yield our comforts up,
To thee our lives resign;
In straits and dangers rich and safe,
If we and ours are thine.

4 Thy saints in earlier life removed,
In sweeter accents sing;
And bless the swiftness of their flight,
That bore them to their King.

5 The burthens of a lengthened day
With patience we would bear
Till evening's welcome hour shall show
We were our Master's care.

HYMN CCXXXV.

Christ's pity and consolation for his [illegible]
John xiv. 1–4.

1 Peace, all ye sorrows of the heart
And all my tears, be dry:
That Christian ne'er can be forlorn,
That views his Jesus nigh.

2 "Let not your bosoms throb, the slave
Nor be your souls afraid!
Trust in your God's almighty name
And trust your Saviour's aid.

3 "Fair mansions in my Father's house
For all his children wait;
And I, your elder brother, go
To open wide the gate.

4 "And if I thither go before,
A dwelling to prepare,
I surely shall return again,
That I may fix you there.

5 "United in eternal love,
My chosen shall remain,
And with rejoicing hearts shall share
The honours of my reign."

6 Yes, Lord, thy gracious words we hear,
And cordial joys they bring:
Frail nature may extort a groan,
But faith shall learn to sing.

HYMN CCXXXVI.

The Christian's life connected with that of Christ. John xiv. 19.

1 THE covenant of a Saviour's love
Shall stand for ever good,
And thus his life shall guard the souls
He purchased with his blood.

2 "I live for ever, (saith the Lord,)
And you shall therefore live;
Receive with pleasure every pledge
My power and love can give."

3 We own the promise, Prince of grace;
Though earthly helpers die;
And animate our fainting hearts,
While Christ our friend is nigh.

4 The king of fears can do no more
Than stop our mortal breath;
But Jesus gives a nobler life,
That cannot yield to death.

HYMN CCXXXVII.

Abiding in Christ necessary to our fruitfulness. John xv. 4.

1 LORD of the vineyard, we adore
That power and grace divine
Which plants our wild, our barren souls
In Christ the living vine.

2 For ever may they there abide,
And, from that vital root
Be influence spread through every branch
To form and feed the fruit.

3 Shine forth, my God, the clusters warm
With rays of sacred love;
Till Eden's soil, and Zion's streams
The generous plant improve.

HYMN CCXXXVIII.

Our prayers effectual when we abide in Christ, and his word abideth in us. John xv. 8.

1 HAIL, gracious Saviour, all divine!
Mysterious ever-living vine!
To thee united may we live,
And nourished by thine influence thrive.

2 Still may our souls in thee abide,
Torn by no tempests from thy side;
Nor from its place within our heart
Thy promise or thy law depart.

3 Then shall our prayers accepted rise,
Through thee a grateful sacrifice,
And all our sighs before thy throne
Descend in ample blessings down.

4 In silent hope our souls shall wait
Their pension from thy mercy's gate;
Nor can our lips or hearts express
A wish proportioned to thy grace.

HYMN CCXXXIX.

Continuing in Christ's love. John xv.

1 To all his flock, what wondrous love
Doth our kind Shepherd bear!
As he to his great Father's heart,
So we to his are dear.

2 So sure, so constant, and so strong,
Do his endearments prove:
O may their energy prevail
To fix us in his love.

3 No more let my divided heart
From this blest centre turn:
But fired by such all-potent rays,
With flames immortal burn.

4 Descend, and all thy power display,
And all thy love reveal;
That the warm streams of Jesus' blood
Thus frozen heart may feel.

HYMN CCXL.

The apostle's call to Christians chosen by Christ to bring forth permanent fruit. John xv. 16.

1 LORD, my God, thy sovereign grace,
And bring the praise to thee;
If thou my chosen portion art,
Thou first hast chosen me.

2 My gracious Counsellor and Guide
Will hear me when I pray;

Nor, while I urge a Saviour's name,
Will frown my soul away.

3 Blest Jesus, animate my heart
With beams of heavenly love,
And teach that cold unthankful soul
The heavenly seed to improve.

4 In copious showers thy Spirit send
To water all the ground;
So to the honour of thy name
Shall lasting fruit be found.

HYMN CCXLI

Peace in Christ amidst tribulations. John xvi. 33.

1 Henceforth let each believing heart
From anxious sorrows cease:
Though storms of trouble rage around
In Jesus we have peace.

2 His blood from wrath to come redeems
And his almighty grace,
By bitterest draughts of deep distress
Its healing power displays.

3 Jesus, our Captain, marched before
To lead us to the fight;
And now he reacheth out the crown
With heavenly glories bright.

4 Lord, 'tis enough; thy voice we hear,
That crown by faith we see:
No sorrows shall o'erwhelm our souls
Since none divide from thee.

HYMN CCXLII

Christ sanctifying himself, that his people may be sanctified. John xvii. 19.

1 Behold the bleeding Lamb of God
Our spotless sacrifice!
By hands of barbarous sinners nailed
Nailed to the cross, he dies.

2 Blest Jesus, whence this streaming blood?
And whence this God descent?
Whence all these pointed thorns, that rend
Thy venerable brow?

3 "I sanctify myself, he cries,
That thou mayst holy be.
Come, trace my life, come, trace my love,
And learn to copy me."

4 Dear Lord, we pant for holiness,
And inbred sin we mourn:
To the bright path of thy commands
Our wandering footsteps turn.

5 Not more sincerely would we wish
To climb the heavenly hill,
Than here, with all our utmost power,
Thy model to imbibe.

HYMN CCXLIII

Meditations on the sepulchre of the saviour. John xix. 41.

1 Full sepulchres I [illegible]
Through all the road on either hand!
And here upon the earthen shelf
In every garden of delight!

2 Thither the winding alleys tend;
There all the flowery borders end;
And [illegible]
Fragrance and music [illegible]

3 Deep in that grassy [illegible]
My fathers and my brethren dwell;
Beneath its broad and gloomy shade
My kindred and my friends are laid:

4 But, while I tread the solemn way,
My faith that Saviour would survey,
Who deigned to sojourn in the tomb
And left behind a rich perfume.

5 My thoughts with ecstasy unknown,
While from his grave they view his throne,
Through my own sepulchre can see
A paradise [illegible]

HYMN CCXLIV

Christ ascending to his Father and God and our God. John xx. 17.

1 In raptures let our hearts ascend
Our heavenly seats to view,
And grateful trace that shining path
Our rising Saviour drew.

2 "I go to my Father and my God,
I go, thus Conqueror rose,
Up to my Father, and your God,
My [illegible]

3 And doth the Lord of glory call
Such worms his brethren dear?
[illegible]
And show our Father there?

4 And doth he touch my trembling lyre
That tuneful sound, my God?
And breathe his Spirit on my heart
To shed his grace abroad?

5 O world, prepare a gentler life
And thou shalt have my love:
Till then, my Father claims it all,
And Christ, who dwells above.

6 Dear Jesus, still [illegible]
That struggles with its clay,
And [illegible]
To sing [illegible]

HYMN CCXLV

The disciples joy at Christ's appearance to them after his resurrection. John xx. 19, 20.

1 Come, our unslaughter'd Saviour, come
Illustrious Conqueror o'er the tomb
Hear thine assembled servants bless,
And fill our hearts with sacred peace.

2 O come thyself, most gracious Lord,
With all the joy thy wounds afford
Reveal the beauties of thy face,
And make us feel thy vital grace.

3 With rapture kneeling round we greet
Thy pierced hands, thy wounded feet,
And from the scar that marks thy side,
We see our life's warm torrent glide.

4 Enter our hearts, Redeemer blest;
Enter, thou ever honoured guest,
Not for one transient hour alone,
But there to fix thy lasting throne.

5 Own this mean dwelling as thy home;
And, when our life's last hour is come,
Let us but die, as in thy sight,
And death shall vanish in delight.

HYMN CCXLVI.

Appeal to Christ for sincerity of love to him.
John xxi. 15.

1 Do not I love thee, O my Lord?
Behold my heart and see,
And turn each cursed idol out,
That dares to rival thee.

2 Do not I love thee from my soul?
Then let me nothing love;
Dead be my heart to every joy,
When Jesus cannot move.

3 Is not thy name melodious still
To mine attentive ear;
Doth not each pulse with pleasure bound
My Saviour's voice to hear?

4 Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock
I would disdain to feed?
Hast thou a foe, before whose face
I fear thy cause to plead?

5 Would not mine ardent spirit vie
With angels round the throne,
To execute thy sacred will,
And make thy glory known?

6 Would not my heart pour forth its blood
In honour of thy name?
And challenge the cold hand of death
To damp the immortal flame.

7 Then knowest I love thee, dearest Lord;
But O! I long to soar
Far from the sphere of mortal joys,
And learn to love more.

HYMN CCXLVII.

Zeal for the cause of Christ; or, Peter and John following their Master. John xxi. 19–24.

1 Blest men, who stretch their willing hands,
Submissive to their Lord's commands,
And yield their liberty and breath
To him, that loved their souls in death!

2 Lead me to suffer, and to die,
If thou, my gracious Lord, art nigh:
One smile from thee my heart shall fire,
And teach me smiling to expire.

3 If nature at the trial shake,
And from the cross or flames draw back,
Grace can its feeble courage raise,
And turn its tremblings into praise.

4 While scarce I dare, with Peter, say,
"I'll boldly tread the bleeding way;"
Yet in thy steps, like John, I'd move
With humble hope, and silent love.

HYMN CCXLVIII.

Christ exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.
Acts v. 31.

1 Exalted Prince of life, we own
The royal honours of thy throne
'Tis fixed by God's almighty hand,
And seraphs bow at thy command.

2 Exalted Saviour, we confess
The sovereign triumphs of thy grace,
Where beams of gentle radiance shine,
And temper majesty divine.

3 Wide thy resistless sceptre sway,
Till all thine enemies obey:
Wide may thy cross its virtue prove,
And conquer millions by its love.

4 Mighty to vanquish, and forgive!
Thine Israel shall repent and live;
And loud proclaim thy healing breath,
Which works them life, who wrought the death.

HYMN CCXLIX.

The believer committing his departing spirit to Jesus.
Acts vii. 58.

1 O Christ, that hast redemption wrought,
Patron of souls, thy blood hath bought
To thee our spirits we commend,
Mighty to succour from the end.

2 Millions of blissful souls above
In realms of purity and love
With songs of endless praise proclaim
The honours of thy faithful name.

3 When all the powers of nature failed
Thy ever constant care prevailed;
Courage and joy thy friendship spoke
When every mortal bond was broke.

4 We on that friendship, Lord, repose
The healing balm of all our woes;
And we, when sinking in the grave
Trust thine omnipotence to save.

5 O may our spirits by thy hand
Be gathered to that happy band
Who midst the blessings of thy reign
Lose all remembrance of their pain.

6 In raptures there divinely sweet
Give us our kindred souls to meet
And wait with them that brighter day
Which all thy triumph shall display.

HYMN CCL

Peter's admonition to Simon Magus — Acts viii 21—24

1 Searcher of hearts, before thy face
I all my soul display;
And, conscious of its innate* arts,
Entreat thy strict survey.

2 If lurking in its inmost folds,
I any sin conceal,
O let a ray of light divine
The secret guile reveal.

3 If tinctured with that odious gall
Unknowing I remain,
Let grace, like a pure silver stream,
Wash out the accursed stain.

4 If in these fatal fetters bound,
A wretched slave I lie,
Smite off my chains and wake my soul
To light and liberty.

5 To humble penitence and prayer
Be gentle pity given:
Speak ample pardon to my heart,
And seal its claim to heaven.

HYMN CCLI

The descent of the Spirit ... on his ordination days — Acts x. 44

1 Great Father of each perfect gift,
Behold thy servants wait
With longing eyes and lifted hands.
We flock around thy gate.

2 O shed abroad that royal gift,
Thy Spirit from above,
To bless our eyes with sacred light,
And fire our hearts with love.

3 With speedy wings may he descend
And solid comfort bring,
And o'er our languid souls extend
His all-reviving wing.

4 Blest earnest of eternal joy
Declare our sins forgiven,
And bear with sweet assay before
Our raptured thoughts to heaven.

5 Dismiss, O God, [illegible]
That earth its fruit may yield,
And change this barren wilderness
To Carmel's flowery field!

HYMN CCLII

The need of salvation — Acts xvi. 30

1 And why do our admiring eyes
Those gospel-glories see?
And whence, doth every heart reply,
Salvation sent to me?

2 In fatal shades of midnight gloom
Ten thousand wretches stray;
And Satan blinds ten thousand more
Amidst the blaze of day.

3 Millions of ranging souls around
[illegible]
Harmonious sounds of grace transformed
To [illegible]

4 And dost thou, Lord, address my heart
And show my sins forgiven,
And hear thy embassy to me
Amongst the lusts of heathens?

5 [illegible]
We sing the Saviour's name;
And, while the long salvation lasts,
[illegible]

HYMN CCLIII

The unknown God — Acts xvii. 23

1 Thou mighty Lord, or God alone,
A King of majesty unknown,
And O! [illegible]
Beyond the reach of mortal view.

2 Yet through the [illegible]
Some [illegible]
And, where thy gracious gospel shines
We read [illegible]

3 But O! [illegible]
How learned thy nature and thy ways

While thousands, even in fields of light
Are buried in Egyptian night.

4 They tread thy courts, thy word they hear
And to thy solemn rites draw near
Yet, though salvation seems so nigh
Because they know not God, they die.

5 Send thy victorious gospel forth,
Wide from these regions of the north;
And through thy churches graces impart
To write thy name on every heart.

HYMN CCLIV.

God's command to all men to repent. Acts xvii. 30.

1 REPENT, the voice celestial cries,
No longer dare delay:
The wretch that scorns the mandate* dies,
And meets a fiery day.

2 No more the sovereign eye of God
O'erlooks the crimes of men:
His heralds are despatched abroad
To warn the world of sin.

3 The summons reach through all the earth.
Let earth attend and fear:
Listen, ye men of royal birth,
And let their vassals† hear.

4 Together in his presence bow,
And all your guilt confess;
Accept the offered Saviour now,
Nor trifle with the grace.

5 Bow, ere the awful trumpet sound,
And call you to his bar:
For mercy knows the appointed bound,
And turns to vengeance there.

6 Amazing love, that yet will call,
And yet prolong our days!
Our hearts subdued by goodness fall,
And weep, and love, and praise.

HYMN CCLV.

Paul's solicitude to finish his course with joy. Acts xx. 24.

1 ASSIST us, Lord, thy name to praise
For this rich gospel of thy grace
And, that our hearts may love it more,
Teach them to feel its vital power.

2 With joy may we our course pursue,
And keep the crown of life in view;
That crown, which in our heav'n repays
The labour of ten thousand days.

3 Should bands of death obstruct our way,
Unmoved their terrors we 'll survey;
And the last hour improve for thee
The last of life or liberty.

4 Welcome those bonds, which may unite
Our souls to their supreme delight!
Welcome that death, whose parental stroke
Hears us to Christ, our better life!

HYMN CCLVI.

Paul preaching and Felix trembling. Acts xxiv. 25.

1 GREAT Sovereign of the human heart,
Thy mighty energy impart,
Which darts at once through breasts of steel,
And makes the nether millstone‡ feel.

2 Let sinners tremble at thy word,
Struck by the terrors of the Lord;
And, while they tremble, let them flee,
And seek their help, their life, from thee.

3 O let them seize the present day,
Nor risk salvation by delay;
To-morrow, Lord, to thee belongs:
This night may vindicate thy wrongs.

4 This night may stop their fleeting breath,
And seal them to eternal death,
May veil redemption from their sight,
And give them flames instead of light.

5 Or should succeeding years remain,
Years, with their sabbaths, all in vain
Before their darkened eyes may roll,
And more obdurate leave the soul.

6 Great Saviour, let thy pity rise,
And make the wretched trifflers wise,
Lest pangs and tremblings felt in vain,
Hasten and feed immortal pain.

HYMN CCLVII.

Help obtained of God. Acts xxvi. 22.

For a New-year's Day.

1 GREAT God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand:
The opening year thy mercy shows
That mercy crowns it, till it close.

2 By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still are we guarded by our God
By his incessant bounty fed,
By his unerring counsel led.

3 With grateful hearts the past we own,
The future, all to us unknown,
We to thy guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before thy feet.

4 In scenes exalted or depressed,
Thou art our joy, and thou our rest

* Command. † Subjects. ‡ [illegible]

Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise
Adored through all our changing days.

5 When death shall interrupt these songs
And seal in silence mortal tongues,
Our helper God, in whom we trust,
In better worlds our souls shall boast.

HYMN CCLVIII

Treasuring up wrath by despising mercy. Rom. ii. 4, 5.

1 Ungrateful sinners, whence this scorn
Of long-extended grace?
And whence this madness, that insults
The Almighty to his face?

2 Is it because his patience waits,
And pitying bowels move,
You multiply audacious crimes,
And spurn his richest love?

3 Is all the treasured wrath so small
You labour still for more,
Though not eternal rolling years
Can e'er exhaust the store?

4 Swift doth the day of vengeance come
That must your sentence seal;
And righteous judgment now unknown
In all its pomp reveal.

5 Alarmed and melted at thy voice,
Our conquered hearts would bow;
And, to escape the thunderer then,
Embrace the Saviour now.

HYMN CCLIX

The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit. Rom. v. 5

1 Descend, immortal Dove,
Spread thy kind wings abroad,
And, wrapt in flames of holy love,
Bear all my soul to God.

2 Jesus, my Lord, reveal
In charms of grace divine,
And be thyself the sacred seal
That pearl of price is mine.

3 Behold my heart expands
To catch the heavenly fire,
It longs to feel the gentle bands,
And groans with strong desire.

4 Thy love, my God, appears
And brings salvation down,
My cordial through this vale of tears,
In paradise my crown.

HYMN CCLX

Christians quickened and raised by the Spirit. Rom. viii. 11

1 Why should our mourning thoughts delight
To grovel on the dust?
Or why should streams of tears run
Around the expiring pile?

2 Did not the Lord our Saviour die
And triumph o'er the grave?
Did not our Lord ascend on high,
And prove his power to save?

3 Doth not the sacred Spirit come,
And dwell in all the saints?
And should the temples of his grace
Resound with long complaints?

4 Awake, my soul, and like the sun
Burst through each sable cloud,
And thou, my voice, though broke with sighs,
Tune forth thy songs aloud.

5 The Spirit raised my Saviour up,
When he had bled for me,
And spite of death and hell shall raise
Thy pious friends and thee.

6 Awake, ye saints, that dwell in dust,
Your hymns of victory sing;
And let his dying servants trust
Their ever-living King.

HYMN CCLXI

God's readiness to give all things with the gift of his Son. Rom. viii. 32

1 Now let my soul with transport rise
And range through earth, and travel the skies,
And view each various form of good,
Where angels hold their high abode.

2 I give my thoughts unbounded scope,
On equal pinions soars my hope;
My faith at noblest objects aims,
And what she sees she wants to claim.

3 Hath not the bounteous King of heaven
From his embrace already given
That Son of his eternal love,
Who filled the brightest throne above;

4 Behold his hand on Jesus laid!
Behold that Lamb a victim made!
And what should move his hand to bless
Yet sinners unreconciled with his love?

5 My soul, with heavenly faith embrace
The sacred covenant of his grace;
Then in delightful silence wait
The issues of a love so great.

HYMN CCLXII

Redeeming with the heart and confessing with the mouth necessary to salvation. Rom. x. 9, 10.

1 And is salvation brought so near,
Where sinful men expiring lie?
Triumph, my soul, the sound to hear,
And shout it joyous to the sky.

3 I ask not, who to heaven shall soar,
That Christ the Saviour thence may come
Or who earth's inmost depths assail
To bring him from the dreary tomb.

3 From heaven on wings of love he flew
And conqueror from the tomb he sprung
My heart believes the witness true,
And dictates to my faithful tongue.

4 I sing salvation brought so near,
No more on earth expiring lie;
I teach the world my joys to hear,
And shout them to the echoing sky.

HYMN CCLXIII.

The living sacrifice. Rom. xii. 1.

1 And will the eternal King
So mean a gift reward?
That offering, Lord, with joy we bring,
Which thy own hand prepared.

2 We own thy various claim,
And to thine altar move,
The willing victims of thy grace,
And bound with cords of love.

3 Descend celestial fire,
The sacrifice inflame;
So shall a grateful odour rise,
Through our Redeemer's name.

HYMN CCLXIV.

The near approach of salvation, an engagement to diligence and love. Rom. xiii. 11.

1 Awake, ye saints, and raise your eyes,
And raise your voices high;
Awake, and praise that sovereign love,
That shows salvation nigh.

2 On all the wings of time it flies,
Each moment brings it near;
Then welcome each declining day!
Welcome each closing year!

3 Not many years their rounds shall run,
Nor many mornings rise,
Ere all its glories stand revealed
To our admiring eyes.

4 Ye wheels of nature, speed your course
Ye mortal powers, decay;
Fast as ye bring the night of death
Ye bring eternal day.

HYMN CCLXV.

The God of peace bruising Satan. Rom. xvi. 20.

1 Ye armies of the living God,
In his all-conquering name,
Lift up your banners, and aloud
Your Leader's grace proclaim.

2 What though the prince of hell invade
With showers of fiery darts,
And join to the fierce lion's roar
The serpent's wily arts?

3 Jesus, who leads his hosts to war,
Shall tread the monster down,
And every faithful soldier share
The triumph and the crown.

4 So Israel on the haughty necks
Of Canaan's tyrants trod,
And sung their Joshua's conquering sword,
And sung their faithful God.*

HYMN CCLXVI.

Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

1 My God, assist me, while I raise
An anthem of harmonious praise:
My heart thy wonders shall proclaim,
And spread its banners in thy name.

2 In Christ I view a store divine:
My Father, all that store is thine;
By thee prepared, by thee bestowed:
Hail to the Saviour, and the God!

3 When gloomy shades my soul o'erspread,
"Let there be light," the Almighty said:
And Christ, my Sun, his beams displays,
And scatters round celestial rays.

4 Condemned, thy criminal I stood,
And awful justice asked my blood:
That welcome Saviour from thy throne
Brought righteousness and pardon down.

5 My soul was all o'erspread with sin,
And lo, his grace hath made me clean:
He rescues from the infernal foe,
And full redemption will bestow.

6 Ye saints, assist my grateful tongue:
Ye angels, warble back my song:
For love like this demands the praise
Of heavenly harps, and endless days.

HYMN CCLXVII.

Being joined to Christ, and one spirit with him. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

1 My Saviour, I am thine
By everlasting bands;
My name, my heart, I would resign,
My soul is in thy hands.

2 To thee I still would cleave
With ever growing zeal

* Joshua x. 24.

Let millions tempt me Christ to leave,
They never shall prevail.

3 His Spirit shall unite
My soul to him, my head;
Shall form me to his image bright,
And teach his path to tread.

4 Death may my soul divide
From this abode of clay;
But love shall keep me near his side
Through all the gloomy way.

5 Since Christ and we are one,
What should remain to fear?
If he in heaven hath fixed his throne,
He 'll fix his members there.

HYMN CCLXVIII

The transitory nature of the world, an argument for Christian moderation. 1 Cor. vii. 29—31

1 Spring up, my soul, with ardent flight,
Nor let this earth delude my sight
With glittering trifles gay and vain:
Wisdom divine directs thy view
To objects ever grand and new,
And faith displays the shining train.

2 Be dead, my hopes, to all below,
Nor let unbounded torrents flow,
When mourning o'er my withered joys:
So this deceitful world is known;
Possessed I call it not my own;
Nor glory in its painted toys.

3 The empty pageant rolls along,
The giddy unexperienced throng
Pursue it with enchanted eyes:
It passeth in swift march away,
Still more and more its charms decay,
Till the last gaudy colour dies.*

4 My God, to thee my soul shall turn,
For thee my noblest passions burn,
And drink in bliss from thee alone:
I fix on that unchanging home,
Where never-fading pleasures bloom,
Fresh springing round thy radiant throne.

HYMN CCLXIX

God's fidelity in moderating temptation.
1 Cor. x. 13.

1 Now let the feeble all be strong,
And make Jehovah's arm their song:
His shield is spread o'er every saint,
And thus supported, who shall faint?

2 What though the hosts of hell engage
With mingled cruelty and rage?
A faithful God restrains their hands,
And chains them down in iron bands.

3 Bound by his word he will display
A strength proportioned to our day;
And, when united trials meet,
Will show a path of safe retreat.

4 Thus far we prove that promise good,
Which Jesus ratified with blood:
Still is he gracious, wise, and just,
And still in him let Israel trust.

HYMN CCLXX

Bearing the image of the earthly and the [illegible]
Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 49.

1 With flowing eyes and bleeding hearts
A blasted world survey;
See the wide ruin sin hath wrought
In one unhappy day!

2 Adam, in God's own image formed,
From God and bliss estranged,
And all the joys of paradise
For guilt and horror changed!

3 Ages of labour and of grief
He mourned his glory lost;
At length the goodliest work of heaven
Sunk down to common dust.

4 O fatal heritage bequeathed
To all his helpless race!
Through the thick mazes of sin and woe
Thus to the grave we pass.

5 But, O my soul, with rapture hear
The second Adam's name,
And the celestial gifts he brings,
To all his seed, proclaim.

6 In holiness and joy complete
He reigns to endless years,
And each adopted chosen child
His splendid image wears.

7 What though in mortal life they fall?
What though by death they fall?
Jesus in one triumphant day
Transforms and crowns them all.

8 Praise to his rich mysterious grace!
Even by our fall we rise;
And gain, for earthly Eden lost,
A heavenly paradise.

HYMN CCLXXI

Ministers comforted, &c. [illegible]
2 Cor. i. 4.

1 Fountain of comfort and of love,
Thy streams, how free they flow!

* Pageants, images or emblematical figures in a procession or procession continually moving, and quickly gone out of sight. See *Francis Expositor* &c.

First water all the world above,
Then visit us below!

2 From Christ, the Head, what grace descends
To cherish every part!
He shares his joys with all his friends,
For all have shared his heart.

3 What though the sorrows here they feel
Are manifold and great!
He brings new consolations still,
As various and as sweet.

4 He shows our numerous sins forgiven,
And shows our covenant God;
He witnesseth our right to heaven,
The purchase of his blood.

5 Though earth and hell against us join,
In him we are secure;
Our diadems shall brighter shine
For all we now endure.

6 On every faithful shepherd's breast,
Lord, send these comforts down;
That they may lead their flock to rest,
Which their own souls have known.

HYMN CCLXXII.

God's delivering goodness acknowledged and trusted.
2 Cor. i. 10.

A Song for the Fifth of November.

1 Praise to the Lord, whose mighty hand
So oft revealed hath saved our land;
And, when united nations rose,
Hath shamed and scourged our haughtiest foes.

2 When mighty navies from afar
To Britain wafted floating war,
His breath dispersed them all with ease,
And sunk their terrors in the seas. *

3 While for our princes they prepare
In caverns deep a burning snare;
He shot from heaven a piercing ray,
And the dark treachery brought to day. †

4 Princes and priests again combine
New chains to forge, new snares to twine;
Again our gracious God appears,
And breaks their chains, and cuts their snares.

5 Obedient winds at his command
Convey his hero to our land;
The sons of Rome with terror view,
And speed their flight when none pursue. ‡

6 Such great deliverance God hath wrought,
And down to us salvation brought;
And still the care of guardian heaven
Secures the bliss itself hath given.

* [illegible]

† [illegible]

‡ [illegible]

7 In thee we trust, Almighty Lord,
Continued rescue to afford:
Still be thy powerful arm made bare,
For all thy servants' hopes are there.

HYMN CCLXXIII.

Ministers a sweet savour, whether of life or death.
2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

1 Praise to the Lord on high,
Who spreads his triumph wide!
While Jesus' fragrant name
Is breathed on every side:
Balmy and rich
The odours rise,
And fill the earth
And reach the skies.

2 Ten thousand dying souls
Its influence feel and live;
Sweeter than vital air
The incense they receive:
They breathe anew,
And rise and sing
Jesus the Lord,
Their conquering King.

3 But sinners scorn the grace
That brings salvation nigh:
They turn their face away,
And faint, and fall, and die.
So sad a doom,
Ye saints, deplore,
For oh they fall
To rise no more.

4 Yet, wise and mighty God,
Shall all thy servants be,
In those who live or die,
A savour sweet to thee:
Supremely bright
Thy grace shall shine,
Guarded with flames
Of wrath divine.

HYMN CCLXXIV.

God shining into the heart. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

1 Praise to the Lord of boundless might!
With uncreated glories bright,
His presence gilds the worlds above,
The unchanging source of light and love.

2 Our rising earth his eye beheld,
When in substantial darkness veiled:
The shapeless chaos, nature's womb,
Lay buried in eternal gloom.§

3 Let there be light, Jehovah said,
And light o'er all its face was spread:

§ Genesis i. 2, 3

Nature, arrayed in charms unknown,
Gay with its new-born lustre shone.

4 He sees the mind, when lost it lies
In shades of ignorance and vice,
And darts from heaven a vivid * ray,
And changes midnight into day.

5 Shine, mighty God, with vigour shine
On this benighted heart of mine;
And let thy glories stand revealed,
As in the Saviour's face beheld.

6 My soul, revived by heaven-born day,
Thy radiant image shall display,
While all my faculties unite
To praise the Lord, who gives me light.

HYMN CCLXXV.

The gospel treasure in earthen vessels. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

1 How rich thy bounty, King of kings!
Thy favours how divine!
The blessings which thy gospel brings,
How splendidly they shine!

2 Gold is but dross, and gems but toys,
Should gold and gems compare;
How mean, when set against those joys
Thy poorest servants share!

3 Yet all these treasures of thy grace
Are lodged in urns † of clay;
And the weak sons of mortal race,
The immortal gifts convey.

4 Feebly they lisp thy glories forth;
Yet grace the victory gives:
Quickly they moulder back to earth;
Yet still thy gospel lives.

5 Such wonders power divine effects;
Such trophies ‡ God can raise;
His hand from crumbling dust erects
Long monuments of praise.

HYMN CCLXXVI.

Living to him who died for us. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

1 My Lord, didst thou endure such smart
My life, when forfeited, to save?
And didst thou bear upon thy heart
My name, when rising from the grave?

2 Am I in thy remembrance still,
Midst all the glories of thy throne?
To form thy servant to thy will,
And fix my dwelling near thy own?

3 What can a feeble worm repay
For love so infinite as thine?
The torrent bears my soul away,
The impetuous stream of grace divine.§

4 To thee, my Lord, it bears me on;
Self shall be deified || no more;
By self betrayed, by self undone,
I live by thy recovering power.

5 Accept a soul so dearly bought;
Bought by thy life upon the tree:
A soul which, by thy Spirit taught,
Knows no delight but serving thee.

HYMN CCLXXVII.

God the author of consolation. 2 Cor. vii. 6.

1 The Lord, how rich his comforts are!
How wide they spread! how high they rise!
He pours in balm to bleeding hearts,
And wipes the tears from flowing eyes.

2 I have no hope, my spirit cried,
Just trembling on the brink of hell;
I am thy hope, the Lord replied,
My love secures its favourites well.

3 My grateful soul shall speak his praise,
Who turns its tremblings into songs;
And those that mourn shall learn from me
Salvation to our God belongs.

HYMN CCLXXVIII.

Satan's strong holds cast down by the gospel.
2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

1 Shout, for the battlements are fall'n,
Which heaven itself defied!
The aspiring towers dismantled ¶ all,
Now spread their ruins wide!

2 Thy wondrous trumpets, Prince of peace,
Sent forth their mighty sound;
The strength of heathen was struck,
And tottered to the ground.**

3 No more proud reasonings shall dispute
What truth divine declares;
No more self-righteousness to plead
Its own perfections dares.

4 No strength our ruined powers can boast
Thy precepts to fulfil:
No liberty we ask or wish
For our rebellious will.

5 The gates we open to admit
The Saviour's gentle sway:
Blest Jesus, 'tis thy right to reign,
Our pleasure to obey.

* Lively, sprightly. † Vessels.
‡ Monuments or tokens of victory.
§ Meaning the new energies of the Spirit of God, which he is pouring in upon my soul.
|| Made a god of.
¶ Demolished, levelled.
** Overthrown.

6 Each thought in sweet subjection held,
Thy sovereign power shall own;
And every traitor shall be slain,
That dares dispute the throne.

HYMN CCLXXIX.

The Christian farewell. 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

1 Thy presence, everlasting God,
Wide o'er all nature spreads abroad;
Thy watchful eyes, which cannot sleep,
In every place thy children keep.

2 While near each other we remain,
Thou dost our lives and souls sustain;
When absent, happy if we share
Thy smiles, thy counsels, and thy care.

3 To thee we all our ways commit,
And seek our comforts near thy feet;
Still on our souls vouchsafe to shine,
And guard and guide us still as thine.

4 Give us in thy beloved house
Again to pay our grateful vows;
Or, if that joy no more be known,
Give us to meet around thy throne.

HYMN CCLXXX.

Living while in the flesh by faith in Christ, who loved us, &c. Gal. ii. 20.

1 My Jesus, while in mortal flesh
I hold my frail abode,
Still would my spirit rest on thee,
Its Saviour, and its God.

2 By hourly faith in thee I live
'Midst all my griefs and snares;
And death, encountered in thy fight,
No form of horror wears.

3 Yes, thou hast loved this sinful worm,
Hast given thyself for me;
Hast brought me from eternal death,
Nailed to the bloody tree.

4 On thy dear cross I fix mine eyes,
Then raise them to thy seat:
Till love dissolves my inmost soul
At its Redeemer's feet.

5 Be dead, my heart, to worldly charms;
Be dead to every sin;
And tell the boldest foes without,
That Jesus reigns within.

6 My life with his connected stands,
Nor asks a surer ground;
He keeps me in his gracious arms
Where heaven itself is found.

HYMN CCLXXXI.

A filial temper, the work of the Spirit, and a proof of adoption. Gal. iv. 6.

1 Sovereign of all the worlds on high,
Allow my humble claim;
Nor, while a word would raise its head,
Disdain a father's name.

2 My Father God! how sweet the sound!
How tender and how dear!
Not all the melody of heaven
Could so delight the ear.

3 Come, sacred Spirit, seal the name
On mine expanding heart:
And show, that in Jehovah's grace
I share a filial part.

4 Cheered by a signal so divine,
Unwavering I believe;
Thou knowest I Abba, Father, cry,
Nor can the sign deceive.

5 On wings of everlasting love
The Comforter is come;
All terrors at his voice disperse,
And endless pleasures bloom.

HYMN CCLXXXII.

Christian sympathy. Gal. vi. 2.

1 Hail, everlasting Prince of peace!
Hail, Governor divine!
How gracious is thy sceptre's sway!
What gentle laws are thine!

2 His tender heart with love o'erflowed,
Love spoke in every breath;
Vigorous it reigned through all this life,
And triumphed in his death.

3 All these united charms he shows
Our frozen souls to move;
This proof of love to him demands
That we each other love.

4 O be the sacred law fulfilled
In every act and thought;
Each angry passion far removed,
Each selfish view forgot.

5 Be thou, my heart, dilated wide
By thy Redeemer's grace:
And, in one grasp of fervent love,
All earth and heaven embrace.

HYMN CCLXXXIII.

Blessing God for spiritual blessings in Christ. Ephes. i. 3.

1 Loud be thy name adored,
Thy titles spread abroad,
Of Christ, our glorious Lord,
The Father and the God!

Through such a Son,
Thy church's head,
Thine honours spread
O'er worlds unknown.

2 Ten thousand gifts of love
From thee through him descend,
And bear our souls above,
To joys that never end:
To heaven they soar,
Sustained by God,
And through the road
His arm adore.

3 Ten thousand songs of praise
Shall by the Saviour rise,
And through eternal days
Shall echo round the skies.
New shouts we 'll give,
And loud proclaim
The honoured name
By which we live.

HYMN CCLXXXIV.

The grand scheme of the gospel. Eph. i. 9—11.

1 We sing the deep mysterious plan,
Which God devised ere time began,
At length disclosed in all its light.
We bless the wondrous birth of love,
Which beams around us from above,
With grace so free, and hope so bright.

2 Here has the wise Eternal Mind
In Christ, their common head, conjoined
Gentiles and Jews, and earth and heaven:
Through him, from the great Father's throne,
Rivers of bliss come rolling down,
And endless peace and life are given.

3 No more the awful cherubs guard
The tree of life with flaming sword,
To drive afar man's trembling race;
At Salem's pearly gates they stand,
And smiling wait (a friendly band!)
To welcome strangers to the place.

4 While we expect that glorious sight,
Love shall our hearts with theirs unite,
And ardent hope our bosoms raise:
From earth's dark vale, and tongues of clay,
To these resplendent realms of day,
We 'll try to send the sounding praise.

HYMN CCLXXXV.

The heavenly inheritance made known by the Spirit. Eph. i. 18.

1 Come, thou celestial Spirit, come,
And call my roving passions home:
To mine enlightened eyes display
The heritage of heavenly day.

2 My God, that heritage is thine:
How rich, how glorious, how divine!
How far above all mortal things,
The little pride of courts and kings!

3 Of endless joy the unbounded store,
Why is its lustre known no more?
Away, ye mists of envious night,
That veil salvation from my sight!

4 Shine forth, Almighty Saviour, shine;
Show the bright world, and show it mine.
Then paradise on earth shall spring,
And mortal worms like angels sing.

HYMN CCLXXXVI.

Salvation by grace. Eph. ii.

1 Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to my ear;
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

2 Grace first contrived a way
To save rebellious man,
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

3 Grace taught my wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road,
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

4 Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.

HYMN CCLXXXVII.

Christians risen and united with Christ to heavenly places. Eph. ii. 5, 6.

1 Stupendous grace! and can it be
Designed for rebels such as we?
O let our ardent praises rise,
High as our hopes beyond the skies!

2 This flesh, by righteous vengeance slain,
Might ever in the dust remain;
These guilty spirits sent to dwell
Midst all the flames and fiends* of hell.

3 But lo, incarnate love descends:
Down to the sepulchre it bends:
Rising, it tears the bars away,
And springs to its own native day.

4 Then was our sepulchre unclosed!
Then was our path to glory cleared:
Then, if that Saviour be our own,
Did we ascend a heavenly throne.

* Demons.

5 A moment shall our joy complete,
And fix us in that shining seat,
Bought by the pangs our Lord endured,
And by unchanging truth secured.

6 O may that love, in strains sublime,
Be sung to the last hour of time!
And let eternity confess,
Through all its rounds, the matchless grace.

HYMN CCLXXXVIII.

Nearness to God through Christ. Eph. ii. 13.

1 And are we now brought near to God,
Who once at distance stood?
And to effect this glorious change,
Did Jesus shed his blood?

2 O for a song of ardent praise
To bear our souls above!
What should allay our lively hope,
Or damp our flaming love?

3 Draw us, O Lord, with quickening grace,
And bring us yet more near;
Here may we see thy glories shine,
And taste thy mercies here.

4 O may that love, which spread thy board,
Dispose us for the feast;
May faith behold a smiling God
Through Jesus' bleeding breast.

5 Fired with the view, our souls shall rise
In such a scene as this,
And view the happy moment near,
That shall complete our bliss.

HYMN CCLXXXIX.

The institution of a gospel ministry from Christ. Eph. iv. 11, 12.

For the Ordination or Settlement of a Minister.

1 Father of mercies, in thy house
Smile on our homage and our vows;
While with a grateful heart we share
These pledges of our Saviour's care.

2 The Saviour, when to heaven he rose
In splendid triumph o'er his foes,
Scattered his gifts on men below,
And wide his royal bounties flow.

3 Hence sprung the apostles' honoured name,
Sacred beyond heroic fame;
Hence dictates the prophetic sage,
And hence the evangelic page.

4 In lowlier forms, to bless our eyes,
Pastors from hence, and teachers rise;
Who, though with feebler rays they shine,
Still add a long-extended line.

5 From Christ their varied gifts derive,
And fed by Christ their graces live:
While, guarded by his potent hand,
'Midst all the rage of hell they stand.

6 So shall the bright succession run
Through the last courses of the sun;
While unborn churches by their care
Shall rise and flourish, large and fair.

7 Jesus our Lord their hearts shall know,
The spring, whence all those blessings flow;
Pastors and people shout his praise
Through the long round of endless days.

HYMN CCXC.

Christ the head of the church. Eph. iv. 15, 16.

1 Jesus, I sing thy matchless grace,
That calls a worm thy own;
Gives me among thy saints a place
To make thy glories known.

2 Allied to thee our vital Head,
We act, and grow, and thrive:
From thee divided, each is dead,
When most he seems alive.

3 Thy saints on earth, and those above,
Here join in sweet accord;
One body all in mutual love,
And thou, our common Lord.

4 O may my faith each hour derive
Thy Spirit with delight;
While death and hell in vain shall strive
This bond to disunite.

5 Thou the whole body wilt present
Before thy Father's face;
Not shall a wrinkle or a spot
Its beauteous form disgrace.

HYMN CCXCI.

Love to others urged from Christ's love, in giving himself a sacrifice. Eph. v. 2.

1 Now be that sacrifice surveyed,
That ransom which the Saviour paid;
That sight familiar to my view,
Yet always wondrous, always new.

2 The Lamb of God, that groaned and bled
And gently bowed his dying head;
While love to sinners fired his heart,
And conquered all the killing smart.

3 Blest Jesus, while thy grace I sing,
What grateful tribute shall I bring,
That earth and heaven and thou mayst see
My love to him, who died for me?

4 That offering, Lord, thy word hath taught,
Nor be thy new command forgot,

That, if their Master's death can move
Thy servants should each other love.

5 When to thy sacred cross we fly,
There let each savage passion die:
While the warm streams of blood divine
Melt our cold hearts to love like thine.

HYMN CCXCII.

The wisdom of redeeming time. Eph. v. 15, 16.

1 God of eternity, from thee
Did infant Time his being draw;
Moments and days, and months and years,
Revolve by thine unvaried law.

2 Silent and slow they glide away,
Steady and strong the current flows,
Lost in eternity's wild sea,
The boundless gulf, from whence it rose.

3 With it the thoughtless sons of men
Before the rapid streams are borne
On to that everlasting home,
Where not one soul can e'er return.

4 Yet while the shore on either side
Presents a gaudy flattering show,
We gaze, in fond amusement lost,
Nor think to what a world we go.

5 Great source of wisdom, teach my heart
To know the price of every hour,
That time may bear me on to joys
Beyond its measure, and its power.

HYMN CCXCIII.

Christ's love to the church in giving himself for it, &c.
Eph. v. 25—27.

1 Bridegroom of souls, how rich thy love!
How generous, how divine!
Our inmost hearts it well may move,
While thus our voices join.

2 Deformed and wretched once we lay,
Worthy thy hate and scorn:
Yet love like thine could find a way
To rescue and adorn.

3 Thou art our ransom; from thy veins
A wondrous fountain flows,
To wash thy bride from all her stains,
And heal our deepest woes.

4 Transformed by thee, e'en here below
Thy church is bright and fair:
But O! how glorious shall she show,
When Jesus shall appear!

5 Thine eye shall all her form survey,
With infinite delight,
Confessed in that illustrious day,
Unblemished in thy sight.

HYMN CCXCIV.

Christ's service, the fruit of our labours on earth.
Phil. i. 22.

1 My gracious Lord, I own thy right
To every service I can pay:
And call it my supreme delight
To hear thy dictates and obey.

2 What is my being, but for thee,
Its sure support, its noblest end?
Thy ever-smiling face to see,
And serve the cause of such a friend.

3 I would not breathe for worldly joy,
Or to increase my worldly good;
Nor future days or powers employ
To spread a sounding name abroad.

4 'Tis to my Saviour I would live;
To him, who for my ransom died;
Nor could untainted Eden give
Such bliss as blossoms at his side.

5 His work my hoary age shall bless,
When youthful vigour is no more:
And my last hour of life confess
His love hath animating power.

HYMN CCXCV.

The happiness of departing, and being with Christ.
Phil. i. 23.

1 While on the verge of life I stand,
And view the scenes on either hand,
My spirit struggles with its clay,
And longs to wing its flight away.

2 Where Jesus dwells my soul would be,
It faints my much loved Lord to see.
Earth, twine no more about my heart,
For 'tis far better to depart.

3 Come, ye angelic convoys, come,
And bear the willing pilgrim home.
Ye know the way to Jesus' throne,
Source of my joys, and of your own.

4 That blessed interview, how sweet!
To fall transported at his feet!
Raised in his arms, to view his face
Through the full beamings of his grace.

5 To see heaven's shining courtiers round,
Each with immortal glories crowned,
And, while his name in concert [illegible]
Beloved, and loving all to embrace!

6 As with a seraph's voice to sing!
To fly as on a cherub's wing!
Performing, with unwearied [illegible]
A present Saviour's high [illegible]

* Mercy, [illegible]

7 Yet with these prospects full in sight
I 'll wait thy signal for my flight;
For, while thy service I pursue,
I find my heaven begun below.

HYMN CCXCVI.

Pressing on in the Christian race. Phil. iii. 12–14.

1 Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigour on:
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.

2 A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey:
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way.

3 'Tis God's all-animating voice,
That calls thee from on high;
'Tis his own hand presents the prize
To thine aspiring eye.

4 That prize with peerless glories bright,
Which shall new lustre boast,
When victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems
Shall blend in common dust.

5 Blest Saviour, introduced by thee,
Have I my race begun;
And crowned with victory, at thy feet
I 'll lay my honours down.

HYMN CCXCVII.

God supplying the necessities of his people.
Phil. iv. 19, 20.

1 My God, how cheerful is the sound!
How pleasant to repeat!
Well may that heart with pleasure bound,
Where God hath fixed his seat.

2 What want shall not our God supply
From his redundant stores?
What streams of mercy from on high
An arm almighty pours!

3 From Christ, the ever-living spring,
These ample blessings flow:
Prepare, my lips, his name to sing,
Whose heart hath loved us so.

4 Now to our Father and our God
Be endless glory given,
Through all the realms of man's abode,
And through the highest heaven.

HYMN CCXCVIII.

Thankfulness for being made meet for the heavenly inheritance. Coloss. i. 12.

1 All-glorious God, what hymns of praise
Shall our transported voices raise!
What flaming love and zeal is due,
While heaven stands open to our view!

2 Once we were fallen, and oh! how low!
Just on the brink of endless woe;
Doomed to a heritage in hell,
Where sinners all in darkness dwell.

3 But lo, a ray of cheerful light
Scatters the horrid shades of night!
Lo, what triumphant grace is shown
To souls impoverished and undone!

4 Far, far beyond these mortal shores
A bright inheritance is ours;
Where saints in light our coming wait,
To share their holy blissful state.

5 If ready drest for heaven we shine,
Thine are the robes, the crown is thine:
May endless years their course prolong,
While "Thine the praise," is all our song.

HYMN CCXCIX.

Angels and Christians united in Christ, as their common head. Coloss. ii. 10.

1 Hail to Emanuel's ever honoured name!
Spread it, ye angels, through heaven's sacred flame.
Ye sceptred cherubim, before his throne,
And flaming seraphim, bow humbly down.
He is your head; with prostrate awe adore him,
And lay with joy your radiant crowns before him.

2 Arrayed in his refulgent beams ye shine,
And draw existence † from his source divine:
Grateful ye wait the signal of his hand,
Honoured too highly by his least command:
In him the indwelling Deity admiring,
And to his brighter image still aspiring.

3 Mortals with you in cheerful homage join,
And bring their anthems to Emanuel's shrine:
Mean as we are, with sins and griefs beset,
We glory, that in him we are complete.
He is our head, and we with you adore him,
And pour our wants, our joys, our hearts before him.

4 We sing the blood that ransomed us from hell;
We sing the graces that in Jesus dwell;
Led by his Spirit, guarded by his hand,
Our hopes anticipate your goodly land
Still his incarnate Deity admiring,
And with heaven's hierarchy; in praise conspiring.

HYMN CCC.

Christians, as risen with Christ, exhorted to seek things above. Coloss. iii. 1.

1 Hearken, ye children of your God;
Ye heirs of glory, hear;

For accents so divine as these
Might charm the dullest ear.

2 Baptized into your Saviour's death,
Your souls to sin must die;
With Christ our Lord ye live anew,
With Christ ascend on high.

3 There at his Father's hand he sits
Enthroned divinely fair;
Yet owns himself your brother still,
And your forerunner there.

4 Rise from these earthly trifles, rise
On wings of faith and love;
Jesus your choicest treasure lies,
And be your hearts, above.

5 But earth and sin will drag us down,
When we attempt to fly;
Lord, send thy strong attractive force,
To raise and fix us high.

HYMN CCCI.

The prosperity of the church, the life of a faithful minister. 1 Thess. iii. 8.

1 Blest Jesus, bow thine ear,
While we entreat thy love:
O come, and all our hearts possess,
And our best passions move.

2 May we stand fast in thee,
Though storms and tempests beat;
And in thy guardian arms obtain
A calm and safe retreat.

3 Still be thy truth maintained,
And still thy word obeyed,
And to the merits of thy blood
A constant homage paid.

4 So shall thy shepherds live
And raise their cheerful head,
And, in such blessings on their flock,
Confess their toils repaid.

HYMN CCCII.

Comfort on the death of a pious friend. 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.

1 Transporting tidings which we hear!
What music to the pious ear!
Christ loves each humble saint so well,
He with his Lord shall ever dwell.

2 Blest Jesus, source of every grace,
From far to view thy smiling face,
While absent thus by faith we live,
Exceeds all joys that earth can give.

3 But O! what ecstasy unknown
Fills the wide circle round thy throne,
Where every rapturous hour appears
Nobler than millions of our years!

4 Millions by millions multiplied
Shall ne'er thy saints from thee divide;
But the bright legions live and praise
Through all thy own immortal days.

5 O happy dead, in thee that sleep,
While o'er their mouldering dust we weep!
O faithful Saviour, who shall come
That dust to ransom from the tomb!

6 While thine unerring word imparts
So rich a cordial to our hearts,
Through tears our triumphs shall be shown,
Though round their graves, and near our own.

HYMN CCCIII.

Christ glorified and admired in his saints at the [illegible] day. 2 Thess. i. 10.

1 Ye heavens, with sounds of triumph ring;
Ye angels, burst into a song;
Jesus descends, victorious King,
And leads his shining train along.

2 Ye saints that sleep in dust, arise;
Let joy re-animate your clay;
Spring to your Saviour through the skies,
And round his throne your homage pay.

3 Then let the sons of heaven draw nigh,
While to the astonished hosts you tell,
How feeble mortals rose so high
From graves and worms, from sin and hell.

4 Tell them, in accents like their own,
What an incarnate God could do;
Then point to Jesus on the throne,
And boast, that Jesus died for you.

5 Transported, they the [illegible]
Their voices catch the sacred name;
Harmonious to his Father's ear,
Jesus the God, their harps proclaim.

6 Sin hath its [illegible]
That thou mightst prove thy power to save;
And death its ensigns wide displayed,
That thou mightst triumph o'er the grave.

HYMN CCCIV.

Christ seen of angels. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

1 O ye immortal throng
Of angels round the throne,
Join with our feeble song,
To make the Saviour known:
On earth ye knew
His wondrous grace,
His beauteous face
In heaven ye view.

* [illegible]

2 Ye saw the heaven-born child
In human flesh arrayed,
Benevolent and mild.
While in the manger laid.
And praise to God,
And peace on earth,
For such a birth,
Proclaimed aloud.

3 Ye in the wilderness
Beheld the tempter spoiled,
Well known in every dress,
In every combat foiled;
And joyed to crown
The Victor's head,
When Satan fled
Before his frown.

4 Around the bloody tree
Ye pressed with strong desire,
That wondrous sight to see,
The Lord of life expire;
And could your eyes
Have known a tear,
Had dropped it there
In sad surprise.

5 Around his sacred tomb
A willing watch ye keep;
Till the blest moment come
To rouse him from his sleep:
Then rolled the stone,
And all adored
Your rising Lord
With joy unknown.

6 When all arrayed in light
The shining conqueror rode,
Ye hailed his rapturous flight
Up to the throne of God;
And waved around
Your golden wings,
And struck your strings
Of sweetest sound.

7 The warbling notes pursue,
And louder anthems raise;
While mortals sing with you
Their own Redeemer's praise.
And thou my heart,
With equal flame,
And joy the same,
Perform thy part.

HYMN CCCV.

The stability of the divine foundation, and its double inscription. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

1 To thee, great Architect on high,
Immortal thanks be paid,
Who, to support thy sinking saints,
This firm foundation laid.

2 Fixed on a rock thy gospel stands,
And braves[a] the rage of hell;
And while the Saviour's hand protects,
His blood cements it well.

3 Here will I build my final hope:
Here rest my weary soul;
Majestic shall the fabric rise,
Till glory crown the whole.

4 Deep on my heart, all-gracious Lord,
Engrave its double seal;
Which, while it speaks thy honoured name,
Its sacred use may tell.

5 Dear by a thousand tender bonds,
Thy saints to thee are known;
And, conscious what a name they bear,
Iniquity they shun.

HYMN CCCVI.

Persecution to be expected by every true Christian.
2 Tim. iii. 12.

1 Great Leader of thine Israel's host,
We shout thy conquering name;
Legions of foes beset thee round,
And legions fled with shame.

2 A victory glorious and complete
Thou by thy death didst gain;
So in thy cause may we contend,
And death itself sustain.

3 By our illustrious General fired,
We no extremes would fear;
Prepared to struggle and to bleed,
If thou, our Lord, be near.

4 We'll trace the footsteps thou hast shown
To triumph and renown;
Nor shun thy combat and thy cross,
May we but share thy crown.

HYMN CCCVII.

The Christian scheme of salvation worthy of God.
Heb. ii. 10.

1 Immortal God, on thee we call,
The great original of all;
Through thee we are, to thee we tend,
Our sure support, our glorious end.

2 We praise that wise mysterious grace,
That pitied our revolted race,
And Jesus, our victorious head,
The Captain of salvation made.

3 He, thine eternal love decreed,
Should many sons to glory lead;
And sinful worms to him are given,
A colony to people heaven.

[a] Defies. [b] Rescue.

4 Jesus for us (O gracious name!)
Encounters agony and shame;
Jesus, the glorious and the great,
Was by dire suffering made complete.

5 A scene of wonders here we see,
Worthy thy Son, and worthy thee:
And while this theme employs our tongues,
All heaven unites its sweetest songs.

HYMN CCCVIII.

Satan and death conquered by the death of Christ.
Heb. ii. 14, 15.

1 Satan, the dire* invader came,
Our new-made world to annoy:
And death marched dreadful in his rear,
His captives to destroy.

2 Caught in his snares our father sunk;
With him his children fell;
And death his fatal shaft† prepared
To smite them down to hell.

3 Jesus with pitying eye beheld,
And left his starry crown,
Turned his own weapons on the foe,
And moved his legions down.

4 By death the Saviour death disarmed,
That we in light may shine;
And fixed this great mysterious law,
That dust should dust refine.

5 No more the pointed shaft we fear,
Nor dread the monster's boast;
No more the pious dead we mourn,
As friends for ever lost.

6 Their tongues, great Prince of life, shall join
With our recovered breath,
And all the immortal hosts, to ascribe
Our victory to thy death.

HYMN CCCIX.

An immediate attention to God's voice required.
Heb. iii. 15.

1 The Lord Jehovah calls,
Be every ear inclined;
May such a voice awake each heart,
And captivate the mind.

2 If he in thunder speaks,
Earth trembles at his nod;
But gentle accents here proclaim
The condescending God.

3 O harden not your hearts,
But hear his voice to-day
Lest, ere to-morrow's earliest dawn,
He call your souls away.

* Dreadful. † Dart.

3 Y

4 Almighty God, pronounce
The word of conquering grace,
So shall the flint dissolve to tears
And scorners seek thy face.

HYMN CCCX.

The eternal sabbath. Heb. iv. 9.

1 Lord of the sabbath, hear our vows,
On this thy day, in this thy house:
And own, as grateful sacrifice,
The songs, which from the desert rise.

2 Thine earthly sabbaths, Lord, we love
But there's a nobler rest above;
To that our labouring souls aspire
With ardent pangs of strong desire.

3 No more fatigue, no more distress;
Nor sin nor hell shall reach the place;
No groans to mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.

4 No rude alarms of raging foes;
No cares to break the long repose;
No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
But sacred, high, eternal noon.

5 O long-expected day, begin;
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin
Fain would we leave this weary road,
And sleep in death to rest with God.

HYMN CCCXI.

Christ our forerunner, and the [illegible] of our hope. Heb. vi. 19, 20.

1 Jesus the Lord our souls adore,
A grateful offering now he meets
High on his Father's throne he reigns
O'er earth, and heaven's extensive plains.

2 His race for ever is complete;
For ever undisturbed his seat;
Myriads of angels round him fly,
And sing his well-gained victory.

3 Yet, midst the honours of his throne,
He joys not for himself alone,
His meanest servants share the gift
Share in that royal tender heart.

4 Rise, rise my soul, thy raptured sight,
With sacred wonder and delight;
Jesus thy own forerunner see
Entered beyond the veil for thee.

5 Loud let the howling tempest dwell,
And foaming waves to heaven's arch swell,
No shipwreck can my vessel fear
Since hope hath fixed its anchor [illegible]

HYMN CCCXII.

The evil conscience purified by the blood of Jesus. Heb. ix. 13, 14.

1 Blest be the Lamb, whose blood was spilt
To sprinkle conscience from its guilt;
To ease its pains, to calm its fears,
And purchase grace for future years.

2 Cleansed by this all atoning blood,
We joy in free access to God,
The living God, before whose face
Sinners in vain shall seek a place.

3 Rouse thee, my soul, to serve him still
With cordial love, with active zeal:
Serve him, like his own Son divine,
Who made his life the price of thine.

4 Blest Jesus, introduced by thee,
The Father's smiling face I see;
And strengthened by thy grace alone,
These grateful services are done.

5 Then must my debt from day to day
Grow with each service that I pay;
So grows my joy, dear Lord, to be
Thus more and more in debt to thee.

HYMN CCCXIII.

Death and judgment appointed to all. Heb. ix. 27.

1 Heaven has confirmed the great decree,
That Adam's race must die:
One general ruin sweeps them down,
And low in dust they lie.

2 Ye living men, the tomb survey,
Where you must quickly dwell;
Hark how the awful summons sounds
In every funeral knell!

3 Once you must die, and once for all;
The solemn purport weigh;
For know that heaven and hell are hung
On that important day.

4 Those eyes, so long in darkness veiled,
Must wake the Judge to see,
And every word, and every thought
Must pass his scrutiny.

5 O may I in the Judge behold
My Saviour and my friend,
And far beyond the reach of death
With all his saints ascend.

HYMN CCCXIV.

Christ's second appearance, &c. Heb. ix. 28.

1 Behold, the Son of God appears,
And in his flesh our sins he bears;
The victim at God's altar stood
To expiate guilt by groans and blood.

2 But lo, a second time he comes
To shake the earth and rend the tombs;
These heavens before him melt away,
And sun and stars in smoke decay.

3 Yet 'midst this general wreck and dread,
Ye saints, with triumph lift the head:
With glad surprise your Saviour meet,
Who comes to make your bliss complete.

4 My soul, a happiness so great
With pleasing expectation wait;
And, while I dwell upon the thought,
Be earth and all its toys forgot.

5 My Saviour God, what grace is thine!
Which gives a prospect so divine!
Come blessed day, and teach our tongues
How angels warble out their songs.

HYMN CCCXV.

Liberty to enter through the veil by the blood of Christ. Heb. x. 19—22.

1 Approach, ye children of your God;
Favourites of heaven, draw near;
Enter the holiest with delight,
Though his own ark be there.

2 Pass through the veil, the Saviour's flesh,
That new and living way:
And majesty enshrined * in love
Shall gentle beams display.

3 Jesus with sin-atoning blood
The throne hath sprinkled o'er;
His fragrant incense spreads its cloud,
And justice flames no more.

4 Approach with boldness and with joy,
But spotless all draw near;
Pure be your lives from every stain,
And every conscience clear.

5 So shall the blessings of his grace
On all your souls distil,
Till each a royal priest appears
On his celestial hill.

HYMN CCCXVI.

God's fidelity to his promises. Heb. x. 23.

1 The promises I sing,
Which sovereign love hath spoke;
Nor will the eternal King
His words of grace revoke.
They stand secure,
And steadfast still
Not Zion's hill
Abides so sure.

* Shekinah.

2 The mountains melt away
When once the Judge appears,
And sun and moon decay,
That measure mortals' years;
But still the same,
In radiant lines,
The promise shines
Through all the flame.

3 Their harmony shall sound
Through mine attentive ears,
When thunders cleave the ground,
And dissipate the spheres:
'Midst all the shock
Of that dread scene,
I stand serene,
Thy word my rock.

HYMN CCCXVII.

The day approaching, a motive to love and worship.
Heb. x. 24, 25.

1 The day approacheth, O my soul,
The great decisive day,
Which from the verge of mortal life
Shall bear thee far away.

2 Another day more awful dawns;
And lo, the Judge appears:
Ye heavens, retire before his face,
And sink, ye darkened stars.

3 Yet does one short preparing hour,
One precious hour, remain;
Rouse thee, my soul, with all thy power,
Nor let it pass in vain.

4 With me my brethren soon must die,
And at that bar appear;
Now be our intercourse improved
To mutual comfort here.

5 For this, thy temple, Lord, we throng;
For this, thy board surround;
Here may our service be approved,
And in thy presence crowned.

HYMN CCCXVIII.

Abraham's faith in leaving his country at the divine command. Heb. xi. 8.

1 Now let our songs proclaim abroad
The unchanging name of Abram's God,
In him let Abram's children boast,
Their Father's ever-living Lord,
His shield, his friend, his great reward,
Who never can deceive their trust.

2 Called by thy voice, with joyful speed
He went, where thou wast pleased to lead,
Unknowing in the path he trod;
His land, his kindred [illegible]
The pious pilgrim to detain,
Propt on the promise of his God.

3 So at thy word the saint foregoes
Each tender tie the nation knows,
And hears no other voice but thine;
Marches where thou shalt point the way,
Where thou shalt pitch his tent will stay,
And learns his Isaac to resign.

4 At length, still faithful to thy own,
Thou callest him to a world unknown,
Through paths untrod by mortal feet;
Smiling, he owns thy voice in death,
Gives to the air his fleeting breath,
And finds the road to Abram's seat.

HYMN CCCXIX.

The God of the patriarchs proposes, from a view of Heb. xi. 16.

1 I am thy God, Jehovah said,
To Abram, and his chosen seed;
And still the same relation owns
To each of Abram's faithful sons.

2 Sovereign of heaven, what words of love
So grand a gift shall approve?
What splendid gifts will God bestow
That all its high import may know?

3 Not the rich flocks and herds that feed
Round Abram's tents in Mamre's mead,
Not Joseph's chariot, nor the throne,
Ivory and gold, of Solomon.

4 Not Canaan's plains a lot can prove
Proportioned to Jehovah's love;
Not Zion's sacred mountain, where
His temple glittered like a star.

5 O'er Zion's mount, o'er Canaan's plains,
Oppression now and horror reigns:
And where the throne of David stood
His tomb a [illegible]

6 'Tis in the heaven of heavens alone
Thou makest thy wondrous friendship known;
A city there thy hand prepares,
Fixed as thy own eternal years.

7 Long as thy reign [illegible]
The blissful nations shall confess,
Thy sovereign love has there bestowed
Salvation worthy of a God.

HYMN CCCXX.

Moses's great choice. Heb. xi. 25.

1 My soul, with all thy weaknesses [illegible]
Survey the heavenly prize:

Nor let these glittering toys of earth
Allure thy wandering eyes.

2 The splendid crown, which Moses sought,
Still beams around his brow;
Though soon great Pharaoh's sceptred pride
Was taught by death to bow.

3 The joys and treasures of a day
I cheerfully resign;
Rich in that large immortal store,
Secured by grace divine.

4 Let fools my wiser choice deride,
Angels and God approve;
Nor scorn of men, nor rage of hell,
My stedfast soul shall move.

5 With ardent eye that bright reward
I daily will survey;
And in the blooming prospect lose
The sorrows of the way.

HYMN CCCXXI.

Acting as seeing him who is invisible. Heb. xi. 27.

1 Eternal and immortal King,
Thy peerless[a] splendours none can bear,
But darkness veils seraphic eyes,
When God with all his lustre 's there.

2 Yet faith can pierce the awful gloom,
The great Invisible can see;
And with its tremblings mingle joy
In fixed regards, great God, to thee.

3 Then every tempting form of sin,
Shamed in thy presence, disappears!
And all the glowing raptured soul
The likeness it contemplates wears.

4 O ever-conscious to my heart,
Witness to its supreme desire,
Behold, it presseth on to thee,
For it hath caught the heavenly fire.

5 This one petition would it urge,
To bear thee ever in its sight;
In life, in death, in worlds unknown,
Its only portion and delight.

HYMN CCCXXII.

Subjection to God the Father of our spirits.
Heb. xii. 9.

1 Eternal source of life and thought,
Be all beneath thyself forgot;
Whilst thee, great parent-mind, we own
In prostrate homage round thy throne.

2 Whilst in themselves our souls survey
Of thee some faint reflected ray,
They wondering to their Father rise,
His power how vast! his thoughts how wise!

3 Behold us as thine offspring, Lord,
And do not cast us off abhorred;
Nor let thy hand, so long our joy,
Be raised in vengeance to destroy.

4 O may we live before thy face,
The willing subjects of thy grace;
And through each path of duty move
With filial awe, and filial love.

HYMN CCCXXIII.

The immutability of Christ. Heb. xiii. 8

1 With transport, Lord, our souls proclaim
The immortal honours of thy name:
Assembled round our Saviour's throne,
We make his ceaseless glories known.

2 High on his Father's royal seat
Our Jesus shone divinely great,
Ere Adam's clay with life was warmed,
Or Gabriel's nobler spirit formed.

3 Through all succeeding ages he
The same hath been, the same shall be;
Immortal radiance gilds his head,
While stars and suns wax old and fade.

4 The same his power his flock to guard;
The same his bounty to reward;
The same his faithfulness and love
To saints on earth, and saints above.

5 Let nature change, and sink, and die;
Jesus shall raise his chosen high,
And fix them near his stable throne,
In glory changeless as his own.

HYMN CCCXXIV.

Watching for souls in the view of the great account.
Heb. xiii. 17.

For the Ordination of a Minister.

1 Let Zion's watchmen all awake,
And take the alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God
Their solemn charge receive.

2 'Tis not a cause of small import
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And filled a Saviour's hands.

3 They watch for souls, for which the Lord
Did heavenly bliss forego;[b]
For souls which must for ever live
In raptures, or in woe.

4 All to the great tribunal haste,
The account to render there

[a] Unequalled.

[b] Forsook.

And shouldst thou strictly mark our faults,
Lord, how shall we appear?

5 May they that Jesus, whom they preach,
Their own Redeemer see;
And watch thou daily o'er their souls,
That they may watch for thee.

HYMN CCCXXV

The Christian perfected by divine grace through Christ. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

1 Father of peace, and God of love,
We own thy power to save!
That power, by which our Shepherd rose
Victorious o'er the grave.

2 We triumph in that Shepherd's name,
Still watchful for our good;
Who brought the eternal covenant down,
And sealed it with his blood.

3 So may thy Spirit seal my soul,
And mould it to thy will;
That my fond heart no more may stray,
But keep thy covenant still.

4 Still may we gain superior strength,
And press with vigour on,
Till full perfection crown our hopes,
And fix us near thy throne.

HYMN CCCXXVI

Christians begotten to God as the first-fruits of his creatures. James i. 18.

1 Now to that sovereign grace,
Whence all our comforts spring,
Let the whole new-begotten race
Their cheerful praises bring.

2 His will first made the choice;
His word the change hath wrought;
In him, our Father, we rejoice,
Nor be the name forgot.

3 Lord, may this matchless love,
Which thy own children see,
Make us from all thy creatures prove
As the first fruits to thee.

4 Sacred to thee alone
Be all these powers of mine;
Then in the noblest sense my own,
When most entirely thine.

HYMN CCCXXVII

Looking into the perfect law of liberty, and continuing in it. James i. 25.

1 Behold the glass the gospel lends,
That men themselves may view:
How free from stain its surface is!
How polished, and how true!

2 Behold that wise, that perfect law,
Which noblest freedom gives;
O may it all our souls refine,
And sanctify our lives!

3 Not with a transient glance surveyed,
And in an hour forgot,
But deep inscribed on every heart,
To reign o'er every thought.

4 Great Author of each perfect gift,
Thy sovereign grace display,
That these rebellious roving powers
May hearken and obey.

5 Inspired by thee, our feeble souls
Shall pass victorious on;
As the faint dawning light improves
To all the blaze of noon.

HYMN CCCXXVIII

James's advice to sinners. James iv. 7, 8.

1 Ye sinners, bend your stubborn necks
Beneath the yoke divine;
In low submission bow ye down
Before his sacred shrine.

2 In penitential streams your tedious mourn
And seek his injured grace;
And wait with broken bleeding hearts
The openings of his face.

3 Resist the tempter's fierce attacks,
And he shall speed his flight;
Draw near to God, and his embrace
Shall fold you with delight.

4 Ye sinners, cleanse your spotted hands,
And purge your hearts from sin;
Here fix your long-divided views,
And peace shall reign within.

5 Blest Saviour, draw us by thy love,
And fix us by thy power
When we have felt these sweet constraints,
Our souls shall rove no more.

HYMN CCCXXIX

The vanity of worldly schemes entirely from the uncertainty of life. James iv. 13–15.

1 To-morrow I and to-day
Lodged in thy sovereign hand
And if its sun arise and shine,
It shines by thy command.

2 The present moment flies,
And bears our life away;
O make thy servants truly wise,
That they may live to-day.

3 Since on this winged hour
Eternity is hung,

Waken by thine almighty power
The aged and the young.

4 One thing demands our care:
O be it still pursued!
Lest, slighted once, the season fair
Should never be renewed.

5 To Jesus may we fly
Swift as the morning light,
Lest life's young golden beams should die
In sudden endless night.

HYMN CCCXXX.

Rejoicing in an unseen Saviour. 1 Peter i. 8.

1 Meet inward joys, suppressed too long,
Ecstatic burst into a song;
From Christ, though now unseen, they rise,
And reach his throne beyond the skies.

2 His glories strike the wondering sight
Of all the first-born sons of light,
Beyond the seraphim they shine,
Unrivalled all, and all divine.

3 Yet mortal worms his friendship boast,
And make his saving name their trust:
Jesus, my Lord, I know him well:
He rescued me from death and hell.

4 This sinful heart from God estranged,
His new-creating power hath changed,
And, mingling with each secret thought,
Maintains the work, which first it wrought.

5 He gives to see his Father's face:
He gives my soul to thrive in grace;
And brings the views of glory down,
The beamings of my heavenly crown.

6 Thus entertained while here below
Unspeakable my transports grow;
New joys in swift succession roll,
And glory fills my silent soul.

HYMN CCCXXXI.

The heart purified to love unfeigned by the Spirit. 1 Peter i. 22.

1 Great Spirit of immortal love,
Vouchsafe our frozen hearts to move:
With ardour strong these breasts inflame
To all that own a Saviour's name.

2 Still let the heavenly fire endure
Fervent and vigorous, true and pure;
Let every heart and every hand
Join in the dear fraternal band.*

3 Celestial Dove, descend, and bring
The smiling blessings on thy wing;
And make us taste those sweets below
Which in the blissful mansions grow

* Heart is one.

HYMN CCCXXXII.

Tasting that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter ii. 3.

1 Yes, it is sweet to taste his grace,
Who bought us with his blood;
My soul prefers the relish still,
To all created good.

2 O how I love that vital word
Which taught me first to live!
Thirst for that uncorrupted milk,
That I may grow and thrive!

3 All-gracious Lord, instruct us more
Thy saving gifts to know:
And let our inmost hearts rejoice,
That thou hast loved us so.

4 Open thy stores with liberal hand,
That we may daily feast;
And let each dying soul around,
The sweet salvation taste.

HYMN CCCXXXIII.

Coming to Christ as a living stone. 1 Peter ii. 4, 5

1 With ecstasy of joy
Extol his glorious name,
Who raised the spacious earth,
And raised our ruined frame;
He built the church
Who built the sky,
Shout and exalt
His honours high.

2 See the foundation laid
By power and love divine;
Jesus, his first-born Son,
How bright his glories shine!
How he descends!
In dust he lies,
That from his tomb
A church might rise.

3 But he for ever lives,
Nor for himself alone;
Each saint new light derives
From this mysterious stone;
His influence darts
Through every soul,
And in one house
Unites the whole.

4 To him with joy we move;
In him cemented stand;
The living temple grows,
And owns the Founder's hand;
That structure, Lord,
Still higher raise,
Louder to sound
Its Builder's praise

5 Descend and shed abroad
The tokens of thy grace,
And with more radiant beams
Let glory fill the place;
Our joyful souls
Shall prostrate fall,
And own, our God
Is all in all.

HYMN CCCXXXIV.

Christ the corner stone. 1 Peter ii. 6. *compared with* Isaiah xxviii. 16, 17.

1 Lord, dost thou show a corner stone
For us to build our hopes upon,
That the fair edifice may rise
Sublime in light beyond the skies?

2 We own the work of sovereign love
Nor death nor hell those hopes shall move,
Which fixed on this foundation stand,
Laid by thy own almighty hand.

3 Thy people long this stone have tried,
And all the powers of hell defied;
Floods of temptation beat in vain,
Well doth this rock the house sustain.

4 When storms of wrath around prevail,
Whirlwind and thunder, fire and hail,
'Tis here our trembling souls shall hide,
And here securely they abide.

5 While they that scorn this precious stone,
Fond of some quicksand of their own,
Borne down by weighty vengeance die,
And buried deep in ruin lie.

HYMN CCCXXXV.

Christ precious to the believer. 1 Peter ii. 7.

1 Jesus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to mine ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud,
That earth and heaven should hear.

2 Yes, thou art precious to my soul,
My transport, and my trust;
Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust.

3 All my capacious powers can wish
In thee doth richly meet:
Nor to mine eyes is light so dear,
Nor friendship half so sweet.

4 Thy grace still dwells upon my heart,
And sheds its fragrance there;
The noblest balm of all its wounds,
The cordial of its care.

5 I'll speak the honours of thy name
With my last labouring breath;
Then speechless clasp thee in mine arms,
The antidote of death.

HYMN CCCXXXVI.

Noah preserved in the ark, and the [illegible]
1 Pet. iii. 20, 21

1 The deluge, at the Almighty's call,
In what impetuous streams it fell!
Swallowed the mountains in its rage,
And swept a guilty world to hell.

2 In vain the tallest sons of pride
Fled from the close-pursuing wave;
Nor could their mightiest towers defend,
Nor swiftness 'scape, nor courage save.

3 How dire the wreck! how loud the roar!
How shrill the universal cry
Of millions in the last despair,
Re-echoed from the lowering sky!

4 Yet Noah, humble happy saint,
Surrounded with the chosen few,
Sat in his ark, secure from fear,
And sang the grace that steered [illegible]

5 So I may sing, in Jesus safe,
While storms of vengeance round me fall,
Conscious how high my hopes are fixed
Beyond what shakes this earthly ball.

6 Enter thine ark, while patience waits,
Nor ever quit that sure retreat;
Then the wide flood, which buries earth,
Shall waft thee to a fairer seat.

7 Nor wreck nor ruin there is seen;
There not a wave of trouble rolls;
But the bright rainbow round the throne*
Seals endless life to all their souls.

HYMN CCCXXXVII.

The [illegible]
1 Pet. iv. 18

1 Behold God's great incarnate Son
In majesty comes flying down.
Hark! for his trumpet's awful sound
Awakes the dead, and cleaves the ground.

2 So solemn shall the judgment be,
And so severe the scrutiny,†
That, by his heart-[illegible]
The saint himself would be undone.

3 Where then, ye sons of Belial,‡ where
Will your astonished souls appear?
How will ye shun his piercing sight?
Or how resist his [illegible]

4 Up to the pointed mountains fly,
And gain the confines of the sky;
There shall ye meet celestial [illegible]
While mountains melt before his ire.§

* Rev. [illegible]
† [illegible]
‡ Rom. [illegible]
§ [illegible]

5 Call on the rending earth to save,
And in its centre search a grave;
The Judge shall well discern thee then
And drag thee trembling to his bar.

6 Deck thee around with fraud and lies,
And put on every fair disguise;
Soon shall thy painted form be known
Amidst ten thousand of his own.

7 Gird thee in arms his wrath to oppose,
And league with millions of his foes;
Soon would the rebel band expire
Like crackling thorns amidst the fire.

8 One only way may yet be found:
Submissive bow ye to the ground:
His cross a refuge will afford
From all the terrors of his sword.

HYMN CCCXXXVIII.

Humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand.
1 Peter v. 6.

1 Beneath thy mighty hand, O God,
Our souls we prostrate low;
Shine forth with gentle radiant beams,
That we thy name may know.

2 Thy hand this various frame produced,
And still supports it well;
That hand with justice and with ease
Might smite our souls to hell.

3 Conscious of meanness and of guilt,
We in the dust would lie;
Stretch forth thy condescending arm,
And lift the humble high.

4 So in the temples of thy grace
We 'll sovereign mercy own,
And, when we shine above the stars,
Extol thy grace alone.

5 The more thou raise such sinful dust,
The lower would it fall;
For less than nothing, Lord, are we,
And thou art all in all.

HYMN CCCXXXIX.

The same.

Psa. Eisteddfa.

1 Our souls with reverence, Lord, bow down,
Struck by the splendours of thy throne;
Humbled, while in thy house we stand,
Beneath thy great tremendous hand.

2 That hand, which bears the steady pole,
While nature's wheels unwearied roll;
That hand, which gives each creature food,
And fills the world with various good.

3 That hand which pierced thy darling Son
To expiate crimes that we had done
That hand, which scatters grace abroad
To turn thy foes to sons of God.

4 But oh! with what distracted rage
Have we presumed that hand to engage!
And, while long patience hath been shown,
Struggled to force thy vengeance down.

5 Here might thy wrath begin to flame,
And vindicate thine injured name:
Till the red thunders of thy hand
Had dealt destruction round our land.

6 With humble hearts our God we meet:
O raise the suppliants at thy feet!
And let that glorious arm this day
Embrace the rebels it might slay.

HYMN CCCXL.

God's care a remedy for ours. 1 Peter v. 7.

1 How gentle God's commands!
How kind his precepts are!
"Come, cast your burthens on the Lord,
And trust his constant care."

2 While Providence supports,
Let saints securely dwell;
That hand, which bears all nature up,
Shall guide his children well.

3 Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your heavenly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

4 His goodness stands approved
Down to the present day;
I 'll drop my burthen at his feet,
And bear a song away.

HYMN CCCXLI.

Establishment in religion from the God of all grace.
1 Peter v. 10, 11.

1 How rich thy favours, God of grace!
How various and divine!
Full as the ocean they are poured,
And bright as heaven they shine.

2 He to eternal glory calls,
And leads the wondrous way,
To his own palace, where he reigns
In uncreated day.

3 Jesus, the herald of his love,
Displays the radiant prize,
And shows the purchase of his blood
To our admiring eyes.

4 He perfects what his hand begins,
And stone on stone he lays:
Till firm and fair the building rise,
A temple to his praise.

5 The songs of everlasting years
That mercy shall attend,
Which leads, through sufferings of an hour,
To joys that never end.

HYMN CCCXLII.

The circumstances of Christ's second appearing.
2 Peter iii. 11, 12.

1 My wakened soul, extend thy wings
Beyond the verge of mortal things;
See this vain world in smoke decay,
And rocks and mountains melt away.

2 Behold the fiery deluge roll
Through heaven's wide arch from pole to pole:
Pale sun, no more thy lustre boast;
Tremble and fall, ye starry host.

3 This wreck of nature all around,
The angel's shout, the trumpet's sound,
Loud the descending Judge proclaim,
And echo his tremendous name.

4 Children of Adam, all appear
With reverence round his awful bar;
For, as his lips pronounce, ye go
To endless bliss, or endless woe.

5 Lord, to mine eyes this scene display
Frequent through each revolving day,
And let thy grace my soul prepare
To meet its full redemption there.

HYMN CCCXLIII.

The importance of being prepared for Christ's second appearance. 2 Peter iii. 14.

1 "Behold, I come, (the Saviour cries,)
With winged speed I come;
My voice shall call your souls away
To their eternal home.

2 "Awake, ye sons of sloth, awake;
Your vain amusements cease,
And strive with your united powers,
That ye be found in peace.

3 "Seize the blest hour with ardent haste,
Nor slight this peaceful word,
Lest your affrighted souls in vain
Fly from my flaming sword.

4 "Happy the man, whose ready heart
Obeys the sacred call;
And shelters in my covenant grace
His everlasting all."

5 Blest Jesus, whose all-searching eye
My inmost powers can see,
Dost thou not know my willing soul
Hath lodged that all with thee?

6 Those eager eyes thy signal wait,
My dear Redeemer, come
I rove a weary pilgrim here,
And long to be at home.

HYMN CCCXLIV.

Growing in grace, &c. 2 Peter iii. 18.

1 Praise to thy name, eternal God,
For all the grace thou shed'st abroad;
For all thine influence from above
To warm our souls with sacred love.

2 Blest be thy hand, which from the skies
Brought down this plant of Paradise,
And gave its heavenly glories birth,
To deck this wilderness of earth.

3 But why does that celestial flower
Open, and thrive, and shine no more?
Where are its balmy odours fled;
And why reclines its beauteous head?

4 Too plain, alas! the languor shows
The unkindly soil in which it grows;
Where the black frosts and beating storm
Wither and rend its tender form.

5 Unchanging sun, thy beams display
To drive the frosts and storms away;
Make all thy potent virtues known
To cheer a plant so much thy own.

6 And thou, blest Spirit, deign to blow
Fresh gales of heaven on shrubs below;
So shall they grow and breathe abroad
A fragrance grateful to our God.

HYMN CCCXLV.

Experimental knowledge communicated.
1 John i. 1—3.

1 Jesus, mine advocate above,
Let me not hear of thee alone,
But make the wonders of thy love
By deep experience sweetly known.

2 On thee my soul would fix its eye;
My lips would taste thy heavenly grace;
Then would I raise thine honours high,
And teach a thousand tongues thy praise.

3 The sacred flame from heart to heart
Should with a rapid progress run;
Till each in God could boast his part,
Through sweet communion with his Son.

4 Thus may the servants of the Lord
Feel the salvation they proclaim;
And thus may crowds receive the word,
And echo back the Saviour's name.

HYMN CCCXLVI.

Communion with God and Christ. 1 John i. 3

1 Our heavenly Father calls,
And Christ invites us near;

With both our friendship shall be sweet,
And our communion dear.

2 God pities all my griefs;
He pardons every day;
Almighty to protect my soul,
And wise to guide my way.

3 How large his bounties are!
What various stores of good,
Diffused from my Redeemer's hand,
And purchased with his blood!

4 Jesus, my living head,
I bless thy faithful care;
Mine advocate before the throne,
And my forerunner there.

5 Here fix, my roving heart;
Here wait, my warmest love;
Till the communion be complete
In nobler scenes above.

HYMN CCCXLVII.

The privileges of saints by the blood of Jesus.
1 John i. 7.

1 My various powers, awake
To sound redeeming grace;
To him that washed us in his blood,
Ascribe eternal praise.

2 What though our guilt appears
Dyed in a crimson grain?
The stream, that flows from Jesus' side,
Shall purge away the stain.

3 'Midst all our various forms
We in this centre meet;
Our hearts cemented by his blood,
Shall taste communion sweet.

4 Then let us walk in light,
Like Christ, whose name we wear;
And, as the pledge of endless bliss,
Our Father's image bear.

HYMN CCCXLVIII.

The blood of Christ cleansing from all sin.
1 John i. 7.

1 My sins, alas! how foul the stains!
How deep, and oh! how wide!
O'er my polluted soul they spread,
In double crimson dyed.

2 How shall I stand before that God,
In whose all piercing sight
Some shades of darkness seem to veil
The purest sons of light?

3 Where shall I wash these spots away,
And make my nature clean,
Since drops of penitential grief
Are tinctured still with sin?

4 Behold a torrent all divine
Flows from the Saviour's side,
And strangely bears a crystal stream
Amidst the purple tide. *

5 Here will I bathe my spotted soul,
And make it pure and fair;
Till not the eye of God discern
One foul pollution there

6 Then, drest in robes of snowy white,
I'll join the shining band,
And learn new anthems to the Lamb,
While round his throne we stand.

HYMN CCCXLIX.

Having the Son, and having life in him. 1 John v. 2.

1 O happy Christian, who can boast,
"The Son of God is mine!"
Happy, though humbled in the dust;
Rich in this gift divine.

2 He lives the life of heaven below,
And shall for ever live;
Eternal streams from Christ shall flow,
And endless vigour give.

3 That life we ask with bended knee,
Nor will the Lord deny;
Nor will celestial mercy see
Its humble suppliants die.

4 That life obtained, for praise alone
We wish continued breath;
And taught by blest experience, own
That praise can live in death.

HYMN CCCL.

Christ the first and the last, humbled to death, and exalted to an eternal triumph over it. Rev. i. 17, 18.

1 What mysteries, Lord, in thee combine!
Jesus, once mortal, yet divine:
The first, the last; the end, the head;
The source of life among the dead.

2 O love, beyond the stretch of thought!
What matchless wonders hath it wrought!
My faith, while she the grace declares,
Trembles beneath the load she bears.

3 Hail, royal Conqueror o'er the grave,
Tender to pity, strong to save!
For ever live, for ever reign,
And prosperous may thy throne remain!

4 Thy saints, obedient to thy word,
With humble joy surround thy board;

* Refer to the blood and water that came out of Christ's wounded side. John xix. 34.

And, long as time pursues its race,
Proclaim thy death, and shout thy grace.

5 In the full choir, where angels join
Their harps of melody divine,
Thy death inspires a song of praise,
New through thy life's eternal days.

HYMN CCCLI.

The keys of death and the unseen world in Christ's hand. Rev. i. 18.

1 Hail to the Prince of life and peace,
Who holds the keys of death and hell!
The spacious world unseen is his,
And sovereign power becomes him well.

2 In shame and torment once he died;
But now he lives for evermore:
Bow down, ye saints, around his seat,
And, all ye angel bands, adore.

3 So live for ever, glorious Lord,
To crush thy foes, and guard thy friends;
While all thy chosen tribes rejoice
That thy dominion never ends.

4 Worthy thy hand to hold the keys,
Guided by wisdom, and by love;
Worthy to rule o'er mortal life,
O'er worlds below, and worlds above.

5 When death thy servants shall invade,
When powers of hell thy church annoy,
Controlled by thee, their rage shall help
The cause they laboured to destroy.

6 For ever reign, victorious King:
Wide through the earth thy name be known;
And call my longing soul to sing
Sublimer anthems near thy throne.

HYMN CCCLII.

Christ's care of ministers and churches. Rev. ii. 1.

1 We bless the eternal source of light,
Who makes the stars to shine;
And, through this dark beclouded world,
Diffuseth rays divine.

2 We bless the churches' sovereign King,
Whose golden lamps we are;
Fixed in the temples of his love
To shine with radiance fair.

3 Still be our purity preserved
Still fed with oil the flame:
And in deep characters inscribed
Our heavenly Master's name.

4 Then, while between our ranks he walks,
And all our state surveys,
His smiles shall with new lustre deck
The people of his praise.

HYMN CCCLIII.

The Christian warrior animated and crowned. Rev. ii. 10.

1 Hark! 'tis our heavenly Leader's voice
From his triumphant seat:
'Midst all the war's tumultuous noise,
How powerful and how sweet!

2 "Fight on, my faithful band, (he cries,)
Nor fear the mortal blow:
Who first in such a warfare dies
Shall speediest victory know.

3 "I have my days of combat known,
And in the dust was laid;
But thence I mounted to my throne,
And glory crowns my head.

4 "That throne, that glory you shall share;
My hands the crown shall give;
And you the sparkling honours wear,
While God himself shall live."

5 Lord, 'tis enough; our bosoms glow
With courage, and with love:
Thy hand shall bear thy soldiers through,
And raise their heads above.

6 My soul, while death beset me round,
Erects her ardent eyes,
And longs, through some illustrious wound,
To rush and seize the prize.

HYMN CCCLIV.

The pillar in God's heavenly temple, with a new inscription. Rev. iii. 12.

1 All-hail, victorious Saviour, hail!
I bow to thy command;
And own, that David's royal key
Well fits thy sovereign hand!

2 Open the treasures of thy love,
And shed thy gifts abroad
Unveil to my prevailing eyes
The temple of my God.

3 There as a pillar let me stand
On an eternal base
Prepared by thine almighty hand,
And polished by thy grace.

4 There deep engraven let me bear
The title of my God;
And mark the New Jerusalem,
As my secure abode.

5 In lasting characters inscribe
Thy own beloved name,
That endless ages there may read
The great Emanuel's claim.

6 Lead on, my General; I defy
What earth or hell can do;
Thy conduct, and this glorious hope
Shall bear thy soldier through.

HYMN CCCLV.

God's covenant unchangeable; or, The rainbow round about the throne. Rev. iv. 3. *compared with* Gen. ix. 13—17.

1 Supreme of beings, with delight
Our eyes survey this heavenly sight;
And trace with admiration sweet
The beaming splendours of thy feet.

2 Jasper and sapphire strive in vain
To paint the glories of thy train;
Thy robes all stream eternal light,
Too powerful for a cherub's sight.

3 Yet round thy throne the rainbow shines,
Fair emblem of thy kind designs;
Bright pledge, that speaks thy covenant sure
Long as thy kingdom shall endure.

4 No more shall deluges of woe
Thy new-created world o'erflow;
Jesus, our sun, his beams displays,
And gilds the clouds with beauteous rays.

5 No gems so bright, no forms so fair;
Mercy and truth shall triumph there:
Thy saints shall bless the peaceful sign,
When stars and suns forget to shine.

6 E'en here, while storms, and gloomy shade,
And horrors, all the scene o'erspread,
Faith views the throne with piercing eye,
And boasts the rainbow still is high.

HYMN CCCLVI.

Victory over Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of the testimony of his servants. Rev. xii. 11.

1 See the old dragon from his throne
Sink with enormous ruin down!
Banished from heaven, and doomed to dwell
Deep in the fiery gloom of hell!

2 Ye heavens, with all your hosts, rejoice:
Ye saints, in concert lend your voice:
Approach your Lord's victorious seat,
And tread the foe beneath your feet.

3 But whence a conquest so divine
Gained by such feeble hands as mine?
Or whence can sinful mortals boast
O'er Satan and his rebel-host?

4 'Twas from thy blood, thou slaughtered Lamb,
That all our palms and triumphs came;
Thy cross, thy spear, inflicts the stroke,
By which the monster's head is broke.

5 Thy faithful word our hope maintains
Through all our combat and our pains;
The accents of thy heavenly breath
Thy soldiers bear through wounds and death.

6 Triumphant Lamb, in worlds unknown,
With transport round thy radiant throne,
Thy happy legions, all complete,
Shall lay their laurels at thy feet.

HYMN CCCLVII.

The song of Moses and the Lamb. Rev. xv. 3.

1 Israel, the tribute bring
To God's victorious name;
The song of Moses sing,
Of Moses and the Lamb:
Improve his lays; *
The theme exceeds,
And nobler deeds
Demand our praise.

2 The prince of hell arose
With impious rage and pride,
And 'midst our numerous foes
Our feeble power defied;
"I will o'ertake,
And I destroy,
My hand with joy
Shall force thee back."

3 Thy hand, Almighty Lord,
Thy trembling Israel saves;
Thine unresisted word
Divides the threatening waves:
Thy hosts pass o'er;
The foe o'erthrown
Sinks like a stone,
To rise no more.

4 Our triumphs we prepare,
And cheerful anthems raise;
Jehovah's arm made bare
Demands immortal praise;
And while we sing,
Ye shores, proclaim
His wondrous name,
Ye deserts, ring.

5 Through all the wilderness
Thy presence, Lord, shall lead;
And bring us to the place,
Thy sovereign love decreed;
Those blissful plains,
Where all around
Hosannas sound,
And transport reigns.

* Sung-ed pass.

HYMN CCCLVIII.

The conquest of death and grief by saints of the heavenly state. Rev. xxi. 4.

1 Lift up, ye saints, your weeping eyes,
Suspend your sorrows and your sighs;
Turn all your groans to joyful songs,
Which Jesus dictates to your tongues.

2 Thus saith the Saviour from his throne,
"Behold all former things are gone,
Past like an anxious dream away,
Chased by the golden beams of day.

3 "See in celestial pomp arrayed
A new-created world displayed;
Mark with what light its prospects shine!
How grand, how various, how divine!

4 "There my own gentle hand shall dry
Each tear from each o'erflowing eye,
And open wide my friendly breast
To lull the weary soul to rest.

5 "No more shall grief assail your heart,
No boding fear, no piercing smart;
For ever there my people dwell
Beyond the range of death and hell."

6 Vain king of terrors, boast no more
Thine ancient wide-extended power;
Each saint in life with Christ his head
Shall reign, when thou thyself art dead.

HYMN CCCLIX.

Christ, the root and offspring of David, and the morning star. Rev. xxii. 16.

1 All-hail, mysterious King!
Hail, David's ancient root!
Thou righteous branch, which thence didst spring
To give the nations fruit.

2 Our weary souls shall rest
Beneath thy grateful shade:
Our thirsting lips salvation taste;
Our fainting hearts are glad.

3 Fair morning star arise,
With living glories bright,
And pour on these awakening eyes
A flood of sacred light.

4 The horrid gloom is fled,
Pierced by thy beauteous ray:
Shine, and our wandering footsteps lead
To everlasting day.

HYMN CCCLX.

Christ's invitation echoed back, &c. Rev. xxii. 17.

1 How free the fountain flows
Of endless life and joy!
That spring, which no confinement knows,
Whose waters never cloy!

2 How sweet the accents sound
From the Redeemer's tongue!
"Assemble all ye nations round,
In one obedient throng.

3 "The Spirit bears the call
To all the distant lands:
The church, the bride, reflects it back,
While Jesus waiting stands.

4 "Ho, every thirsty soul,
Approach the sacred spring;
Drink, and your fainting spirits cheer;
Renew the draught, and sing.

5 "Let all that will approach;
The water freely take;
Free from my opening heart it flows
Your raging thirst to slake."

6 With thankful hearts we come
To taste the offered grace;
And call on all that hear to join
The triad and the praise.

HYMN CCCLXI.

The Christian rejoicing in the views of death and judgment. Rev. xxii. 20.

1 "Behold I come, (the Saviour cries,)
On wings of love I fly:"
So come, dear Lord, (my soul replies,)
And bring salvation nigh.

2 Come, loose these bonds of flesh and sin;
Come, end my pains and cares;
Bear me to thy serene abode
Beyond the clouds and stars.

3 I greet the messengers of death,
By which thou callest me home:
But doubly greet that joyful hour,
When thou thyself shalt come.

4 Come, plead thy Father's injured cause,
And make thy glory shine;
Come, rouse thy servants' mouldering dust,
And their whole frame refine.

5 O come amidst the angelic hosts,
Their humble name to own,
And bear the full assembly back
To dwell around thy throne.

6 With winged speed, Redeemer dear,
Bring on the illustrious day:
Come, lest our spirits droop and faint
Beneath thy long delay.

HYMNS

PARTICULAR OCCASIONS, AND IN UNCOMMON MEASURES

HYMN CCCLXII.

A Morning Hymn, to be used at awaking and rising.

1 Awake, my soul, to meet the day:
Unfold thy drowsy eyes,
And burst the ponderous chain that loads
Thine active faculties.

2 God's guardian shield was round me spread
In my defenceless sleep:
Let him have all my waking hours,
Who doth my slumbers keep.

3 [The work of each immortal soul
Attentive care demands;
Think then what painful labours wait
The faithful pastor's hands.]

4 My moments fly with winged pace,
And swift my hours are hurled;
And death with rapid march comes on
To unveil the eternal world.

5 I for this hour must give account
Before God's awful throne:
Let not this hour neglected pass,
As thousands more have done.

6 Pardon, O God, my former sloth,
And arm my soul with grace,
As, rising now, I seal my vows
To prosecute thy ways.

7 Bright sun of righteousness, arise;
Thy radiant beams display,
And guide my dark bewildered soul
To everlasting day.

HYMN CCCLXIII

An Evening Hymn, to be used when composing one's self to sleep.

I.

Interval of grateful shade
Welcome to my weary head!
Welcome slumbers to mine eyes
Tired with glaring vanities!
My great Master still allows
Needful periods of repose:
By my heavenly Father blest,
Thus I give my powers to rest.
Heavenly Father! gracious name!
Night and day his love the same;
Far be each suspicious thought,
Every anxious care forgot:
Thou, my ever-bounteous God,
Crownest my days with various good
Thy kind eye, that cannot sleep,
These defenceless hours shall keep
Blest vicissitude to me!
Day and night I'm still with thee.

II.

What though downy slumbers flee,
Strangers to my couch and me!
Sleepless, well I know to rest,
Lodged within my Father's breast.
While the empress of the night
Scatters mild her silver light:
While the vivid planets stray
Various through their mystic way;
While the stars unnumbered roll
Round the ever-constant pole;
Far above these spangled skies
All my soul to God shall rise:
'Midst the silence of the night
Mingling with those angels bright,
Whose harmonious voices raise
Ceaseless love and ceaseless praise
Through the throng his gentle ear
Shall my tuneless accents hear
From on high doth he impart
Secret comfort to my heart
He in those serenest hours
Guides my intellectual powers.

And his Spirit doth diffuse,
Sweeter far than midnight dews,
Lifting all my thoughts above,
On the wings of faith and love
Blest alternative to me,
Thus to sleep, or wake, with thee!

III.

What if death my sleep invade?
Should I be of death afraid?
Whilst encircled by thine arm,
Death may strike, but cannot harm.
What if beams of opening day
Shine around my breathless clay?
Brighter visions from on high
Shall regale my mental eye.
Tender friends awhile may mourn
Me from their embraces torn:
Dearer, better friends I have
In the realms beyond the grave.
See the guardian angels nigh
Wait to waft my soul on high!
See the golden gates displayed!
See the crown to grace my head!
See a flood of sacred light,
Which no more shall yield to night!
Transitory world, farewell!
Jesus calls, with him to dwell.
With thy heavenly presence blest,
Death is life, and labour rest.
Welcome sleep or death to me,
Still secure, for still with thee.

HYMN CCCLXIV.

On recovery from sickness, during which much of the divine favour had been experienced.

1 My God, thy service well demands
The remnant of my days;
Why was this fleeting breath renewed,
But to renew thy praise?

2 Thine arms of everlasting love
Did this weak frame sustain,
When life was hovering o'er the grave,
And nature sunk with pain.

3 Thou, when the pains of death were felt,
Didst chase the fears of hell;
And teach my pale and quivering lips
Thy matchless grace to tell.

4 Calmly I bowed my trembling head
On thy dear faithful breast;
Pleased to obey my Father's call
To his eternal rest.

5 Into thy hands, my Saviour God,
Did I my soul resign,
In firm dependence on that truth,
Which needs salvation gives.

6 Back from the borders of the grave
At thy command I come:
Nor would I urge a speedier flight
To my celestial home.

7 Where thou determin'st mine abode,
There would I choose to be;
For in thy presence death is life,
And earth is heaven with thee.

HYMN CCCLXV.

The last words of David. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1–5.

1 Thus hath the son of Jesse said,
When Israel's God had raised his head
To high imperial sway:
Stored with his last poetic fire,
Zion's sweet psalmist tuned his lyre
To this harmonious lay.

2 Thus dictates Israel's sacred Rock:
Thus hath the God of Jacob spoke
By my responsive tongue:
Behold the Just One over men
Commencing his religious reign,
Great subject of my song!

3 So gently shines, with genial ray
The unclouded lamp of rising day,
And cheers the tender flowers,
When midnight's soft diffusive rain
Hath blessed the gardens and the plain
With kind refreshing showers.

4 Shall not my house this honour boast?
My soul the eternal covenant trust,
Well ordered still and sure?
There all my hopes and wishes meet
In death I call its blessings sweet,
And feel its bond secure.

5 The sons of Belial shall not spring,
Who spurn at heaven's appointed King,
And scorn his high command:
Though wide the briers infest the ground,
And the sharp pointed thorns around
Defy a tender hand.

6 A dreadful Warrior shall appear
With iron arms, and massy spear,
And [illegible]
Touched with the lightning of his eye,
At once they kindle into fire,
And vanish in the blaze.

HYMN CCCLXVI.

A Morning One. Psalm cxliv.

Probably composed by David in his young days [illegible]

most of the devoted nations of Canaan, and first went up in solemn procession to the house of God at Jerusalem, there, as it were, to consecrate the arms which he put into their hands. The last referred to, verse 5, were probably the couches, on which they lay at the banquet attending their sacrifices; which gives a noble sense to a passage, on any other interpretation hardly intelligible.

1 O praise ye the Lord, prepare a new song,
And let all his saints in full concert join
Ye tribes all assemble the feast to prolong,
In solemn procession with music divine.

2 O Israel, in him that made thee rejoice,
Let all Zion's sons exult in their King;
While to martial dances you join a glad voice,
Your lutes, harps, and timbrels in harmony bring.

3 The Lord in his saints still finds his delight,
Salvation from him the meek shall adorn:
They well may be joyful, sustained by his might,
And crowned by his favour may lift up their horn.

4 Let carpets be spread, and banquets prepared
Those altars around, whence incense ascends;
Whilst anthems of glory thro' Salem are heard,
And God, whom we worship, indulgent attends.

5 Then as your hearts bound with music and wine,
Inspired by the God, who reigns in the place;
Unsheath all your weapons, and bright let them shine,
And brandish your faulchions, while chaunting his praise.

6 Then march to the field; the heathen defy,
And scatter his wrath on nations around:
Like angels of vengeance your sword lift on high,
And boast that Jehovah commissions the wound.

7 Their generals subdued your triumphs shall grace,
And headed with chains their kings shall be brought;
On the necks shall ye trample of Canaan's proud race,
And all their last remnant for slaughter be sought.

8 No rage of your own such rigour demands,
A sentence divine your arms must enfold:
Of old he this vengeance consigned to your hands,
And in sacred volumes recorded his will.

9 This honour, ye saints, appointed for you,
All-grateful receive, and faithful obey;
And, while this direful pleasure resistless ye do,
Still make his high praises the song of the day.

HYMN CCCLXVII

For the Thanksgiving day for the Peace. April 23, 1749.

1 Now let our songs address the God of peace,
Who bids the tumult of the battle cease:
The greatest spears to pruning-hooks he bends,
And the broad faulchion in the plough-share ends.
His powerful world unites contending nations
In kind embrace, and friendly salutations.

2 Britain, adore the Guardian of thy state,
Who, high on his celestial throne elate,
Still watchful o'er thy safety and repose,
Frowned on the counsels of thy haughtiest foes;
Thy coast secured from every dire invasion
Of fire and sword, and spreading desolation.

3 When rebel-hands with desperate madness armed
He wafted o'er deliverance with his wind;
Drove back the tide that deluged half our land,
And curbed their fury with his mightier hand:
Till dreadful slaughter, and the last confusion,
Taught those audacious sinners their delusion.

4 He gave our fleets to triumph o'er the main,
And scatter terrors 'cross wide ocean's plain:
Opposing leaders trembled at the sight,
Nor found their safety in the attempted flight;
Taught by their bonds how vainly they pretended
Those to distress, whom Israel's God defended.

5 Fierce storms were summoned up in Britain's aid,
And meagre famine hostile lands o'erspread;
By sufferings bowed their conquests they release,
Nor scorn the overtures of equal peace:
Contending powers congratulate the blessing,
Joint hymns of gratitude to heaven addressing.

6 While we beneath our vines and fig-trees sit,
Or thus within thy sacred temple meet,
Accept, great God, the tribute of our song,
And all the mercies of this day prolong.
Then spread thy peaceful word through every nation,
That all the earth may hail thy great salvation.

HYMN CCCLXVIII

The blessing pronounced upon Israel by the priests. Numb. vi. 24—27.

Tune New 113th Psalm.

1 Guardian of Israel, source of peace,
Who hast ordained thy priests to bless,
Shine forth as our propitious Lord,
And verify thy servants' word.

2 Let thy own power defend us still
Through all the year from every ill;
And let the splendour of thy face
Cheer all its bright or gloomy days.

3 Thy countenance our souls would see,
For all our joys unite in thee;
And peace still waits at thy command
To calm our hearts, and bless our land.

4 Hear, while thy priests address their vows,
And scatter blessings through thy house,

And, while they fall, may Israel raise
Its pious songs of ardent praise

HYMN CCCLXIX

A hymn for a Fast-day in time of war. Deut. xxiii. 9

1 Great God of heaven and nature, rise,
And hear our loud united cries:
See Britain bow before thy face
Through all her coasts, and seek thy grace

2 No arm of flesh we make our trust;
Nor sword, nor horse, nor ships we boast
Thine is the land, and thine the main,
And human force and skill is vain.

3 Our guilt might draw thy vengeance down
On every shore, on every town;
But view us, Lord, with pitying eye,
And lay thy lifted thunder by.

4 Forgive the follies of our times,
And purge our land from all its crimes;
Reformed and decked with grace divine
Let princes, priests, and people shine.

5 O may no God-provoking sin
Through all our camps and navies reign;
No foul reproach, to drive from thence
Our surest glory and defence.

6 So shall our God delight to bless,
And crown our arms with wide success:
Our foes shall dread Jehovah's sword;
And conquering Britain shout the Lord.

HYMN CCCLXX.

Jabez's prayer recommended to youth. 1 Chron iv. 9, 10.

1 Thou God of Jabez, hear,
While we entreat thy grace,
And borrow that expressive prayer,
With which he sought thy face

2 "O that the Lord indeed
Would me his servant bless,
From every evil shield my head,
And crown my path with peace!

3 "Be his Almighty hand
My helper and my guide,
Till, with his saints in Canaan's land,
My portion he divide."

4 Thus pious Jabez prayed,
While God inclined his ear
And all, by whom his suit is made
Shall find the blessing near.

5 Ye youths, your vows combine,
With loud united voice;
So shall your heads with honour shine,
And all your hearts rejoice.

HYMN CCCLXXI

Manasseh's affliction, penitence, and restoration. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10–12

1 God of Manasseh, wilt thou scorn
To own that humble name,
While sinners, so remote as we,
Thy grace to him proclaim?

2 High raised on Judah's throne he seemed,
That hell in him might reign;
And taught thy sacred name to know
Its honours to profane.

3 Yet thou the royal wretch didst view
With pity in thine eyes:
How strange a cure thy mercy wrought!
How wondrous, yet how wise!

4 Caught in the thorns by hostile hands,
The captive learned to reign;
And Babel's fetters set him free
From Satan's heavier chain.

5 From the deep dungeon where he lay,
Thou heard'st his doleful cry;
Didst raise the suppliant from the dust,
And bring salvation nigh.

6 Our souls, depraved and hard like his,
May grace exert its power;
And they shall bless the wholesome smart,
That works the sovereign cure.

HYMN CCCLXXII

A church seeking direction from God in the choice of a pastor. Ezra viii. 21

1 Shepherd of Israel, bend thine ear,
Thy servant's groans indulgent hear;
Perplexed, distressed, to thee we cry
And seek the guidance of thine eye.

2 Thy comprehensive view surveys
Our wandering paths, our reckless ways:
Send forth, O Lord, thy truth and light,
To guide our doubtful footsteps right.

3 With longing eyes, behold, we wait
In supplicant crowds at mercy's gate:
Our drooping hearts, O God, sustain:
Shall Israel seek thy face in vain?

4 O Lord, in ways of peace return
Nor let thy flock neglected mourn:
May our blest eyes a shepherd see,
Dear to our souls, and dear to thee

3 Fed by his care, our tongues shall raise
A cheerful tribute to thy praise;
Our children learn the grateful song,
And theirs the cheerful notes prolong.

HYMN CCCLXXIII.

Divine condemnation deprecated, and instruction desired, by the afflicted. Job x. 2

1 Thy righteous Judge, before thy bar,
What human creature can be clear?
An arm so strong, an eye so pure
Who can escape, or who endure.

2 "Do not condemn us, Lord," we cry
As trembling in the dust we lie;
But, while with grief our guilt we own,
Let smiling mercy take the throne.

3 If thou wilt smite, offended God,
Sheathe up thy sword, and take thy rod.
And, 'midst the anguish and the smart,
Open to discipline our heart.

4 By chastening if our souls be taught,
And cleansed from every secret fault,
The wise severity we'll bless,
And mix our groans with songs of praise.

HYMN CCCLXXIV.

Thanksgiving for national deliverance, and improvement of it. Luke i. 74, 75

1 Salvation doth to God belong
His power and grace shall be our song
His hand hath dealt a secret blow,
And terror strikes the haughty foe.

2 Praise to the Lord, who bows his ear
Propitious to his people's prayer;
And, though deliverance long delay,
Answers in his well-chosen day.

3 O may thy grace our land engage
(Rescued from fierce tyrannic rage,)
This tribute of his love to bring
To thee, our Saviour and our King!

4 Our temples, guarded from the flame,
Shall echo thy triumphant name;
And every peaceful private home,
To thee a temple shall become.

5 Still be it our supreme delight
To walk as in thy honoured sight;
Still in thy precepts and thy fear
To life's last hour to persevere.

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THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

EXPRESSED

IN PLAIN AND EASY VERSE,

AND

DIVIDED INTO SHORT LESSONS, FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

[illegible]-saith unto Peter,—Lovest thou me?—Feed my lambs.—JOHN xxi. 15.

PREFACE.

THE little verses now before the reader were written at the desire of my most worthy and honoured friend, the Reverend Mr. Clark of St. Albans, and are published at his request, as what he hopes may, by the divine blessing, do some good in the rising generation. I was the more willing to undertake the task, because I had often observed with how much ease and pleasure children learn verses by heart, how fond they are of repeating them, and, by consequence, how much longer they retain them than they do what they learn in prose.

In this view Dr. Watts's Songs for Children have been a singular blessing to our land; and it is but justice to that great, yet condescending, writer, to own, that if this light essay be of any service in it, a great part of the thanks will be due to him, who had digested the chief heads of Christianity in so natural a method, and expressed them in such easy yet comprehensive language, in the first part of his Second Set of Catechisms, that he had left me very little more to do under many of the articles than to translate them into rhyme; for I can hardly presume to call it poetry.

That simplicity and ease, which may suit children, I have been always careful to maintain, and have endeavoured, here and there, where I conveniently could, to strike the fancy with a little imagery, and especially to affect the hearts of my dear little scholars, by giving a serious and practical turn to the several truths which are delivered. It has also been my great care to insert nothing into these verses but what I apprehend the generality of serious Christians believe, so that I hope they will suit different denominations, as indeed I could wish the rising age might be instructed in what is like to unite, rather than divide, us. Their own comfort, as well as the credit of our common Christianity, is much concerned in it.

Some will, no doubt, think this a trifling performance: but I have been told, that the familiar system of religion which Grotius drew up, in easy verse, for the use of the Dutch sailors, was esteemed by him and others one of his most useful works: and if I had not the patronage of such illustrious names as have gone before me in such humble labours, I should think myself unworthy the honour of calling Jesus my Master, if I thought it beneath me to be desirous of doing good to the least child of the poorest of the people.

No nation under heaven appears to me so well furnished with helps for the Christian education of children as our own. I heartily pray that parents may be diligent in using them, and that they may enforce their good instructions with a suitable example: and then I doubt not, but, through the divine blessing, the happy fruits will be visible: nor will a gracious God, who taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his people, forget the least pious and benevolent attempt for promoting so good a work.

Northampton, October 31, 1745. P. DODDRIDGE

LESSON I.

Of our own nature, and its chief glory and happiness.

Now for a while aside I 'll lay
My childless trifles, and my play,
And call my thoughts which rove abroad,
To view myself and view my God.
I 'll look within, that I may see
What I now am, what I must be.

I am the creature of the Lord:
He made me by his powerful word.
This body, in each curious part,
Was wrought by his unfailing art.
From him my nobler spirit came,
My soul, a spark of heavenly flame:
That soul, by which my body lives,
Which thinks, and hopes, and joys, and grieves,
And must in heaven or hell remain,
When flesh is turned to dust again.

What business then should I attend,
Or what esteem my noblest end!
Sure it consists in this alone,
That God my Maker may be known.
So known, that I may love him still,
And form my actions by his will:
That he may bless me whilst I live,
And when I die my soul receive,
To dwell for ever in his sight
In perfect knowledge and delight.

LESSON II.

The knowledge of God and our duty to be learnt from the Bible.

How shall a young immortal learn
This great, this infinite concern,
What my Almighty Maker is,
And what the way this God to please?

Shall some bright angel spread his wing,
The welcome message down to bring?
Or must we dig beneath the ground,
Deep as where silver mines are found?

I bless his name for what I hear;
The word of life and truth is near;
His gospel sounds through all our land;
Bibles are lodged in every hand.
That sacred book inspired by God
In our own tongue is spread abroad:
That book may little children read,
And learn the knowledge which they need.
I 'll place it still before my eyes,
For there my hope and treasure lies.

LESSON III.

Of the nature and attributes of the Blessed God.

God is a Spirit none can see,
He ever was, is, and shall be:
Present where'er his creatures dwell
Through earth and sea, through heaven and hell.

His eye with infinite survey
Views all their realms in full display:
What has been, is, or shall be done,
Or here, or there, to him is known;
Nor can one thought arise unseen,
In mind of angels, or of men.
Yet far above all anxious cares
Serene He rules his grand affairs;
While wisdom infinite attends
By surest means the noblest ends.

Majestic from his lofty throne
He speaks, and all his will is done.
Nor can united worlds withstand
The force of his Almighty hand.
Yet ever righteous are his ways:
Faithful and true whate'er he says:
The Holy, holy, holy Lord,
By all the angelic host adored.

The bounty of his gracious hands,
Wide as the world he made, extends!
And though himself completely blessed,
With pity looks on the distressed;
And by his Son, our Saviour dear,
To sinners brings salvation near.

All that is glorious, good, and great,
Does in the Lord Jehovah meet.
Then to his name be glory given
By all on earth, and all in heaven.

LESSON IV.

Of God's relation to us.

The Lord my Maker I adore,
Created by his love and power.
He fashioned in their various forms
Angels, and men, and beasts, and worms;
And all their well-ranged orders stand
Supported by his powerful hand.

Father of light! amidst the skies
He bids the golden sun arise:
He scatters the refreshing rain,
To cheer the grass, and swell the grain;
And every day presents the food,
That satisfies my mouth with good.

At home, abroad, by night, by day
He is my guardian, and my stay.
And sure 'tis fit my soul should know
He is my Lord and Sovereign too.

O may that voice, that speaks his love,
My heart to sweet obedience move;
That when I see the Judge enthroned,
I in that Judge may see my friend!

LESSON V.

The sum of our duty to God and man.

THE knowledge which my heart desires,
Is but to learn what God requires.
Speak then the word, my Father dear,
For all my soul's awake to hear:
And O, what joy my breast must move,
To hear, that all thy law is love!

This is the sum of every part;
To love the Lord with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my might,
And in his service to delight:
That I should love my neighbours too,
And what I wish from them should do.

How short and sweet, how good and plain,
Easy to learn, and to retain!
O may thy grace my soul renew!
And 'twill be sweet to practise too.

LESSON VI.

How our love to God is to be expressed.

SINCE love is as my duty known,
How must this love to God be shown?
Sure I the highest thoughts should raise
Of him, who is above all praise:
His favour most of all desire,
And still to please him should aspire:
To him be constant worship paid,
And all his sacred laws obeyed.

If to afflict me be his will,
I 'll bear it with submission still:
A tender Father sure he proves,
And but corrects because he loves.

His word with diligence I 'll hear:
To him present my daily prayer:
And while new mercies I implore,
For blessings past I will adore;
And every action shall express
A heart full-charged with thankfulness.

LESSON VII.

How love to our neighbour should be expressed.

I BY my love to men must prove
How cordially my God I love.
To those whom he hath clothed with power,
I would be subject every hour:
To parents, and to rulers too,
Pay honour and obedience due:
In every word I 'll truth maintain,
In every act shall justice reign.

In all my feeble hands can do
The good of all I would pursue:
And where my powers of action fail
Kind wishes in my heart prevail
For every man, whoe'er he be,
Stranger, or friend, or enemy

Since by God's pardoning grace I live,
Well may I all my foes forgive;
And, as Christ's word and pattern showed,
Conquer their evil by my good.

LESSON VIII.

Sins to be avoided, in thought, word, and action.

GUARD me, O God, from every sin;
Let heart, and tongue, and life be clean!
Though with ten thousand snares beset,
I never would my Lord forget.

Fain would I learn to lay aside
Malice, and stubbornness, and pride,
Envy, and every evil thought;
Nor be my breast with anger hot.
Each other passion wild and rude
I long to feel by grace subdued.

When thus my heart is well prepared,
My tongue I easily shall guard
From every oath, and curse profane,
Nor take God's reverend name in vain:
No sacred thing shall I deride,
Nor scoff, nor rail, nor brawl, nor chide:
My soul will every lie detest,
And every base indecent jest.

This humble watchful soul of mine
Shall with abhorrence then decline
The drunkard's cup, the glutton's feast,
That sink the man down to the beast;
The injurious blow, the wanton eye,
The loss of hours that quickly fly;
And that which leads to every crime,
The vain mispence of sacred time;
What brings dishonour on God's law,
Or what on man would mischief draw.

LESSON IX.

The corruption of nature, and sins of life acknowledged.

LORD, when my wretched soul surveys
The various follies of my ways,
The guilt of every word and thought,
Every neglect, and every fault,
Well may I tremble to appear,
Laden with horror, shame, and fear.

Adam, our common head, alas,
Brought sin and death on all his race.
From him my ruined nature came,
Heir to his sorrow, and his shame:
My body weak, and dark my mind,
To good averse, to sin inclined:
And oh, too soon the deadly fruit
Ripened from that unhappy root.

Duty required my early care
Each fond indulgence to forbear;

Required me, all the good I knew
With constant vigour to pursue.
But my vain heart, and stubborn will,
In its own ways would wander still:
Like a wild ass's colt would go
On to this wilderness of woe.
Vainly I seek to plead a word,
Silent in guilt before the Lord.

LESSON X.

Of the misery which sin hath brought upon us.

Who can abide God's wrath, or stand
Before the terrors of his hand?
Jehovah's curse what heart shall dare
To meet? or what be strong to bear?

He every good can take away,
And every evil on us lay:
Can by one single word bring down
The tallest head that wears a crown,
The statesman wise, the warrior brave,
To moulder in the silent grave;
And send the wretched soul to hell,
To the fierce flames where devils dwell,
For endless years to languish there
In pangs of infinite despair.

I then, poor feeble child, how soon
Must I dissolve before his frown?
And yet his frowns, and vengeance too,
I by my sins have made my due.

Is there no hope? and must I die?
Is there no friend, no helper nigh?
Is it beyond repeal decreed,
That every soul that sins must bleed?
Oh let my longing, trembling ear
Some sound of grace and pardon hear?
My soul would the first news embrace,
And turn its tremblings into praise.

LESSON XI.

Of the Gospel, or the good news of salvation by Christ.

What joyful tidings do I hear?
'Tis gospel grace salutes my ear:
And by thy gentle sound I find,
This righteous God is mild and kind.

Jesus, his only Son, displays
The wonders of his Father's grace,
The great salvation long foretold
By prophets to the Jews of old,
Is now in plainer words made known,
As to the apostles clearly shown.
By this blest message brought from heaven,
Pardon, and peace, and grace is given.

O may I know that Saviour dear,
Whom God has represented there!
And that eternal life receive,
Which he was sent by God to give!

LESSON XII.

Who Christ is, and how he lived on earth.

Jesus! how bright his glories shine!
The great Emanuel is divine.
One with the Father he appears,
And all his Father's honours shares:
Yet he to bring salvation down
Has put our mortal nature on.

He in an humble virgin's womb
A feeble infant did become:
A stable was his lodging made,
And the rude manger was his bed.

Growing in life he still was seen
Humble, laborious, poor, and mean.
The Son of God from year to year
Did as a carpenter appear.

At length, when he to preach was sent,
Through towns and villages he went,
And travelled with unwearied zeal
God's will and nature to reveal.

To prove the heavenly truths he taught,
Unnumbered miracles were wrought.
The blind beheld him; and the ear,
Which had been deaf, his voice could hear;
Sickness obeyed his healing hand;
And devils fled at his command;
The lame for joy around him leap;
The dead he wakens from their sleep.

Through all his life his doctrine shines,
Drawn in the plainest, fairest lines.
And death at length did he sustain,
Our pardon and our peace to gain.
That sinners who condemned stood,
Might gain salvation by his blood.
All honour then ascribed be
To him who lived and died for me!

LESSON XIII.

Of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension.

Jesus the righteous! he, he dies,
For sin a spotless sacrifice!
Justice has on his sacred head
The weight of our transgressions laid.
If God's own Son would sinners save,
He must be humbled to the grave.
That so a pardoning God might shew
What vengeance to our crimes was due.

Nailed to the cross with torturing smart
What anguish racked his tender heart!
Alas! how bitterly he cried,
Tasted the vinegar, and died!
Cold in the tomb that mournful day
My Saviour's mangled body lay.
Will may I bless, and weep, to see
What Jesus bore for love of me.

But, O my soul, thy grief refrain,
Jesus the Saviour lives again.
On the third day the Conqueror rose,
And greatly triumphed o'er his foes;
Proved his recovered life, and then
Ascended to his heaven again.

Exalted on a shining throne
At God's right hand he sets him down,
To plead the merits of his blood,
And rule for all his people's good:
Wide o'er all worlds his power extends,
And well can he protect his friends.
May I in that blest band appear,
Secure from danger and from fear!

LESSON XIV.

Of the nature of faith and repentance.

Thou must repent, and must believe,
Who Christ's salvation would receive.
O may thy Spirit faith impart,
And work repentance in my heart!

Blessed Jesus, who can be so base,
As to suspect thy power or grace?
Or who can e'er so stupid be
To slight thy blessings, Lord, and thee?
With humble reverent hope and love
I to thy gracious feet would move,
And to thy care my all resign,
Resolved to be for ever thine;
Secure, if thou vouchsafe to keep
My feeble soul among thy sheep.

The sins and follies I have done
Humbled in dust I would bemoan;
And while past guilt I thus deplore,
I would repeat that guilt no more:
But by a life of zeal and love
True faith and penitence approve:
So shall thy grace my sins forgive,
Jesus shall smile, and I shall live.

LESSON XV.

Of the assistances and influences of the blessed Spirit

'Tis not in my weak power alone
To melt this stubborn heart of stone,
My soul to change, my life to mend,
Or seek to Christ that generous Friend.

'Tis God's own Spirit from above
Fixes our faith, inflames our love,
And makes a life divine begin
In wretched souls, long dead in sin.

That most important gift of heaven
To those that ask and seek is given:
Then be it my immediate care,
With importunity of prayer,
To seek it in a Saviour's name,
Who will not turn my hopes to shame.

God from on high his grace shall pour,
My soul shall flourish more and more,
Press on with speed from grace to grace,
Till glory end and crown the race.

Since then the Father, and the Son,
And Holy Spirit, three in one,
Glorious beyond all speech and thought,
Have jointly my salvation wrought;
I 'll join them in my songs of praise,
Now, and through heaven's eternal days.

LESSON XVI.

Of the means of grace which God has appointed

What kind provision God has made,
That we may safe to heaven be led!
For this the prophets preached and wrote,
For this the blessed apostles taught;
Taught, as that Spirit did inspire,
Who fell from heaven in tongues of fire,
And gave them languages unknown,
That distant lands his grace might own.
His hand has kept the sacred page
Secure from men's and devils' rage.

For this he churches did ordain,
His truths and worship to maintain:
For this he pastors did provide,
In those assemblies to preside:
And from the round of common days
Marked out our sabbaths to his praise.
Delightful day, when Christians meet!
To hear, and pray, and sing, how sweet!

For this he gives, in solemn ways,
Appointed tokens of his grace:
In sacramental pledges there,
His soldiers to their General swear.
Baptized into one common Lord,
They joyful meet around his board;
Honour the orders of his house,
And speak their love, and seal their vows.

LESSON XVII.

Of the design and obligation of baptism.

In baptism washed we all must be,
In honour of the sacred Three,
To show how we are washed from sin
In Jesus' blood, and born again
By grace divine; and thus are made
Members of Christ our common head.

The Father formed the glorious scheme,
And we adopted are by him.

The Son, great prophet, priest, and king,
Did news of this redemption bring:
He by his death our life procured,
And now bestows it as our Lord.

The Holy Spirit witness bore
To this blest gospel heretofore.

And teaches those he 's purified
Faithful and patient to abide.

Into these names was I baptized,
And be the honour justly prized:
Nor let the sacred bond be broke,
Nor be my covenant God forsook.
Thus washed I 'd keep my garments clean,
And never more return to sin.
One body now all Christians are:
O may they in one Spirit share!
And cherish that endearing love,
In which the saints are blessed above!

LESSON XVIII.

On the nature and design of the Lord's supper.

The memory of Christ's death is sweet,
When saints around his table meet,
And break the bread, and pour the wine,
Obedient to his word divine.

While they the bread and cup receive,
If on their Saviour they believe,
They feast, as on his flesh and blood:
Cordial divine, and heavenly food!
Thus their baptismal bond renew,
And love to every Christian show.

Well may their souls rejoice, and thrive
Oh may the blessed hour arrive,
When ripe in knowledge, and in grace,
I at that board shall find a place!
And now, what there his people do
I would at humble distance view;
Would look to Christ with grateful heart,
And in their pleasures take my part,
Resolved, while such a sight I see,
To live to him who died for me.

LESSON XIX.

Of the nature and office of angels.

My soul the heavenly world survey,
The regions of eternal day.
There Jesus reigns, and round his seat
Millions of glorious angels meet.

Those morning stars, how bright they shine!
How sweetly all their voices join
To praise their Maker! watchful still
To mark the signals of his will;
While with their out-stretched wings they stand,
To fly at his divine command.

All happy as they are, and great,
Yet scorn they not on men to wait
And little children in their arms
They gently bear, secure from harms.

O may I, with such humble zeal
My heavenly Father's word fulfil!
That I, when time has run its race,
May with blessed angels find a place,
Borne on their friendly wings on high
To joys like theirs, which never die.

LESSON XX.

Of the fall and state of the devils.

Well may I tremble, when I read
That sin did heaven itself invade:
Cursed pride, with subtilty unknown,
Perverted angels near God's throne:
They sinned against his holy name,
And hateful devils they became.
But wrath divine pursued them soon,
And flaming vengeance hurled them down.

Now in the pangs of fierce despair,
Prisoners at large they range in air.
Walk through the earth, unheard, unseen,
And lay their snares for thoughtless men;
Tempt us to sin against our God,
And draw us to hell's downward road.

But God can all their power restrain:
My Saviour holds them in his chain,
Till at his bar they all appear,
And meet their final sentence there.

LESSON XXI.

On death.

Lord, I confess thy sentence just,
That sinful man should turn to dust;
That I ere long should yield my breath,
The captive of all-conquering death.

Soon will the awful hour appear,
When I must quit my dwelling here:
These active limbs, to worms a prey,
In the cold grave must waste away;
Nor shall I share in all that 's done,
In this wide world, beneath the sun.

To distant climes, and seats unknown,
My naked spirit must be gone,
To God its Maker must return,
And ever joy, or ever mourn.

No room for penitence and prayer
No further preparation there
Can e'er be made; the thought is vain:
My state unaltered must remain.

Awake, my soul, without delay;
That if God summons thee this day,
Thou cheerful at his call mayst rise,
And spring to life beyond the skies.

LESSON XXII.

On the resurrection of the dead.

What awful ruins death hath made!
How low the wise and great are laid!
Alike the saints, and sinners, die;
Mouldering alike in dust they lie.
But there's a day shall change the scene,
How awful to the sons of men!

When the archangel's trump shall sound,
And shake the air, and cleave the ground,
Jesus enthroned in light appears,
Circled with angels, bright as stars.
"Rise, ye that sleep," the Lord shall say:
And all the earth, and all the sea,
Yield up the nations of the dead,
For ages in their bowels hid.
Bone knows its kindred bone again,
All clothed anew with flesh and skin:
Each spirit knows its proper mate;
They rise an army vast and great.

But oh what different marks they bear,
Of transport some, and some of fear;
When marshalled in the Judge's sight,
These to the left, those to the right,
That they may that last sentence hear,
Which shall their endless state declare!
My soul, in deep attention stay,
And learn the event of such a day.

LESSON XXIII.

Of judgment and eternity, heaven and hell.

When Christ to judge the world descends,
Thus shall he say to all his friends:
"Come blessed souls, that kingdom share,
My Father did for you prepare
Ere earth was founded: come, and reign
Where endless life and joy remain."

Then to the wicked,—"Cursed crew,
Depart, heaven is no place for you:
To those eternal burnings go,
Whose pangs the rebel angels know.

He speaks, and straight his shining hands,
With fiery thunders in their hands,
Drive them away; hell's lake receives
The wretches on its flaming waves:
Justice divine the gates shall bar,
And for a seal affix despair.

While Jesus, rising from his throne,
Leads his triumphant army on,
To enter their divine abode,
In the fair city of their God.
There everlasting pleasures grow;
Full rivers of salvation flow;
And all their happiness appears
Increasing with eternal years.

LESSON XXIV.

The conclusion, in a practical reflection on the whole.

And now, my heart, with reverent awe
From hence thine own instruction draw.
I at this judgment must appear;
I must this solemn sentence hear,
(As I'm with saints or sinners placed,)
"Depart, accursed," or "Come, ye blest
For me the fruits of glory grow;
Or hell awaits my fall below.

Eternal God! what shall I do?
My nature trembles at the view:
My deathless soul herself surveys,
With joy, and terror, and amaze.
Oh be thy shield around me spread,
To guard the spirit thou hast made!
Save me from snares of earth and hell,
And from my self preserve me well:
Lest all the heavenly truths I know
Should aggravate my guilt and woe!

Thy power in weakness is displayed,
If babes by thee be conquerors made;
It Satan's malice shall confound,
And heaven with praises shall resound.

TRACTS, &c.

No. I.

A DISSERTATION

ON

SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S SCHEME,

REDUCING THE SEVERAL HISTORIES CONTAINED IN THE EVANGELISTS TO THEIR PROPER ORDER

THE name of Sir Isaac Newton is so justly celebrated through the learned world, that they who know he has endeavoured to establish a method of settling a chronology of our Lord's life, (for I think one can hardly call it a harmony of the Evangelists,) quite different from what has hitherto been advanced, may be curious to know what it is, and why we presume to depart from it; since it is so natural to imagine, that such a genius must demonstrate whatever it attempts to prove. I therefore think it incumbent upon me to lay the scheme before my reader, as I promised long since to do. (Note (m) on Matt. iv. 25.) After which I shall briefly present, in one view, those reasons (many of which have been already hinted) which compelled me to tread a different road, after having most attentively considered all that this illustrious writer has urged for the support of his plan.

I cannot set myself to this task, without feeling the fatigue of it sensibly allayed, by the pleasure with which I reflect on the firm persuasion which a person of his unequalled sagacity must have entertained of the truth of Christianity, in order to his being engaged to take such pains in illustrating the sacred oracles. A pleasure, which I doubt not every good reader will share with me; especially as (according to the best information, whether public or private, I could ever get) his firm faith in the divine revelation, discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety; and consequently gives us the justest reason to conclude, that he is now rejoicing in the happy effects of it, infinitely more than in all the applause which his philosophical works have procured him; though they have commanded a fame lasting as the world, the true theory of which he had discovered, and (in spite of all the vain efforts of ignorance, pride, and their offspring bigotry) have arrayed him, as it were, in the beams of the sun, and inscribed his name among the constellations of heaven.

Sir Isaac Newton has given us his sentiments on the chronology of our Lord's history, in his Observations on Prophecy, book I. chap. XI. page 144—168. and, according to his usual method, he has done it concisely, only marking out some of the outlines; and after having endeavoured to establish some of the chief principles, by arguments which he judged to be conclusive, he leaves it to his readers to apply those principles to the several particulars; which being deducible from them, he did not think it necessary to enter into. Such is the method he has also taken in his [illegible] great genius, which bore him with such amazing velocity through so vast a circle of various literature. Yet it must render him less sensible of the difficulty attending some of his schemes, than he would otherwise have been, and may [illegible] to those, who are justly sensible how much they are [illegible] how possible it is for the greatest of mankind to be misled by some plausible appearances of things in a general view of them, against which invincible objections may arise, when they come to be applied to unthought-of particulars.

There are many facts recorded in the Evangelists

the order of which is so plain, that all harmonies agree in them: and such especially are most of those with which the history begins, and most of those with which it ends, though there be some disputes about a few circumstances relating to the resurrection. But Sir Isaac enters not at all into that part of the history, nor into any thing that precedes the appearance of John the Baptist.

He lays it down as the foundation of all his other reasonings and calculations here, (on the authority of Luke iii. 1.) that John began to baptize in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, reckoning his reign to have commenced from the death of Augustus, which happened, he says, Aug. 28.* in the year of our Lord (according to the common reckoning) 29. This is said (Newt. page 147.) to have been in the year of the Julian period 4727, which must surely be an error of the press for 4742, the year of that period which is universally known to have answered to the 29th of the received Christian era. He supposes, the Baptist's ministry opened in the spring, when the weather was warm; and allowing the remainder of the year to the spreading of his reputation, he concludes, that our Lord was baptized before the end of it, when Tiberius's 16th year was begun. (Matt. iii. 1—17. Mark i. 1—11. Luke iii. 1—18, 21—23. John i. 6—18. sect. 15—18.) After this the temptation ensued, (Matt. iv. 1—11. Mark i. 12, 13. Luke iv. 1—13. sect. 19.) and all those testimonies of John to Jesus, and the interviews between Jesus and his first disciples, (which are mentioned John i. 19, to the end, sect 20—22.) as likewise our Lord's journey to Galilee, and his first miracle there. (John ii. 1—11. sect. 23.) Then followed our Lord's FIRST PASSOVER, which, according to Sir Isaac, (and I would be understood through all this part of the dissertation to be only reporting his opinion,) happened A. D. 30. at which he drove the traders out of the temple, (John ii. 12, to the end, sect. 24.) had that celebrated conference with Nicodemus, (John iii. 1—21. sect. 25, 26.) and continued for some time to abide in Judea, baptizing by his disciples, while John baptized in Enon, and bore his last recorded testimony to him. (John iii. 22, to the end, sect. 27.)

Thus the summer was spent, till John was thrown into prison about November; (Matt. xiv. 3—5. Luke iii. 19, 20. Mark vi. 17—20. sect. 28.) and our Lord passed through Samaria, in his way to Galilee, about the winter solstice, that is, four months before harvest: (John iv. 1—42. sect. 29, 30.) See note (e) on John iv. 35. After which he went, first to Cana in Galilee, (John iv. 43—54. sect. 31.—) and then, after a circuit, or rather journey, in Galilee, (Matt. iv. 12. Mark i. 14, 15. Luke iv. 14, 15. sect. 31, 32.—) he came and preached at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16—30. sect. 32.) and being rejected there, went and settled for a while at Capernaum, where he called Peter, Andrew, James, and John. (Matt. iv. 13—22. Mark i. 16—20. Luke iv. 31, 32, v. 1—11. sect. 33, 34.) This our author thinks must have taken up all the spring, and must bring us to our Lord's SECOND PASSOVER, A. D. 31.

It is after this passover that Sir Isaac places another circuit through Galilee: which also carried his fame throughout all Syria, and added multitudes from thence, and from Decapolis, to those that followed him from Judea and Jerusalem. (Matt. iv. 23, to the end. Mark i. 28. Luke iv. 44. sect.—36.) To these he preached the celebrated sermon on the mount: (Matt. v. vi. vii. sect. 37—43.) Immediately after which, he cured the leper, (Matt. viii. 1—4. Mark i. 40, to the end. Luke v. 12—16. sect. 44.) the centurion's servant, (Matt. viii. 5—13. Luke vii. 1—10. sect. 55.) and Peter's mother-in-law, with many others. (Matt. viii. 14—17. Mark i. 29—38. Luke iv. 38—44. sect. 35, 36.—)

By this time Sir Isaac supposes the feast of tabernacles approached, when our Lord passing through Samaria was refused a lodging; (Luke ix. 51—56. sect. 127.—) to which he strangely supposes a reference, Matt. viii. 19, 20. (Sect. 69.—) After which, when the feast was over, and Christ returned from Jerusalem toward winter, he stilled a tempest as he crossed the sea, (Matt. viii. 23—27. Mark iv. 35, to the end. Luke viii. 22—25. sect. 69.) and when he had landed, dispossessed the legion: (Matt. viii. 28, to the end. Mark v. 1—21. Luke viii. 26—40. sect. 70.) and then returning again to the western side of the sea, cured the paralytic, (Matt. ix. 1—8. Mark ii. 1—12. Luke v. 18—26. sect. 45.—) called Matthew, (Matt. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27, 28. sect.—45.) and having been entertained at his house, (Matt. ix. 10—17. Mark ii. 15—22. Luke v. 29, to the end. sect. 71.) went out to raise Jairus's daughter, curing the woman who had a bloody flux by the way. (Matt. ix. 18—26. Mark v. 22, to the end. Luke viii. 41, to the end. sect. 72.—) And after performing other cures, (Matt. ix. 27—34. sect.—72.) he took another circuit in Galilee, (Matt. ix. 35, to the end. sect.—73.) gave a charge to his apostles, and sent them out: (Matt. x. 1, to the end; xi. 1. Mark vi. 7—13. Luke ix. 1—6. sect. 74—76.) after which, having answered the messengers which John had sent, he discourses with the people concerning him, (Matt. xi. 2—19. Luke vii. 18—35. sect. 57, 58.) and upbraids the impenitent cities of Galilee. (Matt. xi. 20, to the end. sect. 59.) And as these events would employ the winter and the spring, our author places the THIRD PASSOVER here, A. D. 32.

He does not indeed expressly assert, that this was the feast at which our Lord cured the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and

* [illegible] Aug. 19th [illegible] Sept. 5th [illegible] Sept. 12.

made that defence before the Sanhedrim, related in the 5th chapter of John: (sect. 46—48.) but according to this general plan, this must be its proper place. And that there was a passover about this time, he argues from the story of the disciples rubbing out the ears of corn, which is related as in this place. (Matt. xii. 1—8. Mark ii. 23, to the end. Luke vi. 1—5. sect. 49.) Soon after which happened the cure of the withered hand, (Matt. xii. 9—15. Mark iii. 1—7. Luke vi. 6—11. sect. 50.) and a variety of other miracles, (Matt. xii. 15—21. Mark iii. 7—12. sect. 51.) with that of the dispossession imputed to a confederacy with Beelzebub. (Matt. xii. 22, to the end. Mark iii. 22, to the end. Luke xi. 14—36. sect. 61—64.) Here Sir Isaac places the parables delivered at the sea-side, as he supposes about seed-time, or the feast of tabernacles, (Matt. xiii. 1—52. Mark iv. 1—34. Luke viii. 4—18. sect. 65—68.) his renewed visit to Nazareth, (Matt. xiii. 53, to the end. Mark vi. 1—6 sect. 73.—) and the return of the twelve, after having spent, as he supposes, a year in their embassy. (Mark vi. 30, 31. Luke ix. 10. sect. 78.—)

About this time our author places the beheading of John the Baptist, after he had been in prison two years and a quarter. (Matt. xiv. 1—12. Mark vi. 14—29. Luke ix. 7—9. sect. 77.) After which those multitudes resorted to Christ, whom he fed with the five loaves, (Matt. xiv. 13—23. Mark vi. 30—46. Luke ix. 10—17. John vi. 1—15. sect. 78.) and to whom, after having crossed the lake, (Matt. xiv. 24, to the end. Mark vi. 47, to the end. John vi. 16—21. sect. 79.) he discourses concerning the bread of life. (John vi. 21, to the end. sect. 80—82.) As we are expressly told, John vi. 4. that when this miracle was wrought the passover was near, Sir Isaac concludes this to be the FOURTH PASSOVER after our Lord's baptism, A. D. 33 and argues from John vii. 1. that Christ did not celebrate it at Jerusalem.

Quickly after this, followed the dispute with the Scribes who came from Jerusalem, (Matt. xv. 1—20. Mark vii. 1—23. sect. 83, 84.) After which our Lord departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and after having dispossessed the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman, (Matt. xv. 21—28. Mark vii. 24, to the end. sect. 85.) he returned to the sea of Galilee, where he fed the four thousand. (Matt. xv. 29, to the end. Mark viii. 1—10. sect. 86.) and after having replied to the unreasonable demand the Pharisees made of a sign from heaven, and cautioned his disciples against the leaven of their false doctrine, (Matt. xvi. 1—12. Mark viii. 11—26. sect. 87.) he came to Cæsarea Philippi, and having, by the way acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, he was afterwards transfigured, and ejected an obstinate dæmon. (Matt. xvi. 13, to the end; xvii. 1—21. Mark viii. 27, to the end; ix. 1—29. Luke ix. 18—43. sect. 88—91.) He then came to Capernaum, and made provision by a miracle to pay the tribute; (Matt. xvii. 24, to the end. sect. 92.) and there, or in the neighbourhood of it, discoursed of humility, forgiveness, &c. (Matt. xviii. 1, to the end. Mark ix. 33, to the end. Luke ix. 46—48. sect. 93—95.)

Our author takes no notice of the mission of the seventy, and their return; (Luke x. 1—24. sect. 97—100.) but he would probably have placed it here, previous to that which he supposes to be Christ's last departure from Galilee, (Matt. xix. 1, 2. Mark x. 1. sect. 135.—) when he went up to the feast of tabernacles. (John vii. viii. sect. 98—105.) Neither does he take notice of the visit to Bethany; (Luke x. 38, to the end, sect. 108.) nor of the date of any of those discourses which are recorded by Luke, (from chap. xi. 1. to chap. xviii. 14. sect. 109—129.) except where any passages happen to be parallel to those in Matthew, to which he hints they are to be reduced.

He then introduces our Lord's visit to Jerusalem, and the cure of the blind man at the feast of dedication; (John ix. x. sect. 130—134.) after which Christ retired beyond Jordan, (John x. 40.) where he treats of divorce, (Matt. xix. 3—12. Mark x. 2—12. sect.—135.) blesses the little children, (Matt. xix. 13—15. Mark x. 13—16. Luke xviii. 15—17. sect. 136.) answers, and remarks upon, the young ruler. (Matt. xix. 16, to the end. xx. 1—16. Mark x. 17—31. Luke xviii. 18—30. sect. 137, 138.) After which, on the death of Lazarus, he returns to Bethany, and raises him from the dead; (John xi. 1—46. sect. 139, 140.) and then withdraws to Ephraim, till the approach of the FIFTH PASSOVER after his baptism, which was the last of his life: the particulars of which are related at large by the evangelists, and with the subsequent circumstances of his death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension, make up the rest of this important history: but the contents need not be inserted here, as, for any thing that appears, there is no material difference between a harmony formed on Sir Isaac's principles, or on ours.

I have taken the trouble of quoting the particular passages in each evangelist, as well as of every correspondent section in the Family Expositor, that it may be easy for any who desires it, to read over the whole Paraphrase according to this new scheme, and also to see how it transposes the passages in question, and how it differs from what I judge to be the most exact method of disposition. And the attentive reader will easily see, that there is a coincidence in the order of several of the stories, and a much greater in the dates we have respectively assigned to several which are placed in the same order by both.

A repetition of all the particulars would perhaps be disagreeable. I shall therefore content myself

here with observing in general, that Sir Isaac constantly follows the order of Matthew, whatever transpositions of Mark and Luke it may require; which we do not: and he also concludes, there were FIVE PASSOVERS from the baptism to the death of Christ, whereas we, with the generality of harmonizers, suppose there were but FOUR. I have in my notes hinted at some considerations which determined me to the method I have taken: but it will be expected I should here at least touch upon them again, and give a view of them together, which I the rather do, as they strongly illustrate each other.

The grand reason why I do not every where follow the order of Matthew, is in one word this: That both Mark and Luke do not only in several instances agree to place the stories otherwise, though we have not the least reason to think, that one wrote from the other; but also, that they do, one or another of them, expressly assert, "that the events in question actually happened in a different order from that in which Matthew relates them:" whereas it is observable, that in all such cases Matthew does not so expressly assert his order, as to contradict theirs. A few instances of this may be expedient; and a few shall suffice.

Thus, though Matthew relates the cure of Peter's mother in Law, (sect. 35.) in his eighth chap. ver. 14, 15. after the sermon on the mount, and according to Sir Isaac some months after the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, which he had related, chap. iv. 18—22. Mark says, this cure was immediately after they came out of the synagogue, into which they entered straightway after the call of those disciples. Mark i. 20, 21, 29.

Again, though Matthew gives us the story of Christ's calming the sea, dispossessing Legion, and curing the paralytic, in the latter part of his eighth and beginning of his ninth chapters, and does not relate the parables of the sower &c. delivered from the ship, till the thirteenth; and places so many facts between, that Sir Isaac concludes the miracles to have been wrought in winter, some time before the passover A. D. 32. and the parables not to have been delivered till about the feast of tabernacles, almost a year after. Mark is very punctual in assuring us, (chap. iv. 35. et seq.) that, in the evening of the same day in which the parables were delivered from the ship, Jesus calmed the sea, and dispossessed Legion: for which reason I have followed him, and placed those miracles immediately after the parables (sect. 69. 70.) but have set that of the paralytic much higher, (sect. 45.) as both Luke and Mark connect it strongly with the cure of the leper, which Sir Isaac allows to have happened immediately after the sermon on the mount.

Matthew relates the message of John, and those subsequent [illegible] our Lord, which are contained in his eleventh chapter, after having given us an account of the mission of the apostles in his tenth. But Luke (who more accurately distinguishes between their call, Luke vi. 13—16. and mission, Luke ix. 2—6. as Mark also does, Mark iii. 13—19. and vi. 7—13.) places this message together with the account of several things on which it is founded, as well as the retreat which our Lord made with the twelve before he sent them out, and the fore-mentioned miracles of calming the sea, dispossessing Legion, &c. between those two events, that is, the call, and actual mission, of the twelve, the one of which must in all reason be supposed considerably to precede the other: to which he also agrees with Mark, as was observed above.

Matthew also relates the story of the disciples rubbing out the ears of corn, and the cure of the withered hand, (chap. xii. 1—13.) after the mission of the twelve: whereas both Luke and Mark place whichever of those events they mention before the choice of them (see Mark iii. 1—6. Luke vi. 1—11.) and Luke expressly says, that choice was in those days. (Luke vi. 12, 13.) that is, at the time which followed the fore-mentioned events.

These, and the discourse on the unpardonable sin, (sect. 61.) which we readily allow might have happened twice, are all the most material transpositions we have made: and I must submit it to the judgment of the reader, whether it be not more for the honour of the New Testament in general, to suppose that Matthew might not intend exactly to preserve the order of the history, where he asserts nothing directly concerning it, than to suppose both Mark and Luke to have mistaken it, when they so expressly declare their regard to it: as in some of these instances they do.

Sir Isaac indeed urges, that Matthew (as well as John, in whom I have made some transposition) was an eye witness: but this can have no weight; unless it be certain, that he every where intended to observe an exact order which he knew to be of reasons or causes, many of which may be to us unknown, he might not be scrupulous about.*

And I cannot forbear observing, that on this great man's own principles there cannot be a great deal in the argument for as Matthew was not called till chap. ix. 9. he could not, according to his hypothesis, have been an eye and ear-witness to all the events from chap. iv. to that place; and if, as Sir Isaac also urges, he was sent out as one of the twelve, chap. x. init. and continued a year on his embassy, he could not be such a witness to what passed from the beginning of chap. xi. to the end of chap. xiii. where he places them return after a year's absence. And these are the chapters where we

* Mr. Le Clerc has made a very [illegible]

have made the greatest and most material transpositions, the others hardly deserving a censure.

If this branch of Sir Isaac's argument falls to the ground, and it be not allowed that Matthew observed a strict chronological order; that part of his reasoning, by which he would fix the date of each event, must fall with it. For if it were to be granted, that Matthew hinted at the different seasons of the year when they passed, we could not fix the chronology by that, unless we were sure that each was such a season of a different year, and not of the same; which on this supposition we cannot assert. But I think it very easy (*see above*) to show, that passages which Sir Isaac produces as indications of the seasons, are not so; or at least do not point them out so perceptibly as they ought to do in order to justify the uses he would make of them.

One cannot but wonder, that some of the arguments which I have now in my eye, should ever have been urged by a writer of such extraordinary discernment. As, for instance, that he should conclude the sermon on the mount must be preached later than the passover, because multitudes followed Christ in the open fields, which he says, (page 151.) was an argument of the summer season; though it is so apparent, that when there were those five thousand men, besides women and children, assembled around him, whom he fed with the five loaves, the passover was only at hand. (John vi. 4.) —Or that he should say, (page 142.) the second mentioned Matt. viii. 23. shows the winter was "now come on," as if there were not storms in the summer. —Or, once more, that it must be said time when the parables in Matt. xiii were delivered, "because sowing seed is mentioned in them;" (page 154.) when it is so evident, (as I have observed elsewhere, note (d) on Mark iv. 3.) the very same principle would prove it to be harvest, as another parable delivered the same day refers to that season.

I am not willing to swell this Dissertation, and therefore omitting many remarks which might easily be made on other passages, I will conclude with the mention of two or three particulars which might contribute to lead this illustrious writer into some error.

One thing that has occasioned this, was his taking it for granted, as I observed before, that the fifteenth year of Tiberius, in which Luke (iii. 1.) says, opened his ministry, must needs be reckoned from the death of Augustus; whereas it ought to be computed from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire. (See note (b) on Luke iii. 1.)

Another is, his admitting the rabbinical rules for the translation of the Jewish feasts, of which we have not one word either in the Scriptures, or in Josephus, or Philo. Yet it is on this principle that

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

reader to judge, whether, if such a variety of journeys and events must be allowed to have happened in these nine months, or, according to him, in six, we may not, by a parity of reason, or rather with greater, comprehend all the preceding within the compass of about sixteen; especially when it is considered that, according to Sir Isaac, that progress of our Lord, for which the apostles were intended to make way, and that after the embassy of the seventy, must be thrown into the first six months of this year, and is an extreme, and, I think, insurmountable difficulty, into which we shall not be driven.*

I shall conclude this Dissertation with one reflection, which may perhaps be of some use to those who have but little relish for the niceties of this inquiry. I mean, that when we find this great master, and, I had almost said, so far as the title can be applied to a mortal man, this great father of reason, falling into such obvious mistakes, as I have been obliged here to point out, it tends to give us an humbling idea of the imperfections of the human mind in its present state. And, consequently, we may learn from it two of the most important lessons that can be imagined in social life:—A caution, lest we assert our own opinions with too dogmatical an air;—and a care to avoid such petulancy in censuring the mistakes of others, as if we thought none but the weakest and most contemptible of mankind were capable of being misled by the specious appearances of some inconclusive arguments. And I will venture to say, that if Sir Isaac Newton's error in the order of the harmony teach us this candour, it will be a much greater benefit to us, than if he had placed every circumstance relating to it beyond all possibility of further dispute.

* To make the reader more sensible of this, I shall add a brief survey of the compassed time, within which I suppose the principal events between the several passovers of our Lord's ministry to have happened, referring him to the following chronological table for a more exact view of them.

Events which we suppose between the first and second of our Lord's passovers.

Our Lord spends the summer, and beginning of the winter, in Judea, about the wilderness, passes through Samaria into Galilee, (sect. 25—30.) spends the remainder of the winter and spring in a circuit through Galilee, in which are included his visit to Nazareth, and short stay at Capernaum, and towards the close of the circuit, having preached his celebrated sermon on the mount, returns to Capernaum. (Sect. 31—45.)

Events between the second and third passover.

After vindicating what passed upon rubbing out the ears of corn, and curing the withered hand, he travels to the sea of Galilee, chooses his apostles, and makes another abode at Capernaum; visits Nain, and dismisses John's messengers, all which pass before the end of May. (sect. 46—60.) Then travels, with the twelve in his train, (Luke viii. 1. Matt. xi. 1.) through the places near the sea of Tiberias, perhaps, during the months of June, July, and August: (sect. 61—74.) and attending a much more extensive circuit, dispatches the twelve to make way for him, and probably setting out quickly after them, might employ six months in this part of it, sect. 74—77: and leave sufficient time for his interview with the five thousand whom he miraculously fed, and his conference with the scribes and pharisees from Jerusalem, before the next passover. (Sect. 78—84.)

Events between Christ's third passover and the feast of dedication, which preceded his fourth.

Allowing the time between the passover and the end of May for his journey to the coasted Tyre and Sidon, and other places in Galilee, he might return to Dalmanutha, and feed the four thousand by that time, sect. 85, 86. and the subsequent events and discourses recorded sect. 87—96. employed him till the end of June, he might then send out the seventy, and they might easily meet him at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles in September: between which, and the feast of dedication (that the end of December, we must place his last circuit in Galilee, sect. 97—127. unless which is possible, we suppose it to have been begun quickly after the mission of the seventy, and so some part of July and September to have been employed in it. And indeed one cannot imagine any necessity, that all the seventy, or all the apostles, should have finished their journeys, before our Lord began to follow those who were sent to his nearest places. Or, if we should suppose it, and follow Sir Isaac's reckoning, we must, of necessity, place the two journeys, which followed these two embassies, within this space of time, as was before shewn: whereas if we consider the journey to the coast of Tyre and Sidon as an opposite to the former, we may according to our reckoning have eight months to that grand tour of our Lord, in which he followed the twelve, which might make a convenient proportion to despatch that, in which he followed the seventy, in proportion to their number. And however, that if we consider Galilee not to have been larger than three or four of our western counties, we shall more easily acquiesce in the competency of the time assigned to these circuits.

POSTSCRIPT.

I never had, nor never took, an opportunity of looking into Dupin's Life of Christ, till about a year ago, long after the publication of the second edition of my Paraphrase on the Evangelists: but then I found, to my agreeable surprise, a more perfect agreement between his scheme of the harmony and mine, than I expected any where to have met with; and particularly in the story of the resurrection.

Of the 203 sections, into which I have divided the evangelists, we differ only in the order of 29: and as several of these are inseparably connected, there are only, on the whole, nine stories or discourses, in which there is a variety in our order.

The first, sect. 12. The wise men's visit to Christ; which he places before the presentation, sect. 11.

The second, sect. 37—43. Matthew's account of the sermon on the mount; which he supposes to have been coincident with that in Luke, sect. 53, 54. which I consider as a repetition of it.

The third, sect. 69, 70. The stilling the tempest, and dispossessing Legion, which he places before the calling of Matthew, and immediately after sect. 36.

The fourth, sect. 96. Christ's reproving John for an instance of the narrowness of his spirit; which, as a similar and undetermined fact, he subjoins to sect. 93. Christ's checking the ambition of his disciples.

The fifth, sect. 106. The return of the seventy: which he connects with the story of their mission, sect. 97.

The sixth, sect. 118. Christ's urging the necessity of striving for heaven, &c. which he strangely introduces between sect. 151 and 158.

The seventh, the discourses and facts, sect. 126—135. which he scatters promiscuously, after sect. 105. and elsewhere.

The eighth, sect. 170. The intimation of Judas's

treachery; which he introduces after the eucharist, sect. 172.

And the last, sect. 181. The warning Christ gave of Peter's denying him; which he joins with sect. 171. though I take them to be two different predictions of the same event.

The reader may see my reasons for the order in which I have placed most of these sections, in the notes upon them: but I cannot forbear thinking, that such a coincidence in all the rest, where the one could not write from the other, is a strong presumption in favour of both.

No. II.

A DISSERTATION

ON

THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

AS

PROVED FROM THE FACTS RECORDED IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF IT.

NOTHING can be more evident, than that a firm and cordial belief of the inspiration of the sacred Scripture is of the highest moment; not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence. For if this be given up, the authority of the revelation is enervated, and its use destroyed: the star which is to direct our course, is clouded; our compass is broke to pieces; and we are left to make the voyage of life in sad uncertainty, amidst a thousand rocks, and shelves, and quicksands. I hope, therefore, I may perform a service acceptable to God and my Christian brethren, while I endeavour, as plainly and as briefly as I can, to place some leading proofs of it in a convincing view. And I undertake the task the more willingly, as in the preface to the first volume of my Family Expositor I laid myself under an obligation, several years ago, to attempt something of this kind, and have often been reminded of it by persons for whom I have the highest regard.

I then proposed to handle the subject in a few sermons, to be added to those, long since published, on the evidences of the gospel. But on a review of that particular connexion, which the argument I am here to pursue has with the history of the New Testament, I apprehend it could no where appear better, than at the end of my exposition on the books which contain it. The reader will, I hope, recollect, that in the sermons just now mentioned, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the truth of that history; and every year convinces me more and more, of the unanswerable force of the evidence there displayed. It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the divine blessing, which hath seemed to attend those discourses; and it is a great encouragement to me to hope, that what I am now to offer may be a means of establishing some of my readers in that regard to the sacred oracles, which will be their best preservative against the errors and the vices of that licentious age in which Providence hath cast our lot; whereby our fidelity and our zeal are brought to a trial, which few ages but those of martyrdom could have afforded.

It will be my business,—First, to state the nature of inspiration in general, and of that kind of it which, as I apprehend, we are to ascribe to the New Testament:—I shall then prove, that it was undoubtedly written by such inspiration:—And after this, I shall briefly hint at the influence, which this important truth ought always to have upon our temper and conduct; by enforcing which, I apprehend I shall take the best method to promote a growing persuasion of the truth I am labouring to establish.

I will only premise, that I do not intend this, as a full discussion of the subject; but only, as such a compendious view of the chief proofs, as may suit the place in which it stands, and as may, from the easiest and plainest principles, give rational satisfaction to the minds of common Christians.

who have not leisure, nor perhaps ability, to enter into all the niceties of theological and scholastical controversy.

I. I shall state the nature of inspiration, and of that kind of it, which we are to ascribe to the New Testament.

In this I shall be more particular, as I apprehend, the want of a sufficient accuracy here has occasioned some confusion in the reasoning of several worthy persons, who have treated this important subject more largely than I must here allow myself to do. I shall not, however, criticise on their account of the matter, but plainly lay down what seems to me intelligible, right, and safe.

By inspiration in general, I would be understood to mean, "Any supernatural influence of God upon the mind of a rational creature, where it is formed to any degree of intellectual improvement, beyond what it would, at that time, and in those circumstances, have attained in a natural way, that is, by the usual exercise of its faculties, unassisted by any special divine interposition." Thus, if a man were instantaneously enabled to speak a language which he had never learned, how possible soever it might have been for him to have obtained an equal readiness in it by degrees, I believe few would scruple to say, that he owed his acquaintance with it to a divine inspiration. Or if he gave a true and exact account of what was doing at a distance, and published a particular relation of what he neither saw nor heard, as some of the prophets did; all the world would own, if the affair were too complex, and the account too circumstantial, to be the result of a lucky guess, that he must be inspired with the knowledge of it; though another account equally exact, given by a person on the spot, would be ascribed to no inspiration at all.

But of this supernatural influence on the minds of men, forming them to such extraordinary intellectual improvements and abilities, there are various sorts and degrees, which it will be of importance for us accurately to distinguish from each other.

If a person be discoursing either in word or writing, and God do miraculously watch over his mind, and, however secretly, direct it in such a manner, as to keep him more secure from error in what he speaks or writes, than he could have been merely by the natural exercise of his faculties, I should say he was inspired; even though there should be no extraordinary marks of high genius in the work; or even though another person, with a stronger memory, or relating a fact more immediately after it happened, might naturally have recounted it with equal exactness. Yet still, if there was in this case any thing miraculous, we must, on the principles above, allow an inspiration; and I would call this, to distinguish it from other and higher degrees, an inspiration of superintendency.

If this influence should act in such a degree, as absolutely to exclude all mixture of error in a declaration of doctrines or facts so superintended, we might then call it a plenary superintending inspiration; or, as I would choose for popular use to express myself in this discourse, a full inspiration.

Now it will from hence follow, and I desire that it may be seriously attended to, that a book, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be written by a full inspiration, even though it contain many things which the author might have known and recorded merely by the use of his natural faculties, if there be others which he did not so well know, or could not without miraculous assistance have so exactly recollected; or if, on the whole, a freedom from all error would not, in fact, have been found, unless God had thus superintended or watched over his mind and pen. And in regard to such a production, it would be altogether impertinent and insignificant to inquire, how far did natural memory or natural reason operate, and in what particular facts or doctrines did supernatural agency prevail. It is enough, if I know, that what the author says or writes is true, though I know not particularly how he came by this or that truth: for my obligation to receive it arises from its being known truth, and not merely from its being made known this or that way. And should God miraculously assure me that any particular writing contained nothing but the truth; and should he at the same time tell me, it had been drawn up without any miraculous assistance at all, though I could not then call it inspired, I should be as much obliged to receive and submit to it on its being thus attested by God, as if every single word had been immediately dictated by him.

It will further follow from what is said above, that a book may be written by such full inspiration as I have described, though the author being left to the choice of his own words, phrases, and manner,* there may be some imperfection in the style and method, provided the whole contents of it are true; if the subject be so important, as to make it consistent with the divine wisdom miraculously to interpose, to preserve an entire credibility as to the exact truth of facts recorded, and doctrines delivered as divine. If, indeed, God were represented as declaring such a book to be intended by him as an exact standard for logic, oratory, or poetry, every apparent defect in either would be an internal objection against it. But if it be represented only as intended to teach us truth, in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions, such defects would no more warrant or excuse our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utter-

* It is very evident that the learned Maimonides thought that it [illegible] to the prophets, though I think it [illegible] See Maimon. More Nev. lib. [illegible]

ance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard to a person, who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us.

I have been more particular in stating this kind of inspiration, because it is that which I shall endeavour to assert to the sacred books of the New Testament, and this, without any exception or limitation, as they came out of the hands of the apostles, though I allow it is possible they may, in this or that particular copy, and in some minuter instances which now perhaps affect all our remaining copies, have suffered something by the injuries of time, or the negligence of transcribers, as well as printers; which, that they have in some particulars suffered, is as notorious a fact, as that there is a written or a printed copy of them in the world; yet is at the same time a fact, which no man of common sense or honesty can seriously urge against their authority.

Though it be the main point in my view, to prove that the New Testament is written under that kind of inspiration which I have been explaining, I must nevertheless beg leave to mention two other kinds, of which divines often speak, and which do also, in a considerable degree, belong to many parts of Scripture, though I think it neither expedient, material, nor safe, to assert that they run through the whole of it: I mean, an inspiration of elevation and of suggestion.

The former, as its name plainly intimates, prevails where the faculties, though they act in a regular, and, as it seems, a common, manner, are nevertheless elevated, or raised to some extraordinary degree, so that the performance is more truly sublime, noble, and pathetic, than what would have been produced merely by the force of a man's natural genius. As for the particular degree of the divine agency, where there is indeed something of this inspiration, perhaps neither the person that is under it, nor any other creature, may be able confidently to pronounce concerning it. Perhaps nothing less penetrating than the eye of God himself may be able universally to distinguish that narrow line, which divides what is natural from what is supernatural, in all the productions and powers of imagination, reasoning, and language, or in the effects and powers of memory under the former head. It is a curiosity, in the minute particulars of which we are not at all concerned; as it is the same God which, whether naturally or miraculously, worketh all and in all, 1Cor. xii. 9. But if any excellency in the performance itself can speak it to be more than human, productions of this sort are to be found in Scripture; and the rank and education of some of the sacred penmen, render the hand of God peculiarly conspicuous in the sublimity and lustre of their writings. What the gifts of the Spirit may in every age of the church have done, by operations of this kind, we know not. And I think it would be presumptuous absolutely to deny, that God might act in some extraordinary degree on some of the heathen writers, to produce those glorious works of antiquity, which have been, under the direction of his providence, so efficacious, on the one hand, to transmit the evidences of divine revelation, and, on the other, to illustrate the necessity of it: in consequence of which, I cannot forbear saying, by the way, that I think they who are intimately acquainted with them are, of all men upon earth, the most inexcusable in rejecting Christianity. But our inability to mark out the exact boundaries between nature and an extraordinary divine agency, is not much to be regretted; since it does not appear to be the design of Providence, by such elevations of sentiment, style, and manner, by any means to bear testimony to the person adorned with them, as a messenger sent to speak in his name, which may as effectually be done in the plainest and simplest forms of expression, without any thing which looks like the heightenings of art, or the sparklings of an extraordinary genius.

The other, which divines have called immediate suggestion, is the highest and most extraordinary kind of inspiration; and takes place, when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does, as it were, speak directly to the mind; making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others: so that a person, in what he writes from hence, is no other than first the auditor, and then, if I may be allowed the expression, the secretary, of God; as John was of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he wrote from his sacred lips the seven epistles to the Asiatic churches. And it is, no doubt, to an inspiration of this kind, that the book of the Revelation owes its original.

It is evident from the definitions above, that there may be a full superintendency, where neither of the latter kinds of inspiration, of elevation or suggestion, take place: but I think we must necessarily allow, that an inspiration of suggestion, so far as it goes, must also imply a full superintendency in recovering the history of what has been seen or heard, or any prophetic vision, when it is necessary to make a report of it. For as it would, on the one hand, be impious to imagine that the blessed God would dictate a falsehood to any of his creatures; so neither can we suppose it consistent with the divine wisdom, to suffer the prophet, through infirmity, to err in delivering a message, with which he had expressly charged him, lest what he would be given in vain, so far as there was a failure in the exact delivery of it.

Besides the last book of the New Testament, I

mean, the Revelation, which I have already mentioned in this view, it seems evident to me, that some other parts of it were given by such a suggestion; seeing there are so many predictions interspersed, and so many mysteries revealed, which lay entirely beyond the ken of any human, or perhaps angelic, mind. But that this is applicable to all the history of it, or to all things contained in its epistolary parts, I choose not to assert. For as it cannot be necessary to its entire credibility, which nothing can more effectually secure than a full superintendency, it would subject us to many difficulties, which have been so forcibly urged by others, that it is not necessary for me here to repeat them. But I am well assured, that the apparent insufficiency of the answers, which have been returned to these objections by some very sincere, but I think in this instance less judicious, defenders of Scripture, has led some people to conclude, that the Scripture was not inspired at all; as if it had been on both sides agreed, that a universal suggestion was the only kind of inspiration worth contending about. The consequence of this hath been, that such as are dissatisfied with the arguments, which these defenders of the divine authority of the Scripture insist upon, read the Scriptures, if they read them at all, not to learn their authentic dictates, but to try the sentiments contained in them by the touch-stone of their own reason, and to separate what that shall allow to be right, from what it presumptuously concludes to be wrong. And this boasted standard has been so very defective, that on this mistaken notion they have not only rejected many of the most vital truths of Christianity, but even some essential principles of natural religion. And thus they have in effect annihilated the Christian revelation, at the very same time that they have acknowledged the historical truth of the facts on which it is built. This is the body of men that have affected to call themselves cautious believers: but their character is so admirably well described under that of Agrippa, by my honoured friend Dr. Watts, in his little treatise called the Redeemer and Sanctifier, that it may be sufficient here to have hinted it thus briefly, as the reason why, out of regard to them as well as others, I have resumed the subject of inspiration, and endeavoured to place it in, what I do in my conscience apprehend to be, both a safe and rational light.

That I may remedy, so far as God shall enable me to do it, the great and destructive evil I have just been mentioning, and may establish in the minds of Christians a due regard to the sacred oracles of eternal truth, I shall now proceed to the second part of this discourse: in which,

II. I am to show, how evidently the full inspiration of the New Testament, in the sense stated above, follows from the acknowledged truth of the history which it contains, in all its leading and most important facts.

But before I proceed to the discussion of the matter, I must beg leave to observe, that, though this is what I apprehend to be the grand argument, and that which may most properly be connected with an exposition of the historical books, I am very far from slighting those other arguments which fall not so directly in my way here.

I greatly revere the testimony of the primitive Christian writers, not only to the real existence of the sacred books in those early ages, but also to their divine original: their persuasion of which most evidently appears from the veneration with which they speak of them, even while miraculous gifts remained in the church; and consequently, an exact attendance to a written rule might seem less absolutely necessary, and the authority of inferior teachers might approach nearer to that of the apostles. I believe every candid reader will acknowledge, that nothing can be objected to many strong passages in Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and some other ancient writers he has mentioned, that are now lost. It is needless to produce them here, after those valuable specimens of them, which Dr. Whitby and Mons. Du Pin have given; and especially, considering what my learned friend Dr. Lardner has with so much industry and accuracy of judgment collected on this head, in the second part of his Credibility of the Gospel History. I shall therefore content myself with observing here, that several of the most learned and considerable of these ancients speak of this veneration for the sacred writings of the New Testament, not as the result of their own private judgment, but as that in which all the churches were unanimously agreed.*

The internal characters of divine inspiration, with which every page of the New Testament abounds, do also deserve our attentive notice; and render the book itself, if considered as detached from all external evidence whatsoever, a compendious demonstration of its own sacred original, and consequently of the certainty of that religion which it teaches. The excellency of its doctrines, the spirituality and elevation of its design, the majesty

* Thus Origen says, Philocal. cap. xii. page 41. [illegible] "That of a man would not readily be allowed to be an infidel, he must admit the inspiration of the Scriptures." And he elsewhere places the gospels in the number of writings, "which were received as divine by all the churches of God, and were the elements, or first principles, of the church's faith." [illegible] Tertullian also lays it down as a fundamental principle in disputing with heretics, "That the books of doctrine are to be determined by Scripture;" for the question has evidently the form of a strong suggestion. Athanasius would have passed for no Reformer, even ex Ecclesiæ Fidei. De Principiis Homil. cap. xv. And Eusebius quotes a much more ancient writer than himself, Ecclesiast. Hist. lib. v. cap. 28. who calls the Scriptures "the rule of ancient faith;" and who, after words speaking of heretics, declares, "that if they denied the Scriptures to be divinely inspired, they were infidels."

and simplicity of its style, the agreement of its parts in the most unsuspicious manner, with its more than human efficacy on the hearts and consciences of men, do all concur to give us a very high idea of the New Testament: and I am persuaded, that the wiser and better any man is, and the more familiarly he converses with these unequalled books, the more will he be struck with this evidence. But these things, in the general, are better felt than expressed; and several of the arguments arise, not from particular passages, but from the general tenor of the books: and consequently, they cannot be judged of, but by a serious and attentive perusal.

Dismissing, therefore, these topics, not with neglect, but with the sincerest expressions of just and high veneration, I now proceed to that grand proof of the inspiration of the New Testament, which is derived from the credibility of its leading facts, which having so fully illustrated in the sermons referred to above, I think I have a just title to assume as the foundation of what further reasonings may occur.

Admitting this great principle, it is undeniably certain,—That Jesus of Nazareth was a most extraordinary person:—That after having been foretold by many prophets, in distant periods of time, he was at length, agreeably to the repeated declaration of an angel, first to a priest ministering at the golden altar in the temple, and then to his mother, conceived by a virgin of David's family:—That his birth was proclaimed by a choir of angels, who celebrated it in celestial anthems, as the foundation of peace on earth, and the most glorious display of divine benevolence to men:—That before his public appearance, a person greater than any of the prophets, and whose birth had also been foretold by an angel, was sent to prepare his way:—That on his being baptized, he was anointed with a wonderful effusion of the Spirit, poured down upon him by a visible symbol: and that the efficacy of this sacred agent, continually residing in him, was apparent throughout the whole course of his ministry; not only in the unspotted sanctity of his life, amidst a thousand most violent temptations, and in the bright assemblage of virtues and graces, which shone in it with a lustre before unknown, and since absolutely unparalleled; but also in a multitude of various works of wonder and mercy, which he miraculously wrought on those, whose diseases were of the most desperate and incurable nature, and even on the dead, whom that almighty voice of his, which had driven out the fiercest infernal spirits, and calmed the rage of tempests, did, with serene majesty, awaken into life, as from a slumber. It is also on the same foundation certain, That this illustrious person having, by the malice of his enemies, been most unjustly and cruelly put to death, did, on the third day, arise from the dead. And that, after having given to his disciples the most abundant proofs of that important fact, he at length ascended to heaven gradually in their sight; angels appearing, to assure them he should as visibly descend from thence to the universal judgment, the administration of which he had declared to be committed to him.

I must freely declare, that had I been an entire stranger to the sacred story, and proceeded no further in it than this, supposing me firmly to have believed all these wonderful things, though delivered in the shortest abstract that could have been made of them, I should readily have concluded, that this extraordinary person, being sent, as it plainly appears from the history that he was, with a divine revelation for the benefit of all nations and of all ages, had taken care to leave some authentic records of the doctrine which he taught. And if I had further found, that he had left no such records written by himself, I should naturally have concluded, that he took effectual care that some of his followers should be enabled to deliver down to posterity the system of religion which he taught, in the most accurate manner; with all such extraordinary assistance from God as the nature of the subject required, in order to rendering their accounts exact. And I believe every reasonable man would draw this inference; because it is very apparent, that the great end of this vast and astonishing apparatus (for vast and astonishing it would appear, if what relates to Jesus alone were taken into the survey) must, in the nature of things, be frustrated, if no such records were provided; it being morally impossible that unwritten tradition should convey a system of religion pure and uncorrupted, even to the next generation; and much more, that it should so convey it to the end of time. And it would seem, so far as we can judge, by no means worthy the divine wisdom, to suffer the good effects of such a great and noble plan to be lost, for want of so easy an expedient; especially, since men of the age and country in which these things happened, were not only blessed with the use of letters, but were remarkable for their application to them, and for great proficiency in various branches of learning. And if I should not only have an abstract of the history of Jesus which I judged credible, but should also be so happy as to have the four gospels in my hand, with convincing evidences of their being genuine, which we here suppose; I should, on these principles, accordingly argue, that not only the leading facts, but likewise the system of doctrines and discourses delivered in them, might entirely be depended upon: nor could I conceive the truth of such doctrines and discourses to be seperable from the general truth of the leading facts referred to above: having

as I here suppose, proper evidences to convince me, that the penmen of these books were the persons by whom the memory of these events was to be delivered down to posterity: which is a further principle, that none of common sense and modesty can pretend to contest; none appearing as their competitors, whose pretensions are worthy to be named.

But my apprehension of the full authenticness and credibility of these writers would, on the supposition I am here making, greatly increase, as I proceeded to that excellent and useful book, which the good providence of God has now given me an opportunity of illustrating; the Acts of the holy Apostles: since I learn from thence, that in a very few days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Spirit of God was, according to his promise, poured out upon his apostles in an abundant manner, attended with the visible appearance of a lambent celestial flame; and that, in consequence of this amazing unction, the poor fishermen of Galilee, and their companions, were in a moment enabled to speak, with the greatest readiness and propriety, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic, Persic, and a variety of other languages, the first rudiments of which they had never learnt; and also to perform all kinds of miracles, equal to those of their Master, and in some circumstances, superior to them. My veneration for the writings of these men, and I here suppose, I know those of the New Testament to be so, must be unparalleled, when I think who and what they were: and I am so struck with this plain, but divinely powerful, argument, that I must entreat my reader to review with me, a little more particularly, some of the actions and circumstances of these holy men, to whose writings I am labouring to conciliate his unreserved regard.

Let them all be considered, as preaching the gospel in that extraordinary manner, on the day of Pentecost; and a few days after, when some of their companions had been seized and threatened by the Sanhedrim, as anointed again with such an effusion of the Spirit, as shook the very house in which they were, and inspired them all at once with the same sublime hymn of praise. Let them be considered, as afterwards led out of prison by an angel, and commanded by him to go and preach the gospel in the temple, under the remarkable phraseology of "the words of this life;" as if the whole life and happiness of the human race depended on their knowing and receiving it. Nor let us here forget that extraordinary power, common to all the apostles, of communicating the miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the imposition of their hands. Had we nothing particularly to say of any one, more than these grand things which we hear of them all, it must surely command our reverence to their writings, and set them at a vast distance from any of merely human original.

But through the singular providence of God it hath so happened, that we have the most particular history of the lives of those apostles, to whose writings we are generally most indebted, I mean, John, Peter, and Paul.

With respect to John we know, that besides the concern he had in the cure of the lame man, he was favoured with the visions of God in the Isle of Patmos; where our Lord, after an abode of more than half a century on the throne of his glory at his Father's right hand, did him the unequalled honour to use him as his amanuensis, or secretary; expressly dictating to him the letters he was pleased to send to the seven churches in Asia. How easily then may we suppose him so to have presided over his other writings, as to have secured him from mistakes in them!

Consider Peter, as striking Ananias and Sapphira dead with a word; as curing, by the like powerful word, one cripple at Jerusalem, and another at Lydda; and calling back Dorcas, even from the dead. Let us view him in that grand circumstance, of being marked out so particularly by an angel to Cornelius, and sent to him as the oracle of God himself, from whom that worthy and honourable person was to hear words, by which he and all his house should be saved: and after this, let us view him, as once more delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews, by an angel, who struck off his chains, and opened the doors of his prison, the very night before he was to have been executed. And let any one, with these particulars in his eye, added to the foregoing, in which he shared with all his brethren, say, what more could be necessary, to prove the divine inspiration of what he taught; so far as inspiration was requisite, to render it entirely authentic: or let any one further say, upon what imaginable pretence the authority of his writings can be denied, if that of his preaching be granted.

And to mention no more, let Paul, that great scribe, instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to whose pen we owe so many invaluable epistles, be considered in the same view: and let us endeavour to impress our minds with the various scenes through which we know he passed, and the distinguished favours, with which his Master honoured him, that we may judge, how we are to receive the instruction of his pen. Let us therefore think of him, as so miraculously called by the voice of Christ to the profession of his gospel, when he was persecuting it even to the death, as receiving a full and distinct revelation of that glorious, but to him quite unknown, gospel, by the immediate inspiration of its divine Author; which is a fact he expressly witnesses, and in which he could not possibly be mistaken. Think of the lustre of those astonishing works, which shone round him wherever he went,

and of those wrought in his favour, which showed him so eminently the care of heaven; Demons ejected; distempers cured sometimes with a touch, and sometimes without it, by a garment sent from him to the patient; his motions guided from place to place by a divine oracle; Elymas struck blind for opposing him; his bands loosed by an earthquake; his strength and vigour instantaneously restored, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace at Lystra had stoned him and left him for dead; and to add no more, his safety in a shipwreck, with that of near three hundred more in the same vessel for his sake, promised by an angel, and accomplished without the loss of a single person, when they had expected nothing but a universal ruin. Let us, I say, think of Paul in these circumstances; and with these facts full in our view, let us judge, whether it is at all probable, yea, whether it be morally possible, that a man, sent out and attended with such credentials as these, should be so left of God, amidst all these tokens of his constant care, as to mingle error with sound doctrine, and his own fancies with the divine revelations, which we are sure he received; or whether, if he were not left to such effects of human frailty in his preaching, but might have been regarded by his hearers with entire credit, he would be left to them in those writings, by which he was, as it were, to preach to all future generations of men, from one end of the world to the other; and by which, being dead, he yet speaketh, in all languages, and to all Christian assemblies.

I cannot forbear thinking this plain argument, so well adapted to popular use, abundantly sufficient to carry conviction to every candid mind, in proportion to the degree of its attention and penetration. And I am almost afraid, that some should think I have bestowed an unnecessary labour, thus particularly to state a matter, which hath such a flood of light poured in upon it from almost every page of the sacred story. But I have been obliged, in the course of this exposition, to meditate much on these facts; and under the deep impression I could not but speak as out of the fulness of my heart.

Yet after all I have already said, I should be very unjust to this argument, if I did not endeavour to represent to my reader, how much it is strengthened, on the one hand, by the express and comprehensive promises which our Redeemer made to his apostles; and on the other, by the peculiar language in which the apostles themselves speak of their preaching and writings, and the high regard they challenge to each; a regard, which nothing could justify them in demanding, but a consciousness that they were indeed under a full inspiration.

The promises of our Lord Jesus Christ must undoubtedly have a very great weight with all, that have reflected on that indisputable testimony, which God himself bore to him in raising [illegible]. And therefore, though they are so very well known, I must beg leave, not only to refer to them, but to recite the chief of them at large: and I entreat the reader to consider, how he can reconcile them with an apprehension, that our Lord Jesus Christ did at the same time intend to leave the persons to whom he made such promises liable to mistake both in facts and doctrines, and to [illegible] to mislead such as should depend upon their testimony, where they professed themselves to be thoroughly informed.

In that copious and excellent discourse, which our Lord addressed to the apostles, just before he quitted the guest-chamber to go to the garden of Gethsemane, that is, but a few hours before his death, the grand consolation he urges to his sorrowful disciples, is this; that he would send his Spirit upon them. The donation of which Spirit is represented as the first-fruits of Christ's intercession; when after so long an absence, and such terrible sufferings, he should be restored to his Father's embraces. This is spoken of as the first petition preferred by him, and the first favour granted to his church for his sake: John xiv. 16. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Yea, Christ declares, and he could not be mistaken in it, that the agency of this Spirit should so abundantly counterbalance all the advantages they received from his bodily presence, that strong as their affection to him was, they would in that view have reason to rejoice in his leaving them: (John xvi. 7.) I tell you the truth, that is, I say what may be depended upon as a most important certainty, and very important indeed such a representation was; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Now from these expressions, were they alone, I think we might probably infer, that the apostles, after having received the Spirit, would be in no more danger of erring in their writings, than they would have been, if Jesus himself had been always near them, to inform them concerning any fact or doctrine, of which they ought [illegible] to speak.

This is further confirmed by the title which is given him no less than thrice in this discourse, the Spirit of truth; almost in a breath with these great and weighty circumstances, that he should abide with them for ever: (ver. 16.) that he should guide them into all truth; that he should teach them all things, yea, and show them things to come. John xvi. 13. which must surely secure them from any danger of erring in relating things that were past. But lest any should be perverse enough to dispute the consequence, our Lord particularly

mentions this effect of the Spirit's operation, that they should thereby be fitted to bear a testimony to him, as those who had long been conversant with him, and whose memories were miraculously assisted in recollecting those discourses which they had heard from him: John xv. 26. 27. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also, being so assisted, shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." And again, John xiv. 26. "The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Soon after this, our Lord, on the very day in which he rose from the dead, in a dependence on the aids of this promised Spirit, gives them a commission, which nothing but its plenary inspiration could have answered, or have qualified them to fulfil: for coming to them, he declares, John xx. 21. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you: and upon this he breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained." Which, whether it signifies a power of inflicting and removing miraculous punishments, or of authoritatively declaring that sins were in particular instances forgiven or retained, must, either way, suppose such a constant presence of Christ with them, as it is hard, or rather impossible, to reconcile with supposing them to err in what they wrote for the instruction of the church in succeeding ages.

These are the grand passages, on which I rest this part of the argument: yet I think, I ought not to omit those, in which Christ promises them such extraordinary assistance of the Spirit, while defending his cause in the presence of magistrates; and it is the more proper to mention them, as the language in which they are made is so remarkable. On this occasion then he tells them, Matt. x. 19, 20. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." May we not therefore on the same principles conclude, that when they were to write for the use of all future generations of Christians, it was not so much they who wrote, as the Spirit of the Father, who in effect wrote by them, and, as it were, dictated to them? For the occasion will surely appear as important, in one instance, as in the other, or rather much more important in the latter, than in the former, as an error in their writings would have a much more extensive and lasting influence, than a slip of their tongues in a transient pleading before a magistrate. Nay, to give this argument the greatest possible weight, we find that the same promise was made, almost in the very same words, Luke xii. 11, 12. to persons in the dignity of their office inferior to the apostles; I mean, to the seventy: which might have entitled their writings to such a regard, as I am now labouring to engage to those of their superiors.

I shall only further remind the reader, that our Lord, when just ascending to heaven, refers to that effusion of the Spirit, which was quickly after to happen, even before they departed from Jerusalem, as the era from whence the grand accomplishment of the promises relating to the aids of the Spirit was to be dated. See Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5. And as all the apostolical writings which now remain, were written several years after that event, it plainly proves, they lie within the period in which they were to expect all the assistance which these promises import.

The most plausible objection which can be urged against the application of these promises to the matter now before us, is this: "That these promises only refer to the supernatural assistance, granted to the apostles on great and pressing occasions; but that they might easily, without such assistance, have written a true account of the life and preaching of Christ, and of such other facts as they record; and consequently, that their historical writings at least, how credible soever we suppose them, might be drawn up without any inspiration at all."

To this I might reply, That if it be allowed, that the apostles, in the books which we have been endeavouring to explain, wrote the exact truth, and that in their epistles they have made a right and unerring representation of the revelation with which they were charged, so that we may safely make their writings a rule both of faith and practice, the remaining question would only be about the propriety of using the word inspiration, when speaking of them; and therefore would, on the principles I have laid down above, be comparatively of small importance. Yet I think it easy, in that view of the question, to prove that these writings could not have been thus entirely credible, if they had not been written under such a full inspiration of superintendency, as is stated in the first part of this discourse.

I do indeed allow, and no candid man can dispute it, that the penmen of the New Testament, supposing them able to write at all, might merely by the natural exercise of their memory, under the direction of the common sense and reason of men, have given us a plain, faithful, and very useful account of many extraordinary scenes, to which they had been witnesses during the time they conversed with Jesus on earth, and in which they were active after his ascension. And I cannot forbear saying,

that supposing the truth of the grand leading facts, as, that Jesus of Nazareth taught a doctrine confirmed by miracles, and was himself raised from the dead, I should have esteemed such writings, supposing them merely an honest account of what such men must have known, to be beyond all comparison the most valuable records of antiquity. But when these writings came to be perused, it is evident to me, from the particular contents of them, that honest and worthy men would never have pretended to have written in such a manner, if they had not been conscious of superior direction, and extraordinary divine influence.

For the historians of whom we speak, do not merely give us a very circumstantial account of actions; as what journeys Christ made, what miracles he performed, in what manner he was received, where and how he died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven; but they do also, as we may reasonably expect they should, give us an account of the doctrine he taught: and indeed, if they had not done this, the knowledge of his story, amazing as it is, would have been but an unprofitable amusement to us. Nor do they content themselves with giving us a short summary of his doctrine, or a view of the religion he intended to introduce, as the general result of their having attended so long on his instructions; but they presume to tell us his very words. And here they do not merely relate some short sayings, the remarkable poignancy of which, or their propriety to the circumstances in which they were spoken, might have struck the memory with a peculiar force; but they insert long discourses which he made on public occasions; though they do not pretend that he left any copies of them, or that they themselves took them from any written memoirs whatsoever: and it is worth our notice, that, besides the many shorter sayings and replies, with which the history is interspersed, near one half of the four gospels is taken up with the insertion of these discourses.*

Now it was highly necessary, that if these speeches of our Lord were recorded at all, they should be recorded with great exactness, for many of them relate to the system of doctrines which he came to teach; and others of them are predictions of future events, referring to a great variety of curious circumstances, where a small mistake might greatly have affected the credit of the prediction, and with it the cause of Christianity in general: so that common prudence would have taught the apostles to wave them, rather than pretend to deliver them to posterity, if they had not been sure they could have done it exactly.

But how could they have expected to have done this, merely by the natural strength of their own memories, unless we imagine each of them to be a prodigy in that respect, to which no one of them makes the least shadow of a pretence! It is well known, that several of those speeches of Christ which Matthew and John give us, not now to mention the other evangelists, contain several pages; and some of them cannot be deliberately and decently read over in less than a quarter of an hour. Now I believe, if my reader would make the experiment on any thing of that length which he read or heard yesterday, or even on one of those discourses of Christ, though perhaps he has read or heard it a hundred times; he would find, on a careful examination, many things would probably be omitted, many transposed; many expressed in a different manner: and were he to write a copy of such a discourse from his memory, and then critically to compare it with the original, he would find the sense, in many particulars, where there was some general resemblance, more different than he could perhaps have imagined, and variations, which at first seemed but inconsiderable, would appear greatly to affect the sense, when they came to be more nicely reviewed. If this would so probably be the case with ninety-nine out of a hundred of mankind, and I certainly speak within compass, when a discourse to be repeated had been delivered but a day or an hour before, what could be expected from the apostles, with an interval of so many years? And especially from John, who has, in proportion to the length of his gospel, recorded more speeches than any of the rest, and wrote them, if we may credit the most authentic tradition, more than half a century after our Lord's ascension?

This argument would have great weight, with relation to a man, whose life was ever so powerful, and his affairs contracted in the narrowest sphere: but it will be greatly strengthened, when we come to consider the multitude and variety of scenes, and those too the most interesting that can be imagined, through which the apostles passed. When we consider all their labours and their cares; the journeys they were continually taking; the novelty of objects perpetually surrounding them; and, above all, the persecutions and dangers to which they were daily exposed; and the strong manner in which the mind is struck, and the memory of past circumstances erased, by such occurrences; I cannot conceive, that any reader will be so unreasonable, as to imagine these things could have been written with any exactness by the apostles, if they had not been miraculously assisted in recording them. And what is particularly mentioned by the two of those writers, of the promised agency of the Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things they had heard from Christ himself; John xiv. 26. must I think incontestably prove, that this was the purpose

* If my computation does not deceive me, there are 203 sections or verses taken up thus, and some of them are long sections too: and the number of verses contained in these speeches, is found by the same way to be about 1700 to 3570, which is the number of verses in the four gospels.

for which the Spirit was given; and therefore, we may be sure, that it was a purpose for which it was needed.

I hope I have by this time convinced my reader, that it is agreeable to the other circumstances of the apostles' story, and to the promises which our Lord so largely and so frequently made to them, and the frequent repetition of the promise strongly intimates the importance of it, to suppose, that they were indeed favoured with a full inspiration in their writings.

But to complete the argument, it must be observed, that these holy men, for such the history plainly shows them to have been, assume to themselves such an authority, and speak of their own discourses and writings in such peculiar language, as nothing but a consciousness of such inspiration could warrant, or even excuse.

To make us duly sensible of the force of this argument, let us hear Paul, Peter, and John, and we shall find the remark applicable to them all; though as St. Paul wrote much more than either of the latter, we may naturally expect to find the most frequent instances of it in his writings.

When the apostle Paul had taken notice to the Corinthians, that the subject of his preaching was the wisdom of God in a mystery, and related to things which transcended the sense and imagination of men, he adds, 1 Cor. ii. 10. "But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God:" and again, ver. 12. "We have received, not the spirit of the world, so as to act in that artful way, which a regard to secular advantages dictates; but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God." Now it is natural to conclude from hence, that this knowledge being given them, not merely or chiefly for themselves, but for the church, in which view they speak of themselves and their office, as the gift of God to the church; compare Eph. iv. 11, 12. and 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. they should be assisted to communicate it in a proper manner; since otherwise, the end of God in giving it to them would be frustrated. But the apostle does not content himself with barely suggesting this; but he asserts it in the most express terms: 1 Cor. ii. 13. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, that is, not with a vain ostentation of human eloquence; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or, as some would render and paraphrase it, adapting spiritual expressions to spiritual things.* And in the close of the chapter, when with a noble freedom, in a consciousness of the distinguished character he bore, he puts the question to the whole world besides, Who hath known the mind of the Lord? he adds, But we have the mind of Christ. Which last clause plainly determines the sense, in which we are to take those words at the close of chap. vii. And I think also, that I have the Spirit of God; that is, "I certainly appear to have it;" or, "it is evident and apparent, that my pretences to it are not a vain boast." For, after having so expressly asserted it just above, none can imagine he meant here to insinuate, that he was uncertain whether he had it or not. He appeals therefore to those whose gifts were most eminent, to dispute it, if they could: 1 Cor. xiv. 37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, that is, if he have ever so good evidence that he really is so, for it cannot be thought he meant to appeal only to those who falsely pretended to these endowments, let him acknowledge, that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.—In his second epistle to the Corinthians, chap. ii. 10. he speaks of forgiving offenders in the person of Christ; and amidst the humblest acknowledgments of his own insufficiency, boasts a sufficiency of God, who had made him an able minister of the New Testament. 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Of which he was so thoroughly sensible, that in the first epistle which he ever wrote, so far as Scripture informs us, to any of the churches, I mean, his first epistle to the Thessalonians, he ventures to say, chap. iv. 8. He that despiseth, that is, as the context plainly implies, he that despiseth or rejecteth, what I now write, despiseth not man, only or chiefly, but God, who hath given us his Holy Spirit: which manifestly intimates, that what he wrote was under supernatural divine guidance and influence, as in the second verse of that chapter he had spoken of commandments which he had given them by the Lord Jesus Christ; just as he afterwards declared to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. how well he was able to give proofs of Christ speaking in him.—In his epistle to the Galatians, the apostle solemnly assures them, Gal. i. 11, 12. that the gospel which he had preached among them, was not after man, that is, not of any human original: and he gives this substantial proof of it, that he was himself taught it, no otherwise than by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. Agreeable to which assertion, when he gives the Corinthians an account of the institution and design of the Lord's supper, he says in so many words, 1 Cor. xi. 23. That he had received of the Lord, what he delivered unto them: that is, that he had his notion of that sacrament, and of the actions and words of Christ on which it was founded, by an immediate inspiration from him, or, in the language we have used above, by suggestion. And he speaks of his brethren, as well as of himself, in these terms, Eph. iii. 3, 5. That the mystery of Christ which was before unknown, that

* [illegible]

is, the right of the Gentiles on believing the gospel to full communion with the Christian church, was made known to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and not merely by the natural recollection of what they had heard Christ say, or by their own reasonings upon it.

Most agreeable to this is the strain of Peter, who in one epistle, joins the commandment of the apostles with the words of the holy prophets; 2 Pet. iii. 2. and mentions the epistles of Paul with other scriptures, ver. 15, 16. no doubt, in allusion to the sacred oracles of the Old Testament, which so generally went by that name. And in his other epistle, he insists strenuously upon it, that the gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in exact conformity to the prophetic oracles of former ages, not understood by those who uttered them, a circumstance, in this connexion, highly worthy of our remark: and he seems strongly to intimate, that the angels themselves did by these apostolical preachings learn some things, which, with all their superior faculties, they did not before so fully know. Which things, says he, the angels desire to look into, 1 Pet. i. 12. As Paul had also said, that, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, was made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10.

To conclude this argument, St. John, remarkable as he was for his singular modesty and ingenuity of temper, does not only tell us, that Jesus Christ showed him the revelation; Rev. i. 1. but speaks in his epistle, of an unction poured out from the Holy One, by which they knew all things, 1 John ii. 20. And in another passage he in effect asserts, that he had, in concurrence with his brethren, given such abundant proof of his being under the divine influence and direction in his teaching, whether by word or letter, that an agreement or disagreement with his doctrine was to be made the standard by which they might judge of truth or error, and obedience or disobedience to his injunctions the test of a good or a bad man; which is considerably more than merely asserting the fullest inspiration. 1 John iv. 6. We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

I might here add, if it were necessary, the several passages of the New Testament, in which the gospel preached by the apostles, is called the gospel of God, such as 2 Cor. xi. 7. 1 Thes. ii. 11. and the like: but I omit them, as the stress of the controversy does undoubtedly rest on those I have mentioned, and the importance of the question must be my defence for so large an enumeration of texts, which are so well known.

I shall only remind my reader, in a few words, of

minister now on earth, and you must necessarily suppose his character from that very hour overthrown. The whole world would immediately run to loudly demanding miraculous proofs to verify such assertions; or in condemning, with just indignation, such a claim unsupported by them, as an unpardonable loading it over men's faith and conscience, and thrusting themselves into their Master's throne. Let us not then charge the holy apostles with a conduct, of which we should not suspect any wise and good man now upon the face of the earth; and which if we saw in any of our friends, our charity and respect for them would incline us to inquire after some marks of lunacy in them, as its best excuse.

I have now given an easy and popular view of the principal arguments for the inspiration of the New Testament,* on which my own faith in that important doctrine rests, and such a one, as I hope by the divine blessing may be useful to others. I shall not enter into a particular consideration of the several objections against it, which chiefly arise from texts of Scripture, in which some pretend to find, that the apostles were actually mistaken. I have considered most of these objections already, in my notes on the texts from whence they are taken: for almost all of them relate to passages in the historical books, and I do not know that I have omitted any of them; but have every where given, though as briefly as I could, such solutions as appeared to me in conscience satisfactory, though I have not stood formally to discuss them as objections against the inspiration of those books.

The reader will observe, that very few instances have occurred, in which I have judged it necessary to allow an error in our present copies: but as in those few instances the supposed change of a word or two makes the matter perfectly easy, I think it most respectful to the sacred writings, to account for the seeming difficulty thus, and to impute it to the transcribers, though it is certain, some of these mistakes, supposing them such, did happen very early; because, as Mr. Seed very properly expresses it in his excellent sermon on this subject,† which, since I wrote the former part of this Dissertation, fell into my hands, a partial inspiration is, to all intents and purposes, no inspiration at all: for as he justly argues against the supposition of any mixture of error in these sacred writings, "Mankind would be as much embarrassed, to know what was inspired, and what was not, as they could be to collect a religion for themselves, the consequence of which would be, that we are left just where we were, and that God put himself to a great expense of miracles to effect nothing at all; a consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour."

The arguments brought from a few passages in the epistles, to prove that the apostles did not think themselves inspired, weak as they are, will be considered, if God permit, in their proper places. At present I shall content myself with referring the reader to Dr. Whitby, who I think has given a satisfactory solution to them all.

There are other objections of a quite different class, with which I have no concern, because they affect only such a degree of inspiration, as I think it not prudent, and am sure it is not necessary, to assert. I leave them therefore to be answered by those, if any such there be, who imagine that Paul would need an immediate revelation from heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the Holy Ghost, to remind Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas, or to advise him to mingle a little wine with his water.

Waving therefore the further discussion of these topics, on which it would be more easy than profitable to enlarge, I shall conclude this Dissertation with a reflection or two of a practical nature, into which I earnestly entreat the reader to enter with a becoming attention.

Let me engage him seriously to pause, and consider, what sort of an impression it ought to make upon us, to think, that we have such a book; a book, written by a full divine inspiration: that amidst all the uncertain variety of human reasonings and conjectures, we have a celestial guide through the labyrinth: that God hath condescended to take care, that we should have a most authentic and unerring account of certain important, though very distant, facts, many of which were wrought with his own hand; and with these facts, should have a system of most weighty and interesting doctrines, to the truth of which he makes himself a witness. Such a book must to every considerate person appear an inestimable treasure; and it certainly calls for our most affectionate acknowledgment, that God should confer such a favour on any of his creatures, and much more on those, who by abusing in too many instances their natural light, had made themselves so utterly unworthy of supernatural.

From this view of the inspiration of Scripture we may also infer our obligation to study it with the greatest attention and care, to read it in our closets and our families; and to search in the most diligent and impartial manner into its genuine sense, design, and tendency: which is, in the main, so evident, that no upright heart can fail of understanding it, and every truly good heart must delight to comply with it. This is indeed a most important [illegible] and that without which, all our [illegible] of its divine authority will only condemn us

* I am aware that a learned and pious friend [illegible] very great regard to some [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

before God and our own consciences. Let us therefore always remember, that in consequence of all these important premises, we are indispensably obliged to receive with calm and reverent submission all the dictates of Scripture, to make it our oracle; and, in this respect, to set it at a due distance from all other writings whatsoever; as it is certain, there is no other book in the world that can pretend to equal authority, and produce equal or comparable proofs to support such a pretension. Let us measure the truth of our own sentiments, or those of others, in the great things which Scripture teaches, by their conformity to it. And O that the powerful charm of this blessed book might prevail to draw all that do sincerely regard it into this centre of unity! That, dropping those unscriptural forms, which have so lamentably divided the church, we might more generally content ourselves with the simplicity of divine truths as they are here taught, and agree to put the mildest and kindest interpretation we can, upon the language and sentiments of each other. This is what I cannot forbear inculcating again and again, from a firm persuasion, that it is agreeable to the spirit of the gospel and pleasing to its great Author: and I inculcate it in this place, and at this time, with peculiar affection, as the providence of God around us calls us loudly to do all we can with a safe conscience, to promote a union among protestants. And I heartily pray, that our mutual jealousies and prejudices, which some are so unseasonably labouring to exasperate, may not provoke God to drive us together by a storm of persecution, if peradventure the bond of suffering together may be strong enough to bind those, whom the endearments of the same Christian profession, the same rule of faith, of manners, and of hope, have not yet been able to unite.

On the whole, let me most affectionately invite and entreat every reader, whatsoever his rank in life, or his proficiency in learning, may be, seriously to consider the practical design of these sacred oracles, the sense and authority of which I have been endeavouring to explain and assert. It is indeed a mystery in Divine Providence that there should still remain so much difficulty in them, as that in many points of doctrine, thoughtful, serious, and I trust upright, men should form such different opinions concerning the interpretation of so many passages, and the justice of consequences drawn from them, on the one side, and on the other. But of this there can be no controversy, "That the great design of the New Testament, in delightful harmony with the Old, is to call off our minds from the present world, to establish us in the belief of a future state, and to form us to a serious preparation for it, by bringing us to a lively faith in Christ, and as the genuine effect of that to a tidal loss to God and a fraternal affection for each other;" or, in one word, and a more short and more comprehensive sentence was never written, "to lead us (by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts) to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Tit. ii. 12, 13. To his almighty hand may our souls be committed, by a faith productive of these glorious fruits; and, under the sanctifying quickening and supporting influences of his Spirit, may we wait for his mercy unto eternal life! Then shall no terror of suffering, no allurement of pleasure, no sophistry of error, be able to seduce us; but guided by that light and truth, which shines forth in the sacred pages, we shall march on to that holy hill; where, having happily escaped all the dangers of that dark path which we now tread, we shall greet the dawning of an everlasting day, the morning of a day that SHALL shall go down no more. Amen!

POSTSCRIPT

A Sketch of the Argument by which the Inspiration of the Old Testament may be proved to the utmost satisfaction of the most sober and unbiassed judgment.

If the proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament be deduced in its full compass from its first principles, we must have recourse to a method very nearly resembling that which is taken in the three sermons referred to above, for proving the authority of the New: that is, we must first prove, that the books are genuine; and then, that the history which they contain is credible; from which premises the inspiration of the Old Testament may easily be inferred by a train of arguments similar to that which we have pursued in the Dissertation above.

For proving the genuineness of the books I should think it proper briefly to show, (what I think hardly any will be so ignorant and confident as to deny) that the Jewish affairs in all reasonable probability, and way founded by Moses about fifteen hundred years before Christ's time; and further,—That the Jews, before and at the time of Christ, had books among them bearing the titles of those, which make up and are commonly call the canonical books of the Old Testament.—And that these books then received as the Jewish canon, were the genuine works of the persons to whom they were respectively ascribed.—From hence it is easy further to show, that they have not suffered, and reasoning what a guard the Jews put Christians were upon each other, could not suffer any material alteration since, and more easily, that the Old Testament, as now extant in the Hebrew and

Chaldee languages, is genuine, and in the main such as it originally was.

In order to prove its credibility from this established medium, we may prepare the way, by showing, That many material facts which are there recorded, are also mentioned by very ancient heathen writers.—And it is yet more important to show, as we very easily may, that there is room to go over the same leading thoughts, with those insisted upon in the second of the three sermons mentioned above, and to argue the credibility of the story, from the certain opportunities which the writers had of informing themselves as to the certain truth of the grand facts which they assert, as having themselves been personally concerned in them; and from those many marks of integrity and piety to be found in their writings, which may do as much as any thing of that kind can do, to obviate any suspicion of an intention to deceive.—We may here also advance further, and demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that the facts asserted were of such a nature, as could not possibly have gained credit, had they been false; yet that they did gain most assured credit, of which the persons receiving these books gave the most substantial evidence that can be imagined, by receiving, on the authority of these facts, a system of laws, which though considered as to be divinely supported they were admirably wise, yet were of such a nature, that without such an extraordinary providence as nothing but an assurance of such an original could have warranted them to expect, they must necessarily have proved ruinous to the state they were intended to regulate and establish.*

A further and very noble evidence of the truth of the grand facts attested in the Old Testament, and of the inspiration of a considerable part of it, may be drawn from the consideration of those numerous and various predictions to be found in it; which refer to a multitude of events, several of them before utterly unexampled, which no human sagacity could possibly have foreseen, and which nevertheless happened exactly according to those predictions.†

Having advanced thus far, we may take up a set of arguments correspondent to those insisted on above, to prove from its genuineness and credibility, now supposed to be evinced, that the Old Testament was written by a superintendent inspiration: and this we may argue, not merely, or chiefly, from the tradition to this purpose, so generally and so early prevailing in the Jewish church, though that is considerable, not even from those very special and glorious internal evidences of various kinds, which every competent judge may easily see and feel, but from surveying the characters and circumstances of the persons by whom the several books were written, in comparison with the genius of that dispensation under which they lived and wrote. This may, in all the branches of the argument, be proved in this way, with the greatest ease and strength, concerning Moses, and his writings: and when the authority of the Pentateuch is established, that of most material succeeding books stands in so easy and natural a connexion with it, that I think few have been found, at least since the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, who have in good earnest allowed Moses to have been a messenger from heaven, and denied the inspiration of the prophets, and of the books which we receive as written by them.

But it is obvious, that the illustration of all these propositions would be the work of a large volume, rather than of such a Postscript to a Dissertation, itself of so moderate a length. I have discussed them all, with the most material objections which have been advanced against them, in that course of theological lectures, which I mentioned in the preface to the first volume; and which it is my continual care to render worthy the acceptance of the public in due time, by such alterations and additions as frequent reviews, in conjunction with what occurs to me in reading, conversation, or meditation, may suggest.

I shall conclude these hints, with the mention of one argument for the Inspiration of the Old Testament, entirely independent of all the former; which a few words may set in a convincing light, and which must be satisfactory to all who see the reasonableness of acquiescing in what I have urged above. I mean,—That the inspiration, and consequently the genuineness and credibility, of the Old Testament, may be certainly inferred from that of the New;‡ because our Lord and his apostles were so far from charging the scribes and pharisees, (who on all proper occasions are censured so freely,) with having introduced into the sacred volume any merely human compositions; that, on the contrary,

* The reader will easily imagine I have here supposed, in the way of reasoning, [illegible] Old Testament [illegible] and that [illegible] and [illegible] of the Jewish [illegible] and [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] of

they not only recommend a diligent and constant perusal of these Scriptures, as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness: but speak of them as divine oracles, and as written by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the authors.

I desire that the following list of scriptures may be attentively consulted, and reflected on, in this view. I might have added a great many more, indeed several hundreds, in which the sacred writers of the New Testament argue from those of the Old in such a manner, as nothing could have justified but a firm persuasion that they were divinely inspired. Now as the Jews always allowed, "that the testimony of an approved prophet was sufficient to confirm the mission of one who was supported by it," so I think every reasonable man will readily conclude, that no inspired [illegible] can reasonably object another to be inspired: and indeed the very definition of plenary inspiration as stated above absolutely excludes any room for cavilling on so plain a head. I throw the particular passages which I choose to mention, into the margin below;* and he must be a very indolent inquirer into a question of so much importance, who does not think it worth his while to turn carefully to them, unless he has already such a conviction of the argument that it should need no further to be illustrated or confirmed.

[illegible]

FREE THOUGHTS

ON THE MOST PROBABLE MEANS

OF REVIVING THE DISSENTING INTEREST.

OCCASIONED BY THE LATE

INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF ITS DECAY.

To the Author of the Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest.

SIR,

You will probably be surprised at this address on occasion of your Inquiry, so many months after the publication of it. But my distance from the town, and engagement in business, hindered me from an early sight of it; and many accidents, which it is of no importance to mention, obliged me to delay finishing these papers, so soon as I intended when I began to write them. On the whole, as I am not attempting to criticise on your performance, but only to offer some remarks, which I hope may be of common use, if what I say be just and important, it cannot be quite too late; and if it be either false or trifling, it appears after all too soon.

As I am persuaded that the dissenting cause is founded on reason and truth, and that the honour of God and the public good is nearly concerned in its support, you have my hearty thanks for that generous zeal with which you have appeared for the defence of it. On this account, I should think myself highly obliged to treat you with decency and respect, how much soever my sentiments might differ from yours, as to the particular causes of its decay. And indeed, Sir, you have taken the most effectual method in the world to prevent any thing of a rude attack, by treating all whom you mention, even the meanest and the weakest, with remarkable candour and humanity.

But I have the happiness of agreeing with you in far the greater part of what you advance. I will not now debate, whether the principles of our dissent are less known than they formerly were; and consequently whether that be, properly speaking, a cause of the late decay of our interest: but I will readily grant, Sir, that it is highly necessary they should be known; and I think you have done us a great deal of service by setting them in so easy, and yet in so strong, a light. I hope it may be a means of informing and establishing some, who are too busy or too indolent to give themselves the trouble of perusing what Dr. Calamy, Mr. Peirce, and some others, have written so copiously and so judiciously upon the subject.

I further apprehend, Sir, that nothing can be said upon the case before us of more certain truth or more solid importance, than what you have frequently observed: viz. that our interest has received great damage from our acting in a manner directly opposite to our principles, by unscriptural impositions, and uncharitable contentions with each other. I hope many of us have seen our mistakes here, and shall be careful, for the future, to avoid what has been attended with so many unhappy consequences.

After having thus declared my agreement with you, in the greater part of your discourse, I hope, Sir, you will pardon me, if I add, that I cannot think that you have exhausted your subject. To speak freely, I think you have omitted some causes of the decay of our interest, which are at least as important as those you have handled. It is the design of my present undertaking, to point out some of the most considerable of them, which have occurred to my thoughts: and I persuade myself, Sir, you will be no more offended with me, for offering this supplement to your Inquiry, than I imagine I should myself be with any third person, who should fix upon others which may have escaped us both.

You will the more readily excuse the freedom which I take, as I imagine that the scenes of our lives have been widely different,* and consequently I may have had an opportunity of making some useful observations which have not fallen in your way: though I question not but if you, Sir, had been in my circumstances, you would soon have remarked them; and perhaps have communicated them to the public with much greater advantage.

I shall add nothing more by way of introduction, but that I choose the title I have prefixed to these papers, rather than that of a Further Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest; partly, Sir, as it seemed most respectful to you, but principally that I may not appear to advance any direct charge against any of my brethren in the process of this discourse. I am sensible that would be highly indecent on many accounts, and particularly as it is from the example of several amongst them whom I have most intimately known, that I have learnt many of those particulars of conduct, which I am now going to offer to your consideration, as the happiest expedients for the revival of our common cause.

But before I proceed to particulars, I would observe (what we immediately allow, but too quickly forget) that we are to be concerned for this interest, not merely as the cause of a distinct party, but of truth, honour, and liberty; and I will add, in a great measure, the cause of serious piety too. I would be far from confining all true religion to the members of our own congregations. I am very well aware that there are a multitude of excellent persons in the establishment, both amongst the clergy and the laity, who are (in their different stations) burning and shining lights; such as reflect a glory on the human nature, and the Christian profession. Yet I apprehend some of these are the persons who will most readily allow, that, in proportion to the numbers, there is generally more practical religion to be found in our assemblies, than in theirs. This was surely the original, and this, if I mistake not, must be the support, of our cause. It was not merely a generous sense of liberty, (which may warm the breast of a deist or an atheist,) but a religious reverence for the divine authority, which animated our pious forefathers to so resolute and so expensive an opposition to the attempts which were made in their day, to invade the rights of conscience, and the throne of God, its only sovereign. And if the cause be not still maintained on the same principles, I think it will hardly be worth our while to be much concerned about maintaining it at all. It must argue a great defect, or partiality of thought for any, with the Jesuits of old to boast of their being free from human impositions, when they are the servants of sin. And all the world will evidently perceive, that it is the temper of a pharisee, rather than of a Christian, to contend about mint, anise and cummin, (on one side of the question or the other,) while there is an apparent indifference about the weightier matters of the law. We that are ministers may entertain ourselves and our hearers with fine harangues in defence of liberty; but I apprehend, that in the near views of death and eternity, we shall have little satisfaction in reflecting on the converts we have made to that, unless at the same time we have some reason to hope that they are persons of true substantial piety; such as will be our crown in the day of the Lord, and our companions in the glories of the heavenly world. I cannot say how trifling and contemptible our labours appear to me, when considered in any other view. And therefore, Sir, it will be my concern throughout this whole discourse, to point out those methods for the support of the dissenting interest, which I imagine will be most subservient to the cause of practical religion, and vital holiness in all its branches.

It was the observation of Dr. Burnet, almost forty years ago, in his incomparable discourse on the pastoral care,† "That the dissenters had then in a great measure lost that good character for strictness in religion, which had gained them their credit, and made such numbers fall off to them." Whether that good character has since been recovered, or has not been more and more declining, some others are more capable of judging; but I think it calls for our serious reflection. And if we find upon inquiry, that this our glory is departing, it surely deserves to be mentioned, as one cause, at least, of the decay of our interest: and that all who sincerely wish well to it, should express their affection, by exerting themselves with the utmost zeal for the revival of practical religion amongst us.

This must be our common care, according to the various stations in which Providence has placed us: and as for ministers, nothing can be more evident, than that they, by virtue of their office, are under peculiar obligations to it. And in order to pursue it with the greatest advantage, I cannot but think that it should be their constant study to [illegible] and temper of their people. That so far as they can do it with conscience and honour, they may render themselves agreeable to them both in their public ministrations, and their private converse.

This, Sir, is so obvious a thought, that one would imagine it could not be overlooked: and yet it is certain our interest has received considerable damage for want of a becoming regard to it. [illegible]

* As the author to whom I write is not certainly known, I trust it for granted he is what he seems by [illegible] a gentleman of the laity, and though I have [illegible] I [illegible] my character better, he is supposed by many to be a [illegible] minister at once. I have no evidence of it which is [illegible] to me: and as I [illegible] it would be of [illegible] to appear to know either more or less. I thought it not proper to alter what I had written with regard to the late report.

† Ch. [illegible] p. 87.

cially in those who have been setting out in the ministry amongst us. It was therefore, Sir, with great surprise, that I found you had entirely omitted it in your late Inquiry, and had dropt some hints, which (though to be sure you did not intend it) may very probably lead young preachers into a different and contrary way of thinking, than which hardly any thing can be more prejudicial, either to them, or to the cause in which they are embarked.

The passage of yours, to which I principally refer, is in the 33d and 34th pages of your Inquiry: where, amongst other things, you observe, that "a great many of those things that please the people, have often a very bad tendency in general." And you add, "the being pleased, which they so much insist upon, seldom arises from any thing but some oddness that hits their peculiar humour, and is not from any view to edification at all, and therefore too mean to be worthy any one's study. The people do not usually know wherein oratory, strength of speech, the art of persuasion, &c. consist; and therefore it is vanity in such to pretend to be judges of them. I wish I could deny, that amongst us, they generally fall into the falsest and lowest taste imaginable."

There is, no doubt, Sir, a mixture of truth and good sense in some of these remarks; but for want of being sufficiently guarded, they seem liable to the most fatal abuse. I frankly confess, that when I began to preach, I should have read such a passage with transport, and should very briskly have concluded from it (as many of us are ready enough to conclude without it) that, with regard to our public discourses, we had nothing to do but to take care that our reasoning were conclusive, our method natural, our language elegant, and our delivery decent; and after all this, if the people did not give us a favourable reception, the fault was to be charged on a perverseness of humour, which they should learn to sacrifice to good sense, and the taste of those who were more judicious than themselves; and in the mean time, were the proper objects of contempt rather than regard.

I say not, Sir, that what I have now been quoting from your letter, would lay a just foundation for such a wild conclusion; but I apprehend that a rash young man, ignorant of the world, and full of himself, might probably draw such a conclusion from it. And if such a conclusion were to be universally received and acted upon, by the rising generation of ministers, it must in a few years be the destruction of our interest, unless the taste of our people should be miraculously changed.

I am not so absurd and perverse as to assert,* that learning and politeness will be the ruin of our cause, nor have I ever met with any that maintained so extravagant an opinion. But surely, Sir, a cause may be ruined by learned and polite men, if, with their other furniture, they have not religion and prudence too: and I hardly conceive how a minister, who is possessed of both these, can be unconcerned about the acceptance he meets with from the populace, or can ever imagine that the dissenting interest is generally to be supported in the contempt or neglect of them.

I cannot believe, Sir, that a gentleman of your good sense intended to teach us such a contempt. Had religion, and the souls of men, been entirely out of the question, and had you considered us only as persons whose business it is to speak in public, you well know that such a thought had been directly contrary to the plainest principles of reason, and the rules of those amongst the ancients, as well as the moderns, who were the greatest masters in that profession. You will readily allow, (what no thinking man can dispute,) that a true, skilful, unpopular orator, is a direct contradiction in terms. And I question not, Sir, but that you could in a few hours throw together whole pages of quotations, from Aristotle, Quintilian, Longinus, and especially from Tully, (not to mention Rapin, Gisbert, Fenelon, and Bishop Burnet,) which all speak the same language. You know that Tully in particular declares, not only "That † he desired his own eloquence might be approved by the people," but that his friends might accommodate their discourse to them; and therefore says to Brutus,‡ "Speak to me and to the people." And this he carries so far as to say,§ "That whatever the people approve, must also be approved by the learned and judicious; and ‖ that men of sense never differed from the populace in their judgment of oratory." And that to speak in a manner not adapted to their capacity, and the common sense of mankind, is the greatest fault an orator can commit.¶ These were the sentiments of Tully on a subject peculiarly his own. And few that have ever heard of Longinus, are strangers to that celebrated passage, in which he makes it the test of the true sublime, that strikes periods of all tastes and educations, the meanest as well as the greatest.**

But indeed, (as I hinted above,) the necessity of an orator's accommodating himself to the taste of the people, depends not on the authority of the greatest writers, but on the apparent principles of reason, obvious to common sense; since without it the ends of his undertaking cannot possibly be an-

* Inq. p. 36.

† Unumquemque autem meam POPULO probari velim, &c. Orat. nec. Quis enim multitudinem probare prudens velit? POPULARIS omnino dicendum et electus eloquentia est auditorum adpetitor. Brut. Dicy. 185 II. [illegible]

‡ Ad eum qui populo [illegible] Brut. Accersus. Brut.

§ [illegible] Brut. [illegible]

‖ Nunquam [illegible] Brut. [illegible]

¶ [illegible] [illegible]

** [illegible]

swered, as the people will neither be instructed nor persuaded by what he says.

Again, if the matter were to be considered merely in a political view, and with regard to the support of our interest, as a separate body of men, I can imagine nothing more imprudent, in present circumstances at least, than a neglect of the populace: (by which I mean all plain people of low education and vulgar taste, who are strangers to the refinements of learning and politeness:) it is certain they constitute at least nine parts in ten of most of our congregations, and are generally the supports of the meetings they belong to, by their subscriptions, as well as their attendance. In boroughs (especially) several of them have a vote for members of parliament, and are so numerous, as to have it in their power frequently to turn the balance, by throwing themselves into one scale or the other. Now to speak plainly, Sir, I apprehend it is chiefly this that makes us considerable to many, who have no regard at all to our religious principles. And to the bulk of mankind there is something in the very idea of a large place, and a crowded auditory, which strikes the thought, and secures a society from that contempt, which might perhaps fall upon persons of the most valuable characters amongst them, if they stood alone as the support of the interest, and appeared in their assemblies but as a handful of men.

Now, Sir, as this is the case, as numbers make our interest considerable, and those numbers are principally to be found amongst the common people, would you advise us ministers to neglect the people; or could you wish that any thing you have written, should be interpreted as an encouragement of such a neglect? When we have lost our interest in them, (as we must necessarily do, if we take no care to preserve it,) I would fain know what must become either of us or them. As for them, I imagine, that many of them would grow indifferent to all religion, and seldom appear amongst us, or in any other places of divine worship; and others of a warmer and more resolute temper, would find out ways of making us uneasy; and if they could not get rid of us any other way, would draw off to neighbouring congregations, or form new societies, and choose ministers agreeable to their own taste, who might perhaps think it their prudence to maintain and inflame their resentments against those they had left. Thus our common interest as dissenters would moulder and crumble away, by our frequent divisions and animosities. And we, who by our contempt of the people, had been the occasion of them, shall have the great pleasure of being entertained with the echo of our own voices, and the delicacy of our discourses, in empty places, or amidst a little circle of friends, till perhaps (like some of our brethren) we are starved into a good opinion of conformity: and in the mean time, shall have the public honour of ruining the cause we undertook to support. For the generality of people, who never reason accurately, will readily conclude it was ruined by us, if it sink under our care: though you, Sir, will be so complaisant as to own, it fell by the obstinacy and perverseness of a people, "whose humour was too mean to be worthy any one's study."*

But perhaps, Sir, you will tell me, that we need not be apprehensive of being driven to such extremities; for though some of the lowest of our auditors are lost, we shall gain over others to fill up their places, in a manner much more agreeable to ourselves, and more honourable to our cause in the eyes of the world. "Many gentlemen have left us because they were ashamed of our interest, and nothing can recover them but the study of learning and politeness."† I assure you, Sir, I am an enemy to neither; but heartily wish they may both be cultivated, so far as is consistent with our being acceptable to the people (and I apprehend, as you will afterwards perceive, they are both in a very high degree consistent with it). But I imagine it will never be worth our while, to neglect and displease the people, in order to bring over these gentlemen; or to make other proselytes of their rank, character, and taste.

I shall, perhaps, surprise you when I say, that I am not much charmed with your proposal, allowing it ever so practicable, and the prospect of success ever so fair. You suppose the gentlemen whom you describe, have not left us upon principles of conscience, on apprehension of our being schismatics, &c. (for then no alteration in the manner of our preaching could bring them back) but merely from a delicacy of taste, and because they were ashamed to continue amongst so unpolished a people. You must then suppose, either that they acted in direct opposition to the dictates of conscience, or else, that they did not consult them at all in the affair, nor regarded any thing more than fashion or amusement in the choice of the religious assemblies with which they have joined. The former supposition charges them with an outrageous contempt both of truth and of honour; and the latter, with a shameful mixture of pride and weakness, which has little of the gentleman, and less of the Christian. And I freely declare, that I think an honest mechanic, or day-labourer, who attends the meeting from a religious principle, though perhaps it may expose him to some ridicule amongst his neighbours, and be in some measure detrimental to his temporal affairs, (which is often the case,) is a much more honourable and generous creature, and deserves much greater respect from a Christian minister, than such a gentleman, with all his taste, learning, and politeness.

* [illegible]

In the sight of God, you will readily allow, that it is so; but perhaps, Sir, you will tell me, that I am now considering the matter in a political view. It is time to recollect it, and I ask your pardon for this digression.

I shall therefore speak more directly to the point when I answer, with all due submission, that I apprehend this scheme of bringing back these gentlemen to our assemblies, is but wild and chimerical.

If their conformity entirely depended on the delicacy of their taste, we could never expect to recover them, till we could entertain them with more polite and elegant discourses, than those which they hear in the churches they now frequent. Now, Sir, whatever your complaisance may suggest in our favour, I have not the vanity to believe, that if we and the established clergy were to try our skill in the contest, we should generally exceed them. At least, I see no such certain evidence of our being superior to them here, as should encourage us to risk the whole of our cause upon this attempt; as I imagine we should do, if we were to neglect the people.

And further, I think there is the less reason for making so dangerous an experiment, as it is very apparent to me, that those who have left us, have not been influenced merely by such a critical exactness as you suppose. I know not any among them of a more judicious and refined taste, than some who still continue the ornaments and supports of our assemblies: and it is undeniably evident, that many who have quitted us, have acted on very different principles. Some have been influenced by secular views, (in which they have not always been disappointed,) and some by complaisance to their friends, and particularly those who have married into families of a different persuasion (which has been a very fatal blow to our interest). Many more, I fear, have forsaken us from a secret dislike to strict piety, and with us have abandoned all appearances of religion, and perhaps of common decency and morality. And I question not, Sir, but you very well know, that many others who have broken off from us, and perhaps make the greatest pretences to strength of thought, and politeness of taste, are sunk as low as deism itself, (if not yet lower,) and may probably enough reckon it matter of boasting, that having thrown off one fetter, they have had greater advantage for throwing off the other; i. e. the faith of the Christian, after the strictness of the dissenter.

And are these, Sir, the persons who are to be brought back by our learning and address? Some of them may, perhaps, now and then make an occasional visit to our assemblies for their own amusement, as they frequent the theatre, but surely they can never be depended upon as the support of an interest: nor could you on the whole think it prudent for us to hazard the approbation and affection of our people, in a view of making ourselves agreeable to them.

But *religion* furnishes us with many considerations to the present purpose, of much greater importance than any which could arise merely from prudential views. Surely there is a dignity and a glory in every rational and immortal soul, which must recommend it to the regard of the wise and the good, though it may be destitute of the ornaments of education, or splendid circumstances in life. Let us think of it in its lowest ebb of fortune, or even of character, as still the offspring and image of the great Father of spirits, and as the purchase of redeeming blood: let us consider what an influence its temper and conduct may have at least on the happiness of some little circle of human creatures, with whom Providence has linked it in kindred, in friendship, or in interest; and especially, let us consider what it may become in the gradual brightenings and improvements of the eternal state: let us but seriously dwell on such reflections as these, (too obvious to be missed, yet too important to be forgot,) and we shall find a thousand arguments concurring to inspire us with a sort of paternal tenderness for the souls of the meanest of our people. This will teach us to bear with their prejudices, to accommodate ourselves to their weakness; and to consider it as a mixture of impiety and cruelty, to neglect numbers of them, out of complaisance to the taste of a few, who are perhaps some of them but occasional visitants, and whom we judge by their habits, rather than by any personal acquaintance, to be a part of the polite world.

Did I affect to throw together all that might be said on this subject, I might both illustrate and confirm what I have already written, by showing at large that Christianity is a religion originally calculated for the plainer part of mankind, by that God who has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and, consequently, that a neglect and contempt of the common people is far from being the spirit of the gospel. I might add many remarks to this purpose on the preaching and conduct of St. Paul, and fill whole pages with quotations from him and the rest of the apostles, and many more from some of the most ancient and celebrated fathers of the church. But I do not think it necessary for the support of my argument, and I am persuaded that you, Sir, in particular, have no need of being taught these things from me.

Permit me only to add, (what you must frequently have observed,) that our Lord Jesus Christ is a most amiable and wonderful example of a plain, familiar, and popular preacher. When we come to peruse those divine discourses, which ex-

torted a confession from his very enemies that he spake as never man spake; we find neither a long train of abstract reasonings, nor a succession of laboured periods, adorned with an artificial exactness; but the most solid and important sense, delivered in an easy and natural way, illustrated by similes taken from the most common objects in life, and enforced with lively figures, and the strongest energy of expression, which is well consistent with all the former. So that, upon the whole, it was most happily calculated, at once to instruct the most ignorant, and to awaken the most negligent, hearer. I cannot but wish that some judicious writer would attempt to set this part of our Lord's character in a clearer and a more particular light; and would show us how the whole of his conduct, as well as the manner of his address, was calculated to promote his usefulness under the character of a preacher of righteousness. I hope such an essay might be very serviceable to those of us who have the honour to succeed him in that part of his work; and I persuade myself that it would furnish us with a variety of beautiful remarks on many passages in the evangelical historians, which are not to be found in the most celebrated commentators.

You will excuse me, Sir, for having insisted so largely on the necessity of endeavouring to render ourselves agreeable to our people; because I am fully persuaded that it is of great importance to the support and revival of the dissenting interest. I hope you already apprehend, that I intend nothing in this advice which is below the pursuit of the most elevated genius, or the most generous temper, nothing inconsistent with the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, or the dignity of the Christian and the minister. You cannot imagine that I would recommend a popularity raised by quirks and jingles, or founded on affected tones, or ridiculous grimaces; and much less on an attempt to inflame the passions of mankind about trifling controversies, and the peculiar unscriptural paraphrases of a party. Such a popularity as this is almost the only thing that is more despicable, than the insolent pride of despising the people.

If any of my younger brethren were to inquire how another popularity, of a far more honourable kind, is to be pursued and secured, I answer, that their own converse and observation on the world, must furnish them with the most valuable instructions on this head. And though some of their particular remarks may differ, according to the various places and circumstances in which they are made; yet I apprehend there are many things of considerable importance, in which they will all agree. As for instance:

They will quickly see that the generality of the dissenters, who appear to be persons of serious piety, have been deeply impressed with the peculiarities of the gospel scheme. They have felt the divine energy of those important doctrines, to awaken, and revive, and enlarge the soul; and, therefore, they will have a peculiar relish for discourses upon them. So that, if a man should generally confine himself to subjects of natural religion, and moral virtue, and seldom fly on the doctrines of Christ, and the Spirit, and then perhaps treat them with such caution, that he might seem rather to be making concessions to an adversary, than giving vent to the fulness of his heart on its darling subject, he would soon find, that all the penetration and eloquence of an angel, could not make him universally agreeable to our assemblies.

Many of our people have passed through a variety of exercises in their minds, relating to the great concern of eternal salvation. And they apprehend that the Scripture teaches us to ascribe this combat to the agency of Satan, and the corruptions of our own heart, on the one hand, and the operations of the Holy Spirit of God on the other. It is therefore very agreeable to them, to hear these experimental subjects handled with seriousness and tenderness. It raises their veneration for such a minister, as for one who has himself tasted of the grace of God, and encourages their confidence in him, and their expectations of improving by his labours. On the other hand, it grieves them when these subjects are much neglected, and gives them the most formidable suspicions if one word be dropt which seems to pour contempt upon them, as if they were all fancy and enthusiasm; (with which, it must be granted, they are sometimes mixed).

The greater part of most dissenting congregations consisting, as we before observed, of plain people, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a learned education, nor had leisure for improvements by after-study, it is apparently necessary that a man should speak plainly to them, if he desire they should understand and approve what he says. And as for those that are truly religious, they attend on public worship, not that they may be entertained with a form of sound, nor entertained with some new and curious speculation; but that their hearts may be enlarged as in the presence of God, that they may be powerfully affected with those great things of religion, which they already know and believe, that so their conduct may be suitably influenced by them. And to this purpose they desire that their ministers may speak as if they were in earnest, in a lively and pathetic, as well as a clear and intelligible, manner.

Such is the taste of the generality of the dissenters; a taste which I apprehend they will still retain, whatever attempts may be made to alter it. And I must take the liberty to say, that I conceive

this turn of thought in the people to be the great support of our interest, and not the little scruples which you hint at in the 34th page of your letter, nor even those rational and generous principles of liberty, which you so clearly propose, and so strenuously assert. And I cannot but believe, that if the established clergy, and the dissenting ministers in general, were mutually to exchange their strain of preaching and their manner of living but for one year, it would be the ruin of our cause, even though there should be no alteration in the constitution and discipline of the church of England. However you might fare at London, or in some very singular cases elsewhere, I can hardly imagine that there would be dissenters enough left in some considerable counties, to fill one of our largest meeting-places.

We have then advanced thus far: that he who would be generally agreeable to dissenters, must be an evangelical, an experimental, a plain, and an affectionate preacher. Now I must do our common people the justice to own, that when these points are secured, they are not very delicate in their demands, with regard to the forms of a discourse. They will not in such a case be very much disgusted, though there be no regular chain of reasoning, no remarkable propriety of thought or of expression, no elegance of language, and but little decency of address. The want of all these is forgiven, to what they apprehend of much greater importance. Yet, Sir, I would not from hence infer, that these things are to be neglected; on the contrary, I apprehend it is absolutely necessary, that they should be diligently attended to, in order to obtain that universal popularity, which I think so desirable for the sake of more extensive usefulness. A man of a good taste will certainly take some care about them. It is what he owes to himself, and to the politer part of his audience, whom he will never be willing to lose in the crowd: and he need not fear that a prudent regard to them will spoil his acceptance with the people. Few of them like a discourse the worse for being thoroughly good; and the accomplished orator will find, perhaps to his surprise, that they will not only know and feel the important truths of religion, in the most agreeable dress he can give them; but that they will even applaud the order and regularity of his composures, the beauty of his language, and the gracefulness of his delivery, at the same time that they have the candour not to complain of the indigested rovings, the unnatural transports, and the awkward distortions of the pious, well-meaning, but injudicious preacher. For human nature is so formed, that some manners of thinking and speaking are universally agreeable and delightful. It is the perfection of eloquence to be master of these, and should, I think, be the care of every one that speaks in public, to pursue them as far as genius and opportunity will allow.*

The man who forms himself upon such views as these, if he be not remarkably deficient in natural capacities, will probably be popular amongst the dissenters as a preacher; but a thinking man will easily perceive, this is not the only character under which a minister is considered. His people will naturally and reasonably expect a conduct answerable to his public discourses; and without it, he cannot be thoroughly agreeable to them. They will take it for granted, that a man so well acquainted with divine truths, and one that seems to be so deeply affected with them, should be regular and exemplary in the whole of his behavjour, and free from the taint of vice, or of folly, in any remarkable degree. They will expect that he should be far from being a slave to secular interest, or to the little trifles of food, dress, or domestic accommodation; and that he should avoid every thing haughty and overbearing, or peevish and fretful, in his daily converse. They will conclude, that a desire of doing good to souls, will make him easy of access to those who apply to him for advice, with regard to their spiritual concernments; and that it will likewise dispose him at proper times to visit all the people of his charge, the poor as well as the rich; and that not only under the character of a friend, but of a minister, in a direct view to their spiritual edification. And if a man desire the affections of his people, he must not disappoint such expectations as these.

The tenderness with which parents interest themselves in the concerns of their children, and the earnest desire that all religious parents must necessarily have, that theirs may be a seed to serve the Lord, will engage them very kindly to accept our care, in attempting to bring them under early impressions of serious piety. Catechising has therefore been generally found a very popular, as well as a very useful, practice. And here I think it is much to be wished that our labour may extend to the youth, as well as to little children; that in a familiar way they may be methodically acquainted with the principles of natural religion, and then with the evidences of the truth of Christianity, and with the nature of it, as it is exhibited in the New Testament; both with regard to the privileges and the duties of Christians. As this might be a means of filling our churches with a considerable number of rational, catholic, and pious communicants, from whom considerable usefulness might in time be expected, so it would greatly oblige their religious parents, and lay a foundation for a growing friendship between us, and our catechumens, in the advance of life.

* [illegible] to the SENSES COMMUNIS, which I only thinks [illegible]

I once thought to have insisted more largely on these hints, but am happily prevented by the publication of Mr. Some's sermon, on the methods to be taken by ministers for the revival of religion. He has fully spoken my sentiments, with regard to many of those articles on which I have only glanced. I persuade myself, Sir, you will read it with a great deal of pleasure; for (so far as I can judge) this sermon is almost as agreeable an example of that preaching, as his life is of that conduct, which he recommends. I am confident that a man of your good sense must necessarily approve the scheme which I have briefly laid down, and which is there largely considered and recommended. Were you to choose a pastor for yourself, I doubt not but you would rejoice in such a one; and you would probably have the hearty concurrence of the weakest and most illiterate of your pious neighbours. My younger brethren (for whom alone I am now presuming to write) can have no reason to complain, that I have assigned them either a mean or a severe task. I heartily desire to be their companion in all the most laborious and self-denying parts of it; and I persuade myself, that we shall find it, on the whole, as delightful as honourable, and as advantageous to ourselves as it will be serviceable to the public interest.

There seems to be but one material objection against all this; and it is an objection, in which I doubt not but your own thoughts have all prevented me. It may perhaps be pleaded, that we have a sort of people amongst us, whose approbation and esteem cannot be obtained by such honourable methods as I proposed. For they, whom we call the rigidly orthodox, are so devoted to a peculiar set of human phrases, which have been introduced into the explication of some important doctrines, that they will hardly entertain a favourable thought of any who scruple the use of them, or who do not seem to value them as highly as they, though they may, on all other accounts, be ever so considerable.

You, Sir, hint at* a very expeditious remedy for uneasiness arising from this quarter; that persons of generous and bigoted sentiments should meet in different places. In London it is certainly practicable, and may perhaps be most expedient; but to attempt any such separation in the country, would be the utter ruin of many of our societies, which now make some considerable appearance. But besides my regard to the ministers and societies to which they are related, I must confess, I have too much tenderness for the persons themselves, to be willing entirely to give them up. I have been intimately acquainted with those who have been accused, and perhaps not unjustly, of this unhappy attachment to human phrases, and nicety in controversial points; and I must do many of them the justice to own, that I have found very excellent qualities mingled with this excess of zeal, (which must methinks appear pardonable in them when we consider how artificially it has been infused; and how innocently they have received and retained it, from a real principle of conscience to God). But, indulging them in this one article, several of them will appear to be persons of so much humility and piety, of so much integrity and generosity, of so much activity and zeal for the common interest, that separate from all views to private advantage or reputation, one would heartily wish to do all he honestly can, to remove those prejudices, which give them so much uneasiness, and impair the lustre of so many virtues and graces. And if at the same time we can secure their esteem and friendship, it may have such an influence, both on our own comfort and usefulness in life, that it must be great ignorance or pride to despise it.

You will readily grant, Sir, that the thing is in itself desirable: the great question is, how it may be effected? And here I will venture to say freely, that I apprehend bigotry of all kinds to be a fortress, which may be attacked by sap more successfully than by storm. It is evident that we have most of us something of the humour of children, that grasp a thing so much the more eagerly, when an attempt is made to wrest it out of their hands by violence; and yet perhaps will drop it themselves in a few minutes, if you can but divert their attention to something else.

From such a view of things, I apprehend, we are to judge of the most proper methods of dealing with those, whose case is now under consideration. You, Sir, may tell them again and again, with your natural coolness and moderation,† That it would be an instance of their modesty to resign their pleasures to the general notions and judgment—that instead of assuming the characters of judges and censors, they should put on the humble temper of learners—and receive the truth without being jealous of heresy in our youngest proselytes.—And at the same time that you are thus giving your advice, you may give your reasons, as clearly and handsomely as you have given them for nonconformity in this inquiry: yet, after all, you will probably find, that the [illegible] will out-noise the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely. And should I exert myself with greater warmth and eagerness, should I grow a bigot in the defence of catholicism, and load those of different sentiments with reproaches, because they have profited no better by so many solid arguments. I should indeed pay a very great compliment to them, in supposing them [illegible] knowing and admitting truth, under so disagreeable a disguise: but it would be [illegible]

* Page 44.

† [illegible]

my own character and ease, and I should run the risk of being severely scorched by that flame, which I pretended to extinguish, by pouring on oil.

I cannot but think it much more advisable, according to the apostle's maxim of becoming all things to all men, to study to accommodate ourselves in this respect, as well as in others, to the infirmities of our hearers, as far as with a safe conscience we may. If we can put a tolerably good sense on any of their favourite phrases, it would surely be a most unreasonable stiffness and perverseness of temper, to avoid it merely because they admire it. Or if we cannot go so far, we may at least lay aside any darling phrases of our own, which we know will be offensive to them. (For if the Bible be a complete rule, our human forms are no more necessary than theirs.) Christians as such profess a reverence for the Scripture, and many of these Christians have a distinguishing regard to it, as they have felt its divine energy on their souls. Now, Sir, with submission to the better judgment of my brethren, I think we, who are ministers, should take them by the hand, and should labour to discover to them, more and more, the beauty and fulness of the word of God, not only with regard to this or that particular doctrine, but to the whole system of truth and duty contained in it. It is a subject on which we might speak and they would hear with pleasure; and it would not only divert their attention and their zeal from other things, which might give uneasiness, but would have a direct tendency to enlarge their views, and sweeten their tempers, beyond all our encomiums on liberty and catholicism, or our satires on bigotry and imposition.

I likewise apprehend, that a regard to what was said under the former heads, will further conduce to this happy end. When these exact people hear us preaching in a truly spiritual and experimental strain, and at the same time in such a rational and graceful manner, as may set our discourses above contempt, and make them agreeable to the younger and politer part of our auditory, as well as to others; they will quickly see that it is not for their own interest, or that of their children, to drive us away with a rigorous severity. And therefore, instead of studying to find us heretics, they will rather put the most favourable sense on ambiguous expressions, and labour to believe us as orthodox as they can: or, if they suspect us to be in the dark as to some particulars, yet they will charitably hope, that age and experience will perfect what is wanting, and that God will reveal it to us in his own time. With these views they will cheerfully commit themselves to our ministerial care, if Providence seems to open a way for our settlement amongst them. And when they find that they are handsomely treated by us, that no direct attack is made upon their darling notions; but that the great concerns of practical religion (as dear to them as to any people upon earth) are plainly and faithfully pursued by us, both in public and private, (to the refreshment of their own souls, and to the evident advantage of many others,) they will contract a tender, growing affection for us: and thus their bigotry will gradually wear away, till perhaps they come at last joyfully to embrace those more generous notions, from which they would at first have started back with horror.

Thus we may, after the example of our great Master, teach our followers, as they are able to bear it: and by this moderation, may be instrumental in healing the breaches which we profess to lament, in rescuing many an excellent soul from a painful and dishonourable bondage; and in spreading a generous, candid, Christian spirit, which will be the glory and happiness of our interest in general, as well as of the particular societies under our care. And in the mean time another generation will be rising, whom we may hope to form, in a manner agreeable to our own sentiments, who may transmit to remote ages those united principles of piety and catholicism which they have happily learnt from us.

I cannot but think, that such rational and noble prospects may encourage us to submit to some restraints, which we should not otherwise have chose. But if, after all, we inflexibly insist on "as unbounded a liberty of speaking our sentiments in public, as of forming them in private," or, in the language of Solomon, of uttering all our mind, I think we shall dearly purchase the pleasure of hearing ourselves talk, on a subject on which we can do little more, than echo back a part of what has been so copiously and judiciously written, and so frequently repeated by others. The wiser part of mankind will look upon us as forward heirs, who spend our estate of reputation and importance in life, before we come to it, and upon the whole, we shall not only exceedingly injure ourselves in private life, which is comparatively but a trifle, but shall impair our future usefulness, and even wound the darling cause of liberty, to which we are so ready to sacrifice all. For I seriously declare, that if I could be so wicked as to form a design against it, and so base as to prosecute it by clandestine and hypocritical methods, I would only set myself to declaim in its favour, with imprudent zeal, and unbounded fury.

You have now, Sir, all that I think proper to say, at present, concerning the methods by which I apprehend those of us, who are employed in the ministry, may most effectually contribute to the revival of the dissenting interest. I can assure

you, they are not the reveries of my own closet, but observations which I have drawn from life, as occasions have occurred in conversing with a variety of persons of different stations, relishes, and characters. I have the better opinion of many of them, as I know that they are thoroughly agreeable to the sentiments and conduct of some of the most considerable persons of all denominations amongst us, both in town and country; whose friendship is the honour and pleasure of my life. I am particularly confirmed in this way of thinking, by observing the success which such measures have had in the congregations of my fathers and brethren in these parts. For I know, that in many of them, the number of dissenters is greatly increased within these twenty years, and the interest continues so to flourish, that I am confident some of our honest people, who converse only in their own neighbourhood, will be surprised to hear of an inquiry into the causes of its decay.

If what I have written appear reasonable to you, Sir, I cannot but wish that you, and other gentlemen of the laity, who are heartily concerned for our interest, would endeavour to cultivate such sentiments as these in the minds of young ministers of your acquaintance. We are naturally very desirous of being known to you, and singled out as the object of your regard. Whereas we early begin to look with a comparative contempt upon the meaner sort of people, as an ignoble herd—*Vulgus concamerati*. Whilst engaged in our preparatory studies, we are indeed so generous, as to give up one another to the vulgar; but we have each of us the penetration to discover, that there is something uncommon in our dear selves, by which nature seems to have intended us to be (as we absurdly enough express it) orators for the polite. These arrogant and pernicious sentiments we sometimes carry along with us, from the academy to the pulpit; where, perhaps, we make our first appearance infinitely solicitous about every trifling circumstance of a discourse, yet negligent of that which should be the soul of it. And if the people are not as much charmed with it as ourselves, we have then an evident demonstration of their incorrigible stupidity; and so resentment concurs with pride and ambition, to set us at the remotest distance from those, who ought to be the objects of our tenderest regards.

If an elder minister have so much compassion and generosity, as to deal freely with us upon these heads, and give such advice as circumstances require, it is great odds but we find some excuse for neglecting what he says. "He is ignorant and unpolite; or perhaps intoxicated with his own popularity, and means his counsels to us as encomiums upon himself."—Or if neither of these will do, some other artifice must be found out, to fix the blame any where rather than at home. And if in the midst of a thousand mortifications we can but find out one gentleman of fortune, sense, and learning, that admires us, we are happy. A single diamond is worth more than a whole load of pebbles; and we perhaps adapt, with vast satisfaction, the celebrated words of Arbuscula in Horace, *

Me[n]' movent cimex Pantolabus, &c.

without considering that what was highly proper in the mouth of a player, and a poet, would be extremely absurd in a heathen, and much more in a Christian, orator.

Now, Sir, what I intend by all this, is to shew that you gentlemen may have it in your power to do a great deal to correct these mistaken notions. If we plainly see that you regard us, not merely according to the manner in which our performances are accommodated to your own private taste, but according to our desire and capacity of being useful to the public interest, we shall perhaps be taught to place our point of honour right; and when that is once done, a moderate degree of genius, application, and prudence, may be sufficient, by the blessing of God, to secure the rest.

I would here, Sir, have ended my letter, but the hints you give in the conclusion of yours concerning Academical Education, lead me to add a few words on that head. I would be far from the insolence of pretending to teach tutors; but I apprehend that if my former principles be allowed, it will follow, by the easiest consequence in the world, that it is a very important part of their business, to form their pupils to a regard for the people, and to a manner of preaching, and of converse, which may be agreeable to them.

There is hardly any thing which should be more discouraged in a young student than such a mistaken haughty way of thinking, as I so freely described a little above, especially when it discovers itself in a petulant inclination to employ their talent at satire, in ridiculing the infirmities of plain serious Christians, or the labours of those ministers, who are willing to condescend to the meanest capacities that they may be wise to win souls.

A young man of sense will easily enter into such plain reasonings as I have offered in the beginning of this letter, and be convinced by them, that if he ever appear under the character of a dissenting minister, he must not neglect the people. But it is greatly to be desired, that our students may be engaged to regard them, not merely from political, but religious, views.

It is therefore, no doubt, the care of every pious tutor amongst us, [and may God make it a more constant and successful care,] to possess his pupils, who are designed for the ministry, with a deep and early sense of the importance of the gospel of Christ for the recovery of man from the ruins of the apos-

* Hor. Sat. I. x. 78.

tasy, and his restoration to God and happiness by a mediator.—To show (as it may easily be shown) that this has been the great end of the divine counsels, with regard to which, the harmony of nature in the lower world has been supported, and the various economies of Providence disposed:—To point out the Son of God descending from heaven in favour of this design, pursuing it by humble condescensions to the lowest of the people, and unwearied labours amongst them; and at last, establishing it by agonies and death:—To show them the apostles taking up their Master's cause, prosecuting it with unwearied vigour and resolution, and sacrificing to it their ease, their reputation, their liberty, and their lives:—To trace out those generous emotions of soul, which still live and breathe in their immortal writings:—And then (when their minds are warmed with such a survey) to apply to the students themselves, as persons designed by Providence to engage in the same work, to support and carry on the same interests, who therefore must be acted by the same views, and imbibe the same spirit.

Something of this kind is, I doubt not, attended to; and I must take the liberty to say, that I think these the most important lectures a tutor can read. You cannot but see, Sir, that by the blessing of God, such addresses must have an apparent tendency to fill the mind with sublime and elevated views, and to make a man feel and own too, (though it may appear something unpolite,) that the salvation of one soul is of infinitely greater importance, than charming a thousand splendid assemblies with the most elegant discourses that were ever delivered. A young minister under these impressions, will come out to his public work naturally disposed to care for the state of his people; and such sincere zeal and tenderness will form him to a popular address, abundantly sooner, and more happily, than the most judicious rules which it is possible to dictate.

As examples are the best illustration of precepts, it must certainly be a great advantage to pupils to hear such preaching, and see such pastoral care, as is recommended to them in the lecture-room. A prudent man, who is concerned in the education of young ministers, will be particularly careful to avoid those faults in preaching, which they are in the greatest danger of falling into; and particularly too abstracted a train of reasoning, and too great a care about the little ornaments of speech, when addressing to a common auditory. And if (where other circumstances may allow it) he sometimes engage the attendance of senior pupils in his pastoral visits, and introduce them to the acquaintance and freedom of some serious Christians in the society, it may be much for their improvement. A more intimate knowledge of their hidden worth, and perhaps of those noble traces of natural genius, which they might discover amongst some of a very low education, would something increase their esteem for the populace in general. And from their observations on books and sermons, and their accounts of the various exercises of their minds, (where our politer hearers are generally more reserved,) a man may best learn how they are to be addressed, and form himself to that experimental strain, on which so much of his acceptance and usefulness amongst us will depend.

If you apprehend, Sir, that such a course will make them preachers for the vulgar, and for them only; I think it sufficient to answer, that I entirely agree with you in what you say of the great advantages of an intimate acquaintance with the learned languages, and the classical writers both of the Romans and Greeks. I heartily wish our students may always be well furnished with it before they leave the schools, and think it highly proper it should be carried on through the whole of their academical course. And I cannot imagine, that a man of tolerable sense, who is every day conversing with some of the finest writers of antiquity, and who is (as most of our students are) a little exercised in the mathematical sciences, (to teach him attention of thought, and strength, and perspicuity of reasoning,) will be in great danger of saying any thing remarkably impertinent, or contemptibly low.

As for being masters of our own language, it is a point which I think should be thoroughly laboured from the very beginning of their education. They should to be sure make themselves familiarly acquainted with those writers, who are allowed to be the standards of it, and should frequently be translating and composing. And if this be not only practised at school, but continued through four or five years of academical education, they will have formed a habit of expressing themselves gracefully, or at least tolerably well: so that in their ordinary composures, when they have digested their materials, and ranged their thoughts, they will often find proper, expressive, and elegant words, flowing in faster than they can write them.

And as composition is far from being the only business of an orator; so I heartily wish, that not only tutors, but schoolmasters, (whose character and conduct, by the way, is of vast importance to our interest,) would make a very serious business of teaching lads, who are designed for the ministry, to read well, and to pronounce properly and handsomely. Thus an early remedy would be provided on the one hand, against those unnatural tones and gestures, which (as you well observe*) are a grand cause of our reproach and contempt; and on the other, against that cold insensible air, which sometimes, amongst strangers at least, affects even the moral character of the preacher.

* Inquiry, page 43.

I think some care should be taken, both at the school and the academy, to engage students to a genteel and complaisant behaviour; not only as what is apparently conducive to their mutual ease and pleasure, and the convenience of the family where they are; but as what may render them more agreeable and useful in life, to persons of superior rank, and even to the populace themselves. For a well-bred man knows how to condescend in the most obliging way; and the common people (such is either their good sense or their humour) are peculiarly pleased with the visits and converse of those who they know may be welcome to greater company.

And now, Sir, I have done with my subject, and must conclude, with assuring you, that it is not the design of one line which I have written, merely to prove that you are mistaken in any thing that you have asserted; and therefore I have purposely avoided many citations from your letter, which might easily have been connected with what I have said. You will infer from what you have read, that I differ from you in some other particulars, which are not mentioned, but they apparently depend on what I have debated at large; and I chose to omit them, not only because my letter is already longer than I intended, but from a general observation which I have had frequent occasion to make; that if a man desires to do good by what he says, he must oppose and contradict as little as possible. If I am mistaken in what I have advanced, I shall be heartily thankful for better information; and, if it come from you, it will be peculiarly agreeable, as I shall have nothing to fear from your reproaches, and much to hope from your arguments.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

☞ This was printed in the year 1749, being the first piece the Doctor published.

THREE LETTERS

TO

THE AUTHOR OF A LATE PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT, &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

WHEN I consider the strain and purport of your late discourse, I am heartily sorry that I was so long a stranger to it. A month has hardly passed, since it first fell into my hands. They who know my circumstances in life, and the variety of business in which I am continually engaged, will not wonder that I missed it so long. Nor should I have read it now, had it not been mentioned to me by some friends, for whose judgment I have a very high regard, as a performance which had a very ill aspect on Christianity, and which was executed with much more spirit and address, than is to be found in most of the attacks which have been lately made upon it.

I have now, Sir, perused it with attention; and various as my cares and labours are, I think it of such importance, that I ought to lay before you, and the world, the result of my reflections upon it.

The character you have assumed of a most zealous *Advocate for Christianity*, seems so ill to agree with the purport of your reasonings, that I apprehend most of our readers will esteem it a bad compliment paid to your understanding, if I were to think of that character otherwise than as a mask worn for pleasantry, rather than the design of your pamphlet, with which I am concerned. Were you indeed the warm Christian you personate, I could not behold the wounds of religion with indifference, merely because they were received in the house of a friend: nor would I consent to demolish the walls of a fortress, on the strength of which my life, and even the safety of my country, depended, though the worthiest man upon earth should, in a fit of lunacy, undertake to persuade me, that it was the most effectual method to engage the miraculous protection of an Almighty arm. That those efforts which, in the name of the Lord, you have thought fit to make, with such solemn preparation, and such glowing ardour of spirit, do indeed tend to subvert the faith of Christians, and to expose the gospel to the last degree of contempt, is so exceeding plain, that I verily believe, it would appear to every intelligent reader a solemn kind of trifling, to labour the truth of it: and the passages, which I am to take under examination, may be more than sufficient to demonstrate it to a stranger.

You have evidently represented Christianity, if not religion in general, as an unreasonable thing; for you expressly tell us, not only "that it is not founded on argument," and that it is incapable of being generally proved by it, but go so far as roundly to say, (p. 86.) "that there is an irreconcilable repugnance between reason and faith." You speak of Scripture, as if all your eloquence was at a loss for words strong enough to express your contempt for it. "Manuscript authorities, and paper-revelations," as they are insultingly called, are, it seems, "an empty notion:" (p. 60.)—"The suspicious repositories of human testimony, in which nothing remains that can deserve our least notice, or be thought of consequence enough to engage a moment's attention." (P. 50.) It was not, it seems, enough to represent them as superfluous, "We have no longer need of distant records:" (ibid.) But you briskly maintain, that Omnipotence itself is not able to supply their defects and insufficiency; "though a constant miracle were to interpose on the occasion, and the same Almighty Power that first indited it," whatever you mean by that singular

expression, "were to continue hovering perpetually with a guardian hand over the sacred depositum." (P. 61.)

As for all the Scripture-miracles, on which we have laid so great a stress, you declare without reserve, "that they are to us no more than an uncertain hearsay," and "that the voice of God, bearing witness to his beloved Son, has long since dwindled to human tradition." (P. 52, 53.) Nay, you strongly insinuate, that these miracles were never meant as arguments of the divine authority of the gospel; (p. 46.) and, with very little complaisance to St. Paul, are pleased to tell us, by a burlesque on his words, when speaking of the resurrection of Christ, (pag. 68.) "that the thing was done in a corner," without taking the least notice of the public proofs which were given of it, in the very place where it had happened but a few days before.

It is obvious, Sir, that I might transcribe many pages of your work in illustration of these hints; and I must needs say, that the language appears so unnatural, and so monstrous, in a professed disciple of Christ, that I am sometimes ready to wonder you were not a little more careful to save appearances. But then I recollect, that the character you assume is such, as leaves little room to expect consistency, and seems best supported by such kind of paradoxes and self-contradictions. By this means also you have artfully enough disarmed your adversary of the weapon called *argumentum ad hominem*, a whole magazine of which might otherwise have been presented. Were you to be attacked that way, you would no doubt laugh very heartily, to see an adversary so fairly hit, in a grave expectation that you should be solicitous *cum ratione insanire*, to appear a cool-headed, consistent enthusiast.

You have chosen, Sir, in these transports, whether real or fictitious, to fight with a two-edged weapon; and the blow which you give by a kind of back stroke, while avowedly defending Christianity, seems to me as threatening as any of the rest. I mean, those passages of your book in which you so grossly misrepresent that glorious and important doctrine of the New Testament, concerning the agency of the divine Spirit, in promoting the reception and efficacy of the gospel. This, according to you, is nothing less than such an immediate and instantaneous communication of the whole sum and system of the gospel, as renders every particular believer more infallible, than the church of Rome has generally asserted the pope to be, and secures the most illiterate person, even from a possibility of error. (P. 89, 90.) This plenary inspiration communicated to every private Christian, you represent as the main and only support of religion, though I think, Sir, you must needs know, that every difference of opinion in the Christian church is a demonstration that no such universal influences do, in fact, take place. So that upon the whole, you have left Christianity no evidence but what every one sees it has not, that is, indeed, you have left it no evidence at all. In one word, if your readers were to suppose you serious in what you write, and to fall in with your reasoning, I think the plain consequence must be, that all men of sober sense would immediately reject the gospel, while among the remainder, every one that was mad would make himself a prophet, and vent every wild chimera of his distempered brain as an immediate dictate of God himself; in the plenitude of inspiration and distraction, equally scorning to condescend to assign any reasons for his doctrines, or to hear any arguments against them.

That your late performance, sprightly and ingenious as it is, has a tendency to produce these terrible effects, (for to me they appear terrible beyond expression,) is too evident; and I may afterwards give you a more particular account of the reasons, on which I apprehend that it must in its consequences affect the foundations of natural religion, as well as of revealed. How far any of these consequences might be intended by you, it is not my business to determine. You, Sir, are ere long to answer that to the great Judge of hearts, whose tribunal I should dread to usurp. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that the ludicrous turn you so often give to Scripture, and the air of burlesque and irony which runs through your whole piece, neither suits the character of a rapturous devotee so often affected, nor discovers a becoming sense of the infinite moment of the question in debate. Pardon me, Sir, the plainness with which I speak my real apprehensions on this head, and believe me when I seriously declare, it is with no design to libel and expose you, but with a sincere desire to serve you and others, into whose hand this letter may come, that I now set myself to examine what you have advanced, and, if possible, to lead you into juster and safer sentiments.

Agreeably to these views, and that regard to the general good which has engaged me to enter on this controversy, I shall decline the invidious and unnecessary task of pursuing you with severe criticism through every paragraph. I am not solicitous to expose every ungraceful expression, to enhance every minute mistake, nor even to censure every clause of the sacred writings which I apprehend you have misrepresented or misapplied. I have not leisure for such a task as this, and there is hardly any thing against which my temper more strongly recoils. I shall examine what I apprehend most material and most dangerous in your work, with calmness and seriousness, representing it as fairly in words as I can, what I take to be the strength of

your cause, and telling you with the simplicity and moderation that becomes a Christian, how I answer it to my own conscience. This I shall do with all possible plainness, not affecting to be witty in a case in which eternity is concerned; nor so consulting in your taste and character, as to forget that I am addressing the public, and aiming not to divert, but, if possible, to edify. And if any cannot relish such a design, and such a manner, I give them fair warning to throw this letter aside, and to waste (or shall I rather say, to kill) no more of their precious moments about it.

It sufficiently appears, Sir, from your manner of writing, that you are well aware, the main strength of your cause lies in the first head of your discourse, to which therefore, after some gay flourishes on the two last, you return again towards the conclusion of your pamphlet. It is this, therefore, which I shall here examine at large; and the rather, because I think what you urge on this topic, though it be far from any new discovery, may admit some further illustration than I have commonly met with; and is the point which, in proportion to its difficulty and importance, has been least discussed by the worthy apologists for Christianity, in which our country is so happy. The foundations of the solution have indeed often been laid down; but I have long wished to see the matter placed in that particular point of view, in which the difficulties you propose, and which naturally arise, may be most happily obviated.

It is your professed design under your first general to show, "That reason, or the intellectual faculty, could not possibly, both from its own nature, and that of religion, be the principle intended by God to lead us into a true faith." (P. 7.) An ambiguous proposition, the sense of which must be ascertained in a few words, before its pretended demonstration can be discussed.

You well know, Sir, that the whole body of Christians, as such, are, and must ever be, agreed, that reason is not our only guide, but that Divine Revelation is most wisely and graciously intended to supply its many deficiencies; and you know, too, that they generally acknowledge the reality and importance of divine influences on the mind, to confirm our faith, and to quicken our obedience. So that if you would not encounter a puppet of your own forming, with whom we have no manner of concern, you must mean by this grand proposition, "That reason is not to be consulted, in judging either of the evidences or the sense of any supposed revelation, nor in forming any of our religious sentiments." An assertion so apparently extravagant, that one would imagine, that merely to propound it were a sufficient confutation.

Can any one indeed seriously think, that the noblest of our powers was intended only to the lowest and meanest purposes, to serve the little offices of mortal life, and not to be consulted in the greatest of concerns, those of immortality? Strange! that the only power which renders us capable of saying, *Where is God my Maker?* and of forming any sentiments of religion at all, should be discharged from that province, for which it seems chiefly to have been given! But it will at least have strength and spirit enough to say, Why must I be thus discharged? And you condescend to answer at large, without seeming to be aware, that your first step towards demonstrating your point supposes it to be false; appealing to reason itself to judge, that it is not capable of judging at all. Nor is this position only inconsistent with the pertinency of any reasoning whatsoever, but particularly inconsistent with that footing on which you profess to place Christianity, when its rational proofs are given up. Since, if God were, according to your strange hypothesis, to reveal to me in a moment the whole system of Christianity, and were I assured, by some inward inexplicable sensation, that it was indeed a revelation from him, I could not receive it without some reasoning. I must at least have this one short syllogism in my mind, "What comes from God is to be admitted as true; but this comes from God, therefore it is to be so admitted." And the foundation of this supposes some previous reasoning, concerning the existence and veracity of that Being, whose testimony is so readily to be admitted.

A very small part of your sagacity, Sir, might serve to discover this, which, obvious as it is, supersedes all you have written. I will therefore take it for granted, that what you really intend by this general, and very unguarded, proposition, is chiefly this; "That Christianity is not capable of such a rational proof, as can be made intelligible to the generality of mankind, so as to oblige them to receive and obey it." This is what you seem to have at heart throughout your whole book, and I shall not further press the advantage you have given an opponent, by asserting so much more than was necessary to your main design.

You do indeed sometimes acknowledge, I think in direct opposition to your main argument, that Christianity is capable of being rationally proved to the conviction of a studious person; (however unnecessary, and however hazardous it may be, even for such a one to meddle with that kind of proof:) but you always contend, that the generality of mankind cannot enter into any rational proofs of it; (though it is well known that it was intended for them;) and that they who can will not find them sufficient, to bear the stress which must in fact be laid upon them, if we desire to be Christians to any valuable purpose. I shall therefore set myself on the contrary to prove, "That the rational

evidence of Christianity is so adjusted, that the generality of its professors may, if they be not wanting to themselves, attain to some competent satisfaction with regard to it." And when I have offered that proof, I shall consider your objections.

I am far from asserting, that every one in common life can have a full view of all the controversies which relate to Christianity; a curiosity of literature, which to multitudes would be of very small importance: nor do I maintain, that every sincere believer is capable of rendering a sufficient reason for his faith; an ability on many accounts highly desirable, yet not, so far as I can find, at all essential to salvation. A man may have reason in his own mind, which he cannot readily put into words. Nay, I apprehend it possible, that a man may feel and comply with the practical tendency of Christianity, who does not himself rightly apprehend the force of its rational proofs, and perhaps lays a very great stress on arguments which are far from being conclusive. And I hope, Sir, you will allow, that when a man's temper and character is such as the gospel requires, such a speculative mistake as to the strength of an argument does not affect his salvation. Else, I fear, we must condemn all those excellent persons, who have believed the great fundamental of all religion, the existence of a God, chiefly on the force of those Cartesian arguments, now generally, and I think rationally, exploded.

The question is not, What knowledge is universally necessary, nor what is in fact attained; but what satisfaction might generally be had, if there be a competent care, on the one hand, to teach, and on the other, to learn. This is all which is absolutely essential to my argument. Nevertheless, for the further illustration of the subject, I shall freely tell you, how I apprehend the case to stand, with regard to the generality of the common people, who are in good earnest in the profession of religion; readily acknowledging, though with great grief, that there are thousands, and ten thousands, who wear the name of Christians as by mere accident, without at all considering its meaning, reason, or obligation; a case very consistent with the possibility of their being better informed, and rationally convinced.

Now here, Sir, the leading thought will be, that God has so adjusted the nature and circumstances of Christianity, as represented and exhibited in the New Testament, that it is attended with a strong degree of internal evidence, of which, by an unaccountable omission, you take not the least notice; and that what is most essential to the external proof, lies within much less compass than you seem to imagine, and is capable, if previous precautions be taken in a proper manner, of being opened to persons of an ordinary capacity, and understood by them, though they have neither ability nor leisure for the curiosities of learned disquisition.

For the illustration of this, you must give me leave to remind you, that both the Mosaic and Christian dispensation have been much misrepresented, in consequence of men's taking their notions of them, rather from the conduct of their professors, than from the institutes of their respective founders. To apply this to the present occasion, let us consider what the case of Christians would be, with regard to the rational evidence of their religion, if things were to flow on in the channel, into which it was the apparent design of our divine Master to direct them.

You will no doubt, Sir, readily allow, that a pious education, and a standing ministry, are appointments of our blessed Redeemer, and will spare me the trouble of proving either of them in form. And as you take it for granted in the whole of your Letter, that infant baptism is a Christian ordinance, you will also allow me to mention it as a common principle, though little of my argument will depend on its being so.

A parent therefore acting upon the laws of Christianity, (which is what I here all along suppose in stating the case,) having in a solemn manner devoted his child to God in its early infancy, and having ever since been earnestly recommending it to the divine blessing, watches the first dawning of reason, to instil into its tender mind, sentiments of piety to God, gratitude to the Redeemer, benevolence to men, and every other grace and virtue which the gospel recommends, and which the life of its great Founder exemplified. Quickened by the obligation, which the birth and baptism of every younger child in the family renews, the father and mother concur in a wise and conscientious care, to keep their dear charge, as far as possible, out of the sight and hearing of every thing profane, cruel, and indecent; and to accustom it to love whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are righteous, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, the child will be taught, by the force of precept and daily example, to seek after these things, and to pursue them. The consequence of this, under those influences of divine grace which may be cheerfully expected in the way of duty, will probably be an early sense of decency, virtue, and piety. The growth of those seeds of corrupt nature, which will in some instances discover themselves in the most amiable children, will in a great measure be suppressed; religion will grow familiar and pleasant, under the smiling aspect it will appear to wear, and the Bible, which our little disciple will early have been taught to read, will soon become a most delightful book. The entertaining stories, the fine

examples, the beautiful poems, the wise precepts, so gravely and yet so kindly given, which it will every where meet with, must give it abundance of pleasure; and it will be eager to read those things, the general contents of which it has learnt, long before it could read, from the daily discourse of its parents, who, while they are recounting these glorious things, will be teaching themselves as well as their children, and by more familiar and attentive views of them, confirming their own faith, and animating their own piety. And as for the leading facts which the child meets with in Scripture, strange as some of them may appear, it will readily believe them on this general foundation; that its good parents, who know much better than himself, and never deceive him, assure him that every thing which this excellent book contains is true. And this, Sir, is all the satisfaction which a child of the most extraordinary genius can have in the first stages of life; and if it die before it arrive to greater maturity, it will be happy in the practical influence, which the gospel, thus implicitly believed, had upon its temper and conduct; as it could be under no necessity of entering into its rational evidence, before those faculties opened by which that evidence was to be received, any more than a blind man can be obliged to read, or the dumb to sing God's praises.

At length, as the minds of children open, they will gradually be led into some further reflections on the certainty of these things in which they have been instructed. And here they will soon perceive some degree of difference in the evidence of them, immediately appearing. As for the existence of the Supreme Being, I really think that the noblest and most satisfactory arguments, of which the mind of man is capable, are those which are obvious even to the understanding of a child: I mean those taken from the works of creation and providence. Common sense will surely tell these little creatures, as soon as they can understand the words, that if every house, even the poorest cottage, must have some builder, there must be one who built all things, who made heaven and earth, with all their bright, noble furniture. And as they see, clearly as they see the sun, that he who made and upholds all these things, is powerful and wise; which every flower, and every fly, when considered as his work, may show them: so they may naturally conclude, such a great and wise Being is good; and it will be easy to show them, that every agreeable object about them is a sensible proof of his goodness; every pleasant fruit, for instance, a gift of God, which all the men in the world could not have made, or provided for them, without him.

By such familiar views of things they may be brought, not only to believe, but to know, that there is a great, powerful, wise, and kind Father of the world always near them. Nor will it be difficult to give them some rational view and conviction of his moral attributes, as inferred from his natural. I suppose they have in those early lessons of sacred history, which have been their entertainment from their infancy, been led to reflect on the characters of persons mentioned; to see the amiableness of some affections and actions, and the deformity of others, which in many instances are as obvious, as that one face, or dress, makes a pleasanter appearance to the eye than another. Discerning this visible difference in moral characters, long before they knew what the words morality or character signify, they will naturally, and I think very reasonably, conclude, that it is just to ascribe every excellence and glory to him, in whom they see so many: and by consequence, that he must be pleased with what is good, and displeased with what is evil. They see it in their wise and pious parents, (for wise and pious we here suppose them to be,) and they will much more conclude, it must be in him, whom they have learnt to address as "our Father who art in heaven." I take the liberty, Sir, to tell you, that I have examined many scores of children on these heads, not as to what they have learnt, but as to what they themselves think of the matter; and have put the questions in various forms, to suggest an affirmative or negative answer; and I always find, if they understand the terms of it, they answer right upon a very short pause.

Agreeably to those obvious principles, they naturally apprehend, that the regard of God to his creatures follow them beyond death; and that he rewards or punishes them, suitably to their temper and behaviour. They cannot think, that God would have suffered such persons as Abel, or the seven sons of that good woman in the Maccabees, to have been slain in that cruel manner, if he had not intended to take them to himself, and make them happier than they were: that, Sir, is a learned prejudice, the laboured error of a *man*, of a *minute philosopher:* the simplicity of a virtuous *child* is not able to attain it.

A prudent parent will easily foresee, that the child will find greater difficulties in coming at the evidence of the truth of those things, which depend merely upon the authority of Scripture: he will early be laying in materials for its seeing the force of that noble part of it, which you so strangely leave untouched; I mean, that which is internal, and arises from the contents and design of the book itself. A child trained up as we here suppose, will, probably, of itself, make a great many reflections, what an excellent book it is; especially as to some parts of it, with which I have known little children so struck, that they have, of their own accord, read the same passage, though neither history nor parable, over and over, till they have almost learned it by heart. the religious parent or friend will

watch, encourage, and illustrate these remarks; and at length, when he finds the young mind strong enough to receive it, he will lead it to reflect, what excellent men they must be who wrote such things: and when that reflection is familiar, and has been daily renewed, perhaps for weeks and months, another easily follows, that the Bible is undoubtedly true and divine; for good men would never have invented lies, and have presumed to teach them in the name of God himself; and wicked men would not, and could not, have written what is so excellently good, and tends to make others so. This, Sir, my pious friends taught me when I was a child, and I think it, to this very day, an argument of unanswerable weight: and I cannot but apprehend, that the more a man advances in real goodness, and the more intimately he converses with Scripture, the more he will be impressed with it. Here is an argument depending on no other fact than this, that there is such a book as the Bible in the world, of which our children are as sure, as that there is a sun: and Providence has wisely ordered it so, that they may understand the force of it, before they can enter into objections against it; and so far as I can judge, those objections must be stronger than any I have ever met with, which can be sufficient to balance the force of it. Yet this is far from being the only foundation of our faith, or the only argument in its favour, which a young Christian may be able, with proper assistance, to understand.

The external evidence does not indeed lie within so little room, nor can it perhaps be made equally obvious by every pious parent; yet with the assistance which able ministers, and proper books, may give, I apprehend, a child of fourteen or fifteen years old may have some competent view of it. It will be a most easy thing to show him, by uncontroverted testimonies, collected by a variety of writers,—that Christianity was an ancient religion,—for the sake of which its professors, in its earliest ages, endured great extremities;—that there was, about 1700 years ago, such a person as Jesus Christ, the great founder of it;—that the first preachers of his religion wrote books, which were called by the name of those that make up the most important part of the New Testament;—that these books are, in the main, transmitted to us uncorrupted;—and that our translation of them may, in the general, be depended upon as right. These are the grand preliminaries; and as the foundation may be laid without much difficulty, so the superstructure may be raised upon it, with yet much more ease. From the New Testament, thus proved to be genuine, a person of very moderate capacity and learning will presently be able to show, that the writers of it certainly knew, whether the facts they recorded were true or false;—that their character, so far as we can judge by their manner of writing, was so excellently good, that there is no reason to suspect them of falsehood;—nay, that the probability of their fidelity is so great, that it would be astonishing, if the strongest temptation could prevail upon them to violate it;—at least in so criminal a manner, as they must have done, if they were impostors—the temptations must have been exceeding strong, to justify the least degree of suspicion:—but they had no temptation at all to forge such a story, and to attempt to impose upon the world by it:—however, that if they had made the attempt, they could not have succeeded in gaining credit;—nevertheless, it is plain, they did gain credit among vast multitudes, who were strongly prejudiced against the religion they taught;—from all which things compared, it appears that their story, and the religion founded upon it, i. e. Christianity, is true: a conclusion which may be greatly illustrated by showing them further,—what wonderful things have since happened for the confirmation of it; considering, on the one hand, what God has done to establish it; and on the other, what methods its enemies have taken to destroy it.

It is not my business, Sir, to state and vindicate these arguments at large; I have done it already in my Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, which were published several years ago; and I shall be very ready to canvass the strength of them, as there represented, with any who shall think fit to bring them into dispute. I the rather mention those Sermons here, because they are calculated for popular use, and may assist those who are not so well versed in the arguments, to propose them to their children or catechumens, in what I apprehend the easiest and plainest light. By talking over these heads in a free and familiar manner, and then giving them the book to read two or three times alone, till he has fixed the leading thoughts in his understanding and memory, I doubt not but such a foundation might be laid in a few days, as all the succeeding years of life would not be able to shake. Nor must it ever be forgotten, how much it would be cemented and established by that true taste of moral beauty and excellence, which we suppose already formed in the mind of our young student. He would find so much to charm him in the sentiments, character, and conduct of the apostles, as would engage him to lay a very great stress on that important branch of the argument which turns on that point. It would appear to him, in theory, utterly improbable, that men of their heroic goodness should engage in so impious and detestable a fraud, as they must have engaged in, if their testimony was false; as,* on the other hand, the good sense which may easily be discovered in their

* [illegible]

writings and behaviour, will make it appear equally absurd to imagine, they should so madly run on sufferings and ruin, as they must have done, if they had not been conscious of a divine support, or miraculous powers, and of immense future rewards.

A religious youth, grown up to years of maturity, with a mind thus furnished, and thus disposed, will not easily be perverted to infidelity: so precious a freight would be too weighty, to be overset by every wind of doctrine, and every breath of ridicule. Yet it might conduce to his security, if a prudent parent or minister should give him, before the scene of temptation opens, some short hints of the chief topics from whence objections against Christianity are drawn, and of the plainest and most obvious answers to them, which, so far as I can judge, are generally the most solid. If a person be not intended for some learned profession, or distinguished circumstance in life, it is by no means necessary to be large in this part of the scheme; but something of this kind may easily and profitably be done, and there will be no reason to be in any panic, lest every hint of an objection should overturn his faith. Answers will be suggested, with those objections; and he will soon be weary of hearing such poor unsatisfactory things as most of the cavils of infidelity are. And here, again, the good habits and dispositions formed in his mind, will be of great service. He will perceive, that Christianity wears so favourable an aspect, and opens upon him so fine a prospect, that he will not hunt after objections against it; as a man is not studious to find a flaw in writings, by which he stands entitled to the reversion of some noble estate: and when they accidentally start up in this way, he will soon see, that many of them are grounded on notorious falsehood, and are in themselves despicably mean; especially when set against the great arguments for it, of which he is already possessed: and with regard to others, the assistance of ministers and other religious friends, which when pressed with real difficulties he will honestly seek, will, no doubt, furnish him with proper answers; and, indeed, his converse with the Scriptures will enable him, without foreign assistance, to obviate most of them, and they will vanish like birds of night before the sun: not now to mention those auxiliaries, which his faith will often call in, from observing and comparing the different characters of those, who are most solicitous, on the one hand to destroy it, and on the other to support it, of which I may hereafter speak.

If this, Sir, were merely an imaginary scheme, on which no parent acted, and no children were educated, yet if it were (as, I think, every one must own it is) agreeable to the original Christian plan, it would not be foreign to our purpose; as it will prove, that if proper precautions were taken, and men were to act in character, competent rational evidence might be attained as young people grew up to a capacity of exercising reason, which is all that could be supposed requisite. But bad as the work is, I bless God, I can confidently say, I have in the main traces copied from the life. This, to my certain knowledge, is the care of many parents and ministers, and this the felicity of many children. The success is generally answerable; and I hope, the instances in which it is so in the protestant world, are not to be numbered by scores, but by hundreds and thousands, who are to be regarded as the precious seed of the church in the next age, and who, I doubt not, will, in spite of all the efforts of infidelity, exert themselves so effectually in its service, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Nevertheless, while I bless God that this is the case of so many, I readily acknowledge, that, through a negligence, for which I fear a multitude of parents and ministers have a terrible account to render before God, it is generally much otherwise. By far the greater part of professing Christians have probably no better reason to give for their religion, than that they were early baptised into it, and have been trained up in some of its external forms. Far from being instructed in its evidences, they are hardly taught its doctrines, or its precepts; or superficially learn them from those, who do not themselves seem to be in good earnest concerned about the one or the other. The fatal consequence is too plain. The corruptions of nature, abetted by the force of evil examples, prevail against them; and they are early plunged into such licentious practices, that if they ever reflect on the most evident and express declarations of the word of God, they must immediately see, that they are condemned by it.

Now, there is no reason to wonder, if many of this sort of Christians are easy proselytes to infidelity. It is no surprising thing, if a bold jest thrown upon Scripture, or a confident senseless assertion of its falsehood, (perhaps from a person on whose word hardly any thing else would be believed,) have with them all the weight of a demonstration. They will be little concerned to ask information, or consider how objections may be answered. Those magical words, priestcraft, and the prejudice of education, stun and terrify them: they submit, as you gravely express it, (p. 75.) "in the impotence and impuberty of a dutiful understanding, in the tractable simplicity of unpractised reason: with the obsequious and humble acquiescence of a babe, they sit down to learn their lesson" too; and their unbelief, after they have attained the stature of men, is just as blind and implicit as the faith of their childhood was.

This, Sir, is undoubtedly the case with many: and you cannot but have observed what large com-

panies in the freethinking army are raised and enlisted from among these vagabonds. But the generality of men among us, as in every nation, go on thoughtlessly in the religion in which they were educated: hearing the truth of it often asserted, and perhaps never hearing it contradicted, they entertain no doubts on the subject, but grow old in a mere speculative and ineffectual assent to Christianity. And if their heart at any time smite them, with the contrariety of their temper and conduct to the rules which they acknowledge to be divine, they seek their shelter in the hope of making their peace with God, (as they commonly express it,) before they go out of the world; and perhaps abuse some of the noblest discoveries which the gospel makes, as an encouragement to continue in those sins and follies, from which it was expressly designed to reclaim them.

Nevertheless, it frequently happens among such as these, that some are awakened to think deeply and seriously of religion: the plain lively preaching of the gospel, or perhaps some afflictive providence, rouses them from their lethargy. And I must reckon it among the chief felicities of my life, that I have had many opportunities of observing, what are in fact the workings of men's spirits in such a circumstance.

And here I have always found, that the moral perfections of the great Governor of the world appear to them in a very lively view: the records of their own conscience are thrown open before their eyes, and they feel a load of guilt pressing on their minds, of which they were before utterly insensible. Under this anxiety they hear of the remedy which the gospel has provided; and they hear of it with another kind of regard than formerly. It is what they now perceive that they want; (strange, that they should have perceived it no sooner!) and it appears far more important to them than animal life and all its enjoyments. Hearing of the love and grace of a Redeemer, concerning the reality of whose undertaking they never had any considerable doubt, their hearts are transported with a flow of most ardent and various affections; they find another kind of energy in these things, than they were ever aware, or could have imagined to be possible. He has saved their lives at the expense of his own, and under the constraints of his love, they consecrate themselves to a forgiving God, with an ardour of soul which nothing but gratitude can inspire. They do now, as it were, receive the gospel anew from his hand, not as a revelation new made, but now first endeared to them, by a sense of their own concern in it; they exemplify the beauty of its precepts, and they feel the force of its consolations. A blessed effect, in which I humbly acknowledge the finger of God and the agency of his Spirit; though I see no reason to pretend to an immediate inspiration, in the sense which you maintain.

When the first tumult of affections, raised by so interesting and important a scene, subsides, and the happy converts come more coolly to reflect on what has passed, they draw a new argument of the truth of this glorious gospel from its experienced efficacy; and, though they cannot make a stranger sensible of the force of it, will say, like the blind man, as yet little instructed in many other proofs of our Lord's divine mission, If he were not of God, he could not have opened my eyes; and under the lively impression of it, the sophistry of modern infidels is as little to them as that of the Sanhedrim was to him. At length, growing in wisdom and piety by their acquaintance with the gospel, and in proportion to their regard for it, they likewise, who had formerly no taste and sensibility for such things, become qualified to take a more extensive survey of its internal evidence, and to judge of it; and, accordingly, they see it much in the same light with those who had been formed to an earlier subjection to it, and had grown up with it in their hands and their hearts.

Of these recovered votaries to it, some who have a head turned for reasoning, perhaps from a desire to serve others, and honour God, by defending Christianity, rather than from any doubt which they themselves have of its truth, set themselves to study the evidences of the gospel, as stated in some judicious treatise on the subject; which they carefully examine, and often ground so thoroughly in their understandings and memories, as to be able to silence, if not to convince, gainsayers. And others, who have not leisure or inclination to search so particularly into the whole compass of the argument, are perhaps greatly confirmed in their faith, by some circumstances which powerfully impress them, though they may not be able to communicate the force of the argument to others; or though, where it is communicated, it cannot publicly be stated, without inconveniences which might overbalance the advantages arising from the discovery of such occurrences.

I am sensible, Sir, I am touching on a subject, which it is difficult to handle, without the imputation of enthusiasm, and perhaps without the danger of it: and therefore I shall dismiss it in few words. I take upon me now to assert no facts, either as my own experience, or as on the testimony of others, whom I may have reason to credit; but I would suggest the thought in hypothesis. Is it in the nature of things impossible, or is it utterly incredible, that the great Author and Governor of all should, in some rare instances, even in these later ages, deviate from the laws by which he stately rules the natural world, for the deliverance and support of some of his faithful servants in circumstances of

great extremity; especially, when thereby the interest of the moral world may remarkably be promoted? Or supposing this to be ever so rare, I would further ask, Is it impossible that he may, on a perfect view of every minutest circumstance, have constituted the course of things in such a manner, that there shall be a remarkable correspondence between a train of thoughts in a Christian's mind, and an event arising from other natural, but perhaps unobserved, causes, on which that train of thoughts could have no influence? Do you, Sir, thoroughly understand the law, by which thoughts arise in our mind? or can you say, by what connexion one springs up, rather than another? Can you account for it, why the mind is sometimes so much more forcibly struck than at other times, with the same object; or why it sometimes feels itself directed strongly into a certain channel, and track of thinking, in which it is not conscious to itself of a self-determining agency? Or are you sure that there may not be a special gracious appointment (whether natural or miraculous I do not now contend) in certain events, the causes of which are so unobserved, that we commonly, but perhaps rashly, say, they happen by chance? That the minds of many eminently wise and good men have been greatly comforted and established by such events, I am well assured; and it seems probable to me, that to well-disposed persons, of weaker abilities, they may more frequently happen: nevertheless, as I know they are liable to a great deal of cavil, and that it is the fashion of the age to deride every thing of this nature, I will not urge this argument in the present debate, but content myself with having insinuated it. I think I ought not entirely to have omitted it; and this seems its most proper place.

It is, I hope, at least possible, that the faith of an illiterate Christian may be not only really, but rationally, confirmed by such events; or, if you will admit the commonly received phrase, by such special providences as these. However, I am sure, there is another topic of argument, which is frequently of great and important service in this view, and which falls under the daily observation of the common people as well as others, and of which they are as competent judges as the most polite and learned of mankind. I mean, that which arises from comparing the temper and conduct of those who profess to reject the gospel, with that of those who seem most cordially to esteem and embrace it.

If it were evident and notorious, that infidelity did generally in fact make men better; if it increased their reverence for the Divine Being, and made them more diligent, constant, and devout in paying their daily homage before him; if it rendered them more sober and temperate, more mild and gentle, more upright and benevolent, in their behaviour; though this would be a most unaccountable phenomenon to any one who examines the constitution of the gospel, (since that diminishes no natural motive to virtue, and adds many peculiar to itself,) I do not say, that this remark ought to balance all the evidence on the other side; yet I will venture, Sir, to say, that I think it would shock an honest and candid mind, more than all the objections I have ever seen or heard of, as advanced by our modern freethinkers. But I firmly believe, that what weight this thought has, will be found in favour of Christianity, and not in opposition to it.

You well know, Sir, one can judge of these things only by one's own observation, and the report of others. I will not now insist on the latter; and that what I have to say as to the former may not be imputed to the eagerness of disputation, I think it not unbecoming my character to use the solemnity of saying, in the words of St. Paul, I protest to you by our rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, (and a stronger asseveration I cannot use,) that I write on this topic, as I would do if my life were to conclude with this letter, and I were directly to pass to account before the Judge of hearts for the truth of what I say.

I condescend not to speak of a mere freedom from gross and infamous vices; but sure I am, that if ever I have seen amiable and sublime virtue in the world, I have seen it among the humble disciples of Jesus. Where education and circumstances in life have been low, Christian principles have, to my certain knowledge, so far as principles could be known from behaviour, raised, animated, and ennobled the mind. I have beheld, even in cottages, that filial devotion toward the blessed God, that cordial submission to his will under the most painful dispensations, that calm steady fortitude in the midst of evils, which might have made a philosopher tremble; that cheerfulness in the immediate views of death; and, in the tenor of lives which I have intimately known, that strict integrity, that diligence, that contentment, that readiness to do good, in full proportion to their small abilities; that generous self-denial to avoid what might grieve and offend others; and, to crown all, that tender solicitude for the eternal happiness of friends, of strangers, and sometimes even of enemies; which has often filled me with wonder as well as delight. I speak freely, as conscious both of the truth and importance of what I say; nor am I at all ashamed thus openly to acknowledge, that my faith in Christianity has been not a little established by such observations as these; which, I bless God, have not been made in a few instances: and I esteem the evidence not the less, but the more, because day-labourers might enter into it, as well as myself.

I doubt not, Sir, but thousands more have also

made observations of this kind, and that it will generally be found, that when the principles of Christianity enter a mind before unaffected with them, they produce this effect, which indeed it is most natural they should. On the other hand, as to professed infidels, and it is on them only that the observation can pertinently be made, I appeal to the world in general, whether they do not commonly make shipwreck of a good conscience, as well as of faith, and plainly show, that the precepts of the gospel are as disagreeable to them as its doctrines. It would be strange, indeed, if good nature, a sense of honour, and, especially in advanced life, a caution not to disgrace distinguishing principles, did not restrain some from scandalous enormities, and produce something agreeable in their behaviour; but I believe, most who know the world will allow, that it is a peculiar glory for any of this sect to maintain so much as an uniform external appearance of what the best heathen moralists have esteemed virtue.

People of attention and reflection in the lower ranks of life, are not so stupid, as not to observe those things, or to neglect drawing the obvious inference from them: an inference, in which they will be both directed, and supported, by that maxim of our divine Master, By their fruits ye shall know them. What the morals of infidel writers in private life have been, it may seem difficult certainl to judge, because their pieces have been mostly anonymous. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that some of those ingenious authors have found out a way of letting the world into their characters, without publishing their names; and that in some such palpable instances, as one would almost ascribe to a judicial infatuation, or think they had been hired to expose their own cause to contempt.

And this leads me further to touch upon that confirmation, which the faith of plain Christians sometimes receives, from observing, not only the character of those who would subvert Christianity, but also the manner in which they often manage their opposition to it.

Every one who can read his Bible may observe, (and it may be profitable for young persons, especially, to be shown it,) how unjustly the enemies of revelation often represent the doctrines and facts delivered in Scripture. He may see the calumnies, which these men often throw upon the inspired writers, or those whom they celebrate, rolling off, like foul water from the down of a swan, without leaving any trace or soil behind it. It is obvious also to remark, that instead of examining, or so much as attempting to confute, the arguments for Christianity, which these gentlemen cannot but know; they only advance their surmises, and their possibilities, or make vain efforts to prove, that those things cannot in reason be, which in fact appear.

It is not to be wondered, if honest persons of plain sense have soon enough of such teachers, and do not often come to seek for grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles; or that if the boisterous attacks, which are made on their faith by such methods, seem at first a little to loosen the roots of it, the storm afterwards serves only to fix it the faster, and to make way for its further spread. Especially when they see, that arguments produced in opposition to Christianity, often have as malignant an aspect on natural religion too, and apparently tend to destroy all mutual commerce among mankind, which can never be carried on without some confidence in the testimony of each other. It is thus that meat often comes out of the eater, and sweetness out of the fierce; and the subtle are taken in their own craftiness. The grossness of such visible and palpable snares engages prudent people to avoid the path in which they lie, and so secures them from others of a finer contexture and more dangerous form.

And thus, Sir, I have fulfilled my promise, and given you a more distinct account, than I remember to have met with elsewhere, of the rational satisfaction which many Christians in common life have, and others, under due cultivation, might without any accuracy of learning obtain, with regard to the truth of the religion they profess. And I do sincerely apprehend, that this representation of the matter, far different from that which you have given, if it appear just, will contain a compendious answer to what you have suggested on the contrary side of the question, and be such a reply to your treatise, as *nothing* is to the celebrated arguments which have been brought to demonstrate the *impossibility of motion*.

But here, Sir, as you tell my friend, "I am very sensible, I have been holding you for some time past in the highest impatience of zeal, to interpose and remind me," that even this evidence cannot be obtained by all;—that while it is pursued, it keeps the mind in a state of dangerous hesitation;—and where it is had, it is founded in the prepossessions of education, on partial and imperfect views of the question;—that much of it depends upon precarious human testimony;—and consequently, that it cannot have efficacy enough to satisfy the mind, to control irregular affections, or to incourage against those extremities, which the gospel may sometimes require us to endure in its defence. Each of these particulars you object in your pamphlet: and I do not remember any thing material suggested in it, and proper to be considered in this place, which does not fall under one or other of these heads.

Now as to the first of these, it is indeed true, that all the evidence which I have here described, can-

not probably be attained by all; though I am confident a great deal more might be done for this purpose, in an enlightened and protestant country like ours, than we generally see. Care might be taken, especially if the richer kind of people had a becoming compassion on their poor neighbours, to teach all children to read, and to furnish all families with Bibles; as also to put such catechisms into their hands, as contain some hints of the reasons of Christianity. And if that which Dr. Thomas Burnet has drawn up in so plain and concise a manner, were to be used, I will venture to say, that children will be furnished with reasons for being Christians, which, so far as I can learn, the most sagacious Deists have been too wise to attempt directly to answer; and till they both attempt, and effect it, the understanding of a child may see, that whatever else they do is of very little importance. There are also several other plain and popular pieces,* which may, with a very small expense of money and time, be purchased and perused by young people: and if they were to be read two or three times over in families on the evening of the Lord's day, children and servants might, by an attentive hearing, be enabled to give some reason of the hope that is in them. And till they come to be capable of understanding such plain things as these, if they have no reason to believe their Bible to be true, but that they find it excellently good, and see it believed and reverenced by the wisest and best of those around them, it is, I suppose, at least as good a ground for their faith, as such infant understandings can have for infidelity. Nor will it be easy to invent any scheme, by which a child shall attain any knowledge at all, without some confidence in the veracity and skill of its parents, or other teachers.

Indeed, Sir, according to the injurious representation you have made of human nature, this is the case, not of little children alone, but of most who are grown up to years of maturity. "The generality of apprehensions," say you, (p. 17.) "extend not beyond a simple proposition, and are thrown out at once at the very mention of introducing a medium;" that is, in plain terms, they are not rational creatures. I shall not now urge, how inconsistent this is with the arguments, by which those that call themselves (by a strong catachresis) freethinkers, attempt to reason people out of a regard to revelation; and that, even by maintaining the natural abilities of the human mind to discover, without any supernatural assistance, every thing in religion which we are concerned to know. You, Sir, are too zealous a Christian to be pressed with such a consequence; or to be told, that if your subsequent discourse (p. 18, 19.) be right, when taken in connexion with this principle, it will lead to a conclusion, that men may live at random, not having sense enough to be capable of rendering an account to God for their actions. It would, I doubt not, be well for some, if this were indeed the case; but I hope none that pretend to reason against religion, will imagine they have any pretence to take shelter in such a thought. If this admonition be a digression, you will, I hope, pardon it, in favour of those who, I dare say, are the greatest admirers of your performance; and I will now return to remind you, in direct answer to what you advance, that daily experience shows the capacities of mankind in general not to be so weak as (just to serve a present purpose) you are pleased to suppose them. Do not people in low life reason on the common occurrences of it? Do they not learn the art of numbers, and often know how to apply it in cases where the reason of that application requires more than one medium to find it out? I suppose the natural understanding of men, in different stations of life, is, on an average, pretty equal, and that education generally makes the chief difference; and I have had an opportunity of observing, that among those who enter on academical studies, (and reasoning is not much cultivated in grammar-schools,) there is not one in some scores who, with proper instructions, does not, in a few days, grow capable of entering into the force of Euclid's demonstrations. And I hope none will have so little modesty as not readily to acknowledge, that the reasonings by which Christianity is proved in the plain pieces I referred to above, are much easier, and less abstruse, than those relating to the properties of mathematical figures to persons to whom they are entirely new. Objections, therefore, taken from the supposed impossibility of entering into the proofs offered, can only take place with regard to persons who, when grown up, are so unhappy as to want common sense; of whom it cannot be supposed that either of us intend to speak, in what we have said on either side of the question in debate between us.

But you will not fail to remonstrate, as you have already done at large, (p. 13, 14.) that supposing the rational evidence of Christianity ever so intelligible, it will at least require time for the most candid inquirer to make himself master of it; and while he is pursuing it, he continues in a state of extreme danger; because he is hesitating about that, on an immediate compliance with which his salvation depends. But to this, which really appears to me the most considerable difficulty you have suggested, I beg leave to answer, that the examination requires not so much time as you would represent, and that while the mind is pursuing it, there is no need at all that it should be in a state of

* Either the Three Sermons mentioned before, or the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letters, or a pamphlet entitled Plain Reasons for being a Christian, or the first part of The Gentleman's Religion.

infidelity, and consequently, of dangerous to its final happiness, if life should end before the examination be finished.

You, Sir, I think, by one of the most palpable sophisms that I have any where met with, every where affect to represent the case in question, as if a man could have no rational evidence of Christianity, till he had inquired, on the one hand, into every thing that could be said either to confirm, or even to illustrate it; and, on the other hand, into every objection that has been brought against it. And if this be not granted, all your flourishes (p. 61—63.) will be mere ornaments of wit and eloquence, entirely wide of the matter in debate. On the contrary, it seems self-evident, that this is so far from being necessary to make a rational and intelligent Christian, that it is not necessary to constitute an able and an accomplished divine. View it in any other instance, and you cannot but allow what I say. Would you maintain that a man cannot be fit to practise as a lawyer, or a physician, till he has read every thing that has been written in any controversy relating to those professions? It would be much more apparently absurd, to insist on this polemical omniscience, (if I may be allowed the expression,) in the case before us: since, at that rate, a competent number of infidels might, without urging one material argument, overthrow Christianity, supposing it in itself ever so rational, merely by writing a greater number of books about it than any one man could be able to read.

On the whole, controversies relating to Christianity are endless; but what is essential to the proof of it lies within a very little room, and may be set in so plain and easy a light, that a man may in a few hours, with attentive thought, be competently master of the argument. If indeed he desires copiously and curiously to examine the particular branches of it, he must allow proportionable time and labour: but it is by no means necessary, though you, Sir, seem constantly to take it for granted, that he should be all this while in suspense as to the truth of the gospel in general. Every topic of argument is not so fundamental, as that the whole evidence of Christianity should depend on that topic; much less is every particular proof belonging to each topic so: and least of all, the circumstance of every particular proof. I might, for instance, see great reason to believe Christianity to be true, even though I knew nothing of its extraordinary success and speedy propagation in the first ages of the church, or I might be sure, that it was early propagated through vast tracts of land, with circumstances which afford a strong conviction of its truth, though I were yet to learn, whether it reached India or Britain during those early days, and if it did, whether the Christians of St. Thomas received it from the apostle of that name, or our happy island from St. Paul. I may be sure, that Jesus was prophesied of in the Old Testament, while I am entirely dubious how Daniel's weeks are to be calculated; nay, I may be uncertain as to some niceties in the calculation, and yet be in general sure, that the period they mark out is elapsed, and that it ended much about the time of Christ.

And as a consequence of all this it is evident, that books on various topics relating to Christianity may be highly valuable, and yet by no means necessary to lay a rational foundation for our faith. They may suggest new thoughts; they may place arguments urged many ages ago, in a clearer and more beautiful light; they may obviate difficulties, which ingenious men have started, and artfully aggravated; and thus they may demand the esteem and gratitude of the Christian world, to which the learned and worthy authors of the Analogy between Reason and Revelation, and of the Trial of the Witnesses, are undoubtedly entitled; and yet "the evidence of the gospel, like its great Author, might be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," notwithstanding all you are pleased so shrewdly to insinuate on this head. (P. 20—22.)

But waving this, which, though I thought it necessary to touch upon it here, relates not immediately to the case of common Christians, you will, I doubt not, be ready to remind me, that let the evidence to be offered to their consideration be ever so short and ever so plain, yet some time must be taken up in examining it, even that part of it which is most essential; and while that examination continues, they must be in a state of dangerous hesitation; since to doubt the truth of Christianity is (according to your representation of the matter) a damnable apostasy from it.

In answer to this part of the objection, I am compelled to say, that I apprehend there is in it a complication of errors. I cannot, in the first place, see how the faith of a Christian is utterly cancelled by every doubt and suspicion which arises in his mind. Our thoughts are not entirely at our command, and natural temper may sometimes suggest fears, which reason can neither authorize nor exclude. The humble Christian, conscious, on the one hand, of the imperfection of his character, and on the other, of the greatness of his hopes, may be ready sometimes to suspect, that the gospel is too good news to be true. Now where will you find your proofs, either from Scripture or from reason, that every such suspicion is an apostasy from the faith, and that it is damnable thus to be tempted?

But to cut the grand sinew of your objection, I will presume to say, how widely soever it may differ from the schemes you have formed on this subject, that I apprehend a man may be rationally established in the faith of the gospel, and may have can-

diddly examined the evidences of it, without ceasing to believe it while he pursues that examination; which I think may easily appear from what I have represented above, and I the rather repeat it, as you, Sir, seem so studious to keep your reader from one thought of it.

Having once learnt what the gospel scheme is, I can never doubt of its being admirably calculated to elevate, to purify, and to strengthen the soul, to fix it on God, and to open in it sentiments of the most sincere and generous benevolence towards men. Of this I am as sure, as that there is a gospel scheme at all, or such a book as the New Testament existing in the world. Nor can I ever question for a moment, after having read that admirable book with attention, that there seem to be in it all imaginable signs of integrity, piety, and goodness in the heart of its writers. Both these will appear strong presumptions of its truth and authority, and such as would require cogent arguments on the other side to balance them: arguments which, till I hear, I see no reason to set myself to surmise. And it is likely in theory, that a religion attended with strong internal evidence, will not be left destitute of external, I shall set myself to examine into that, under the apprehension of a strong probability that it will turn out in favour of the gospel.

I remember indeed, that you somewhere speak with sovereign contempt of "that inquiry, which is intended with a shrewd foreboding how the matter will end." But I must entreat you to ask yourself again, whether it is not possible for the most impartial mind, in such cases, to have such forebodings; nay, whether it be always possible to avoid them, even when entering on the most resolutely impartial examination? Consider the matter in subjects where the severest reasoning takes place, and where there can be no interest to bribe the assent, I mean, where mathematical theorems are concerned.

I question not, Sir, but you have observed, if you ever turn your thoughts this way at all, that there is often an observable proportion in the figure of a diagram, which leads a man to think the proposition true, as soon as he reads it. Besides, that having found demonstration attending all the former propositions, suppose of Euclid, he naturally concludes, he shall find it in the proposition in question. He would not perhaps accept a bet of a thousand guineas to one, against the force of a demonstration, which he has not yet studied; and which, notwithstanding this grand foreboding, he shall be able as freely and fairly to canvass, as he ever did any of the former. So little does there seem in this part of the argument, which you have pushed with so much eagerness and triumph.

But to return to the case of young persons, to be instructed in the evidences of Christianity, the matter we were considering, and from whence my regard to this favourite topic of yours led me to digress a little too far:—I freely own, and leave you, Sir, to make the best of the concession, I would not have youth led into any doubts about these matters, till their understandings arrive at a strength and solidity capable of encountering with them. I would not represent Christianity to my catechumens, or my children, nor indeed to the most intelligent and judicious of my hearers, as a dubious, uncertain thing, where the probabilities were so equal, that it was quite precarious which way an honest inquirer would see reason to determine. It appears to my reason, and conscience, quite in another point of light, as an evident and certain truth, which I assuredly know; in which I rejoice as the anchor of my soul, and which I verily believe must be the salvation of theirs, if they are saved at all. With these views it would be a horrible iniquity in me, to speak slightly and dubiously about it: yet I may, in a perfect consistence with this persuasion, and with the declaration of it, recommend it to others, not as on my own authority, but on the force of reasons, concerning the strength of which they are to judge for themselves; though I am ever so earnestly solicitous that they may judge aright, as knowing how strictly they are to answer for the integrity of their conduct in this affair.

But here, I am well aware, you will glory over me as convicted by my own confession. You will tell me, that all this scheme of educating children in Christian principles, and recommending them with so much confidence and delight, is an avowed method of prejudicing their minds strongly on one side of the question, and utterly inconsistent with any pretence of bringing them to a fair and honest inquiry; in order to which it is absolutely necessary, that a man come to search after truth without any preconceived opinion at all, and perfectly indifferent on which side he may happen to find it.

This I confess, Sir, has a plausible sound, and is a charming subject for a young academic, or a very young preacher, if he has a mind to display his talent at declamation: but after all, it is perfect knight-errantry, and lays down a law to mankind, which it is in many instances impossible they should follow, and which of consequence can be neither necessary nor reasonable. The affections of the human mind may indeed be controlled, but they cannot be extirpated; nor is it needful men should be insensible, in order to their being impartial. Had Junius Brutus, when he saw his sons arraigned before him for treason against their country, been thus philosophically indifferent whether they were innocent or guilty, he had been the idiot he formerly counterfeited, or something worse than

that: and yet he did justice: and in other circumstances, with all the bowels of a father melting over them, he might have been equally just in acquitting them. A man may have strict reason for assenting to what he has been taught from his very infancy, and where the truth is greatly for his interest; or otherwise, who could have reason to believe himself heir to a kingdom, or an estate? A man may, I hope, have reason to believe the being of a God, yet who among us was not taught it from a child? or what virtuous mind does not see, that all its happiness is concerned in the question? Who would not esteem it far worse than death, to be brought to an apprehension that he lives in a fatherless world, and that all the resource which he thought he had found in the guardianship of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, was but the amusement of a pleasing dream?

And while I am on this topic, give me leave to touch on that notion, which some have entertained, of leaving children untaught in religion, that they may come unprejudiced to inquire into it: an absurdity, surely, to be numbered among the greatest which the adventurous infidelity of the present age has started, or its implicit disciples have imbibed, in open and perhaps boasted defiance of the common sense of mankind throughout all ages, nations, and religions. And yet I am told, some who have continued to call themselves Christians, have been wild enough to admit it. With them indeed I might justly cut short further debate, by urging, what on their professed principles must be unanswerable, the most express authority both of the Jewish and Christian revelations, strongly requiring that children should be brought up in an early and familiar acquaintance with them. But for the sake of others I would observe, and would entreat every professed disciple of reason to consider, that the notion of omitting an education in religion, to avoid prejudice, is utterly inconsistent with itself. For it is certain, as the world now goes, and every infidel must surely in his conscience know it, that if the children of Christians are not taught religion, and trained up in the exercises of it, they will soon learn vice and immorality, and then they will come to inquire into the evidences of Christianity in time, (if they ever made the inquiry at all,) with this terrible prejudice on the negative side of the question, "If Christianity be true, I am in a state of condemnation, and an heir of everlasting ruin: and I must relinquish all the dearest of my pleasures, in pursuit of a pretended felicity, which I had rather be annihilated than confined to."

And indeed, Sir, we would gladly know, if children are not to be taught religion, on what principles they are to be taught virtue. The philosophical questions relating to the first principles, and ultimate obligations, of morality, they can as little understand as those of religion: and if they are to be taught it, as in itself an amiable thing, and a thing which their parents know to be reasonable, and conducive to their happiness, they may on the like foundation be taught, to receive the gospel as the word of God, and, according to their little abilities, to worship, and live like Christians.

I think I may conclude this head with an appeal to every man's conscience, whether it would be best for society in general, that our children should be taught Christianity in their early years? Whether the history of a life and character like that of the blessed Jesus, be not one of the finest lessons they can learn? And whether an apprehension of our obligations to him as our great Redeemer, who, as the messenger and gift of his Father's love, taught such excellent truths, and did and suffered so much for our salvation, be not admirably calculated to touch their tender hearts, and form them to humility, gratitude, and love? I hope, men of such lordly and towering understandings, as our deists generally are, will at least condescend to own this of the gospel, which wise men will reckon no small circumstance in its favour: and these gentlemen must pardon me when I add, that had their own minds been more deeply touched with it, their understandings might have been more solid, in proportion to the degree in which their own opinion of them had been less exalted.

But should you allow this, you may still insist, that, according to the scheme I have proposed, our young Christian, in his most advanced stage, must have very partial and imperfect views of the question; since I have supposed him chiefly to have heard the advocates on one side, and have not made the perusal of infidel writers, or an attendance upon such catechists, if such there be, any part of our method.

It is here obvious to reply, that I have advised, as young persons grow up towards manhood, to give them some hints of the main objections which are generally made to Christianity, or at least some view of the chief topics, from whence these objections are taken. A Christian parent or minister will of course do this in such a manner, as to show that there seems to him to be very little weight in them, when compared with the evidence in favour of our religion; and this he may do in perfect consistence with giving a plain and honest view of the strength of the objections, which to be sure he ought to give, if he mentions it at all.

This may commonly suffice; yet I readily acknowledge, there are circumstances, in which it may be very expedient to enter into a more particular detail of objections and answers. This I take to be especially the case of those, who are educated for the ministry; and perhaps I might add, of gentlemen intended for the practice of the law, and

indeed, of all whose incomes can afford what is commonly called a liberal education. The strong temptations, to which such persons are generally exposed, might, I think, require proportionable antidotes; at least I am persuaded, every considerate person will acknowledge, that it is incumbent on those who are to be the teachers and guardians of religion, to be well acquainted with its proofs; in order to which, let such, by all means, before they appear in a public character, examine the evidence on both sides. And whatever use they may make of a tutor on this occasion, as to the method and order of their studies, and whatever confidence they may place in his integrity and capacities, let them not acquiesce in whatever abstracts he may give them of the objections which our adversaries advance; but let them attentively peruse the most celebrated pieces, which have been written by them; and what they are, no man of tolerable acquaintance with the world can be long to seek. Thus let them hear infidels pleading their own cause; at the same time weighing, which justice and common sense will require, those answers which have been returned by the learned advocates for Christianity, in which our country, above all others, has been so eminently happy.

Sad, indeed, is the drudgery our younger brethren must go through, in reading such authors, as many of those who have attacked religion; as I well know by my own painful and laborious experience. But the confirmation which their faith may receive, by the very efforts made to overthrow it, will, I hope, in many instances, be a sufficient reward. And as these pieces, especially in the hand of second-rate writers, contain little more than a confident and unwearied repetition of the same objections, which have been answered perhaps many scores and hundreds of times, without taking any notice of those replies; (which, whether it be owing to the learning or the modesty of the authors, I will not undertake to say;) one who is acquainted with these controversies will be able to despatch large volumes in a little time, and will see that many of them need no new answers. All which will be a circumstance of some consolation under so tedious a task.

This, Sir, is a method in the education of young ministers, which is practised, even among the protestant dissenters, in the midst of those many disadvantages under which their tutors and students labour; in several of whose little seminaries, to my certain knowledge, the rational evidences of natural and revealed religion, with such a view of the objections against both, are as regularly and methodically taught as logic or geometry, or any of the other sciences: and with what superior advantage this important branch of learning is cultivated in our two celebrated universities, is not for me to say, or perhaps to imagine. But as for the common people, I hope none will be so unreasonable as to insist upon it, that they should spend their money for that which is not bread, or their labour for that which will yield them so little satisfaction, as a course of polemics would in their circumstances do. For them, the plain and practical method I have offered above, seems abundantly sufficient. And if objections come in their way, which in this free age may very probably happen, let them apply to those who may be most like to answer them, and weigh the answers seriously and impartially; at the same time humbly addressing the great Father of lights, to lead them into all necessary truth, and to preserve them from every dangerous mistake, in a matter of such apparent moment: and, with these precautions, reason and experience concur to teach me, that their Christian friends need be in no pain for the event. Their inquiries, as I before observed, may be impartial, and their determinations rational, without knowing every thing that has been said, on one side, and on the other. And for them to remain still undetermined, from any impertinent suspicion, that somebody might have something to say which they never heard, but which, if they knew it, might be an invincible objection to Christianity, is a conduct into which no one will be like to fall, who is not pretty heartily resolved to be an infidel at all adventures. For if there be any good sense in such a turn of mind, it must be a foundation of universal scepticism in all the affairs of life, as well as religion; and would be full as absurd, as if a jury should refuse to give a verdict upon the evidence they have already received, because it is possible there may be some absent persons in the world, who, if they were present, might give such information as would turn the scale the contrary way.

On the whole, it seems to me strictly reasonable, that as every man should seriously reflect on the nature, genius, tendency, and evidence, of those religious principles in which he has been brought up; so he should continue to adhere to them, till he sees an evidence against it, at least equal to that which he has for it. And I further apprehend, that there are certain degrees of evidence attending many truths, of one kind and another, moral and religious, as well as mathematical, in which a candid and upright man may see reason to acquiesce, without giving himself perpetual trouble in renewing his inquiries as long as he lives; and concerning which he may have a rational apprehension, that he shall never meet with any thing to be urged against them, which is worthy of his notice, unless it should be for the sake of others, rather than for his own. Whether this be not the case with regard to Christianity, every one must judge for himself, as in the sight of God, and on a review of the information he has gained with respect to it. Yet it is possible, that when his judgment is thus determined in its

favour, objections against it may afterwards occur to him, which though he does not seek, he may not be able to avoid hearing. Of these, some may be such, as he has already weighed in the balance, and found wanting: others may immediately appear to affect only what is circumstantial, in the evidence on which he has already yielded his assent, and not what is essential to it; or at most, but a small part of the evidence, which, if it were to be given up, the main strength of the various and complex argument in which he before acquiesced, might remain secure; as for instance, the meaning of some particular prophecy which he thought to refer to Christ, or the like. Now I apprehend, that by far the greater part of what is commonly advanced against Christianity, perhaps nineteen objections in twenty, will, to one well instructed and experienced in religion, be reducible to one or other of these heads. As for those which fall under neither of them, I doubt not but they will soon appear to be built on some ignorance or misrepresentation of the plan of revelation, which will, I hope, never want pious and learned votaries, capable of defending it, and of turning the difficulties urged against it, or the manner in which they are treated, into occasions of adding increasing lustre to its proofs, and, perhaps, into arguments in its favour; as the world has already seen in frequent instances.

The chief remaining objection is, that, according to the plan laid down above, we shall have our faith built upon mere human testimony, which you, Sir, represent as a most fallacious and uncertain thing, utterly unfit to be the foundation of so important a superstructure. It is by no means necessary here to repeat all the diminutive things, which you are pleased to say of human testimony, without any distinction, and with as much severity, as if you judged of it in general, by what you may have found in some deistical writings. It all centres in depreciating its validity; and the reader will soon see, how far it is to be regarded, as just in itself, or as applicable to the present occasion.

And here I must, in the first place, remind you, that the article now in question does not at all concern, or affect, the internal evidence of Christianity, which of itself alone is a very considerable thing; especially when it is considered, how probable it is, that God might favour the world with a revelation, which in its present condition it so evidently needs. It is not on testimony that I believe there is such a book as the Bible in the world. I see it, and read it; and that it is in the main rightly translated, even an illiterate Christian among us may be sure; because if there had been any gross prevarication in this respect, considering the variety of sects among us, clamours must have arisen, which he sees in fact do not arise, between the contending parties, as I have elsewhere argued more at large.* And therefore all the proofs of the divine authority of this book, that arise from the contexture, design, harmony, and efficacy, which I mentioned above, are quite independent, even on that human testimony, on which its genuineness depends, and are built on sense, observation, and experience.

There are indeed other, and those I confess very material, proofs of Christianity, in which some considerable regard to human testimony is absolutely necessary: but before we further discuss these, give me leave to ask you, Sir, Will you, or any man of candour or common sense, venture to assert, that we are in no circumstances obliged to admit the truth of any fact on the testimony of other men? You cannot but know, how often the contrary has been demonstrated, by all our best writers on this subject: nay, I think you cannot but see, at the first glance, the glaring absurdity of such a principle. Does not the course of human life every day declare, what is, and must be, the sense of mankind with regard to this? Are not things of the utmost importance, in which not only the estates and lives of particular persons, but the interests of whole nations, are concerned, undertaken and determined on the credit of testimony? and is it not absolutely necessary, they should turn upon it? How dishonest then, and how shameful, would it be to assert, that it is to be regarded in other things of the greatest moment, but not in those which relate to the support of the gospel.

If there be any thing particular in that evidence to which we appeal on this occasion, which renders it unworthy of regard, let our adversaries show it plainly. You will not, Sir, I am persuaded, think fit to assert, that every fact must of course be given up, which is said to have happened almost two thousand years ago, or that we may never [illegible] that books are genuine which pretend to such antiquity as that. Are all the classics of Greece and Rome spurious? Or is it to be numbered among the uncertainties of antiquity, whether Cyrus conquered Babylon, and whether Julius Cæsar was assassinated in the senate? These facts are of more ancient date than any which are asserted in the New Testament; yet are you a sceptic with regard to them? Were you as sure that you should be possessed of all imaginable happiness for a million of years, as you are of the truth or falsehood of those things, would you entertain any afflictive doubt with regard to it? or would you not, what you would look on as such a tenure, for the certain enjoyment of any thing in mortal life? A man's own heart easily answers him such questions as these: and yet the testimony in support of Christianity is slighted, though it is most easy to show, that it is far superior

* See Sermons on the Power [illegible] Vol. I. Serm.

to that by which we are informed of Cyrus's conquests, or of Cæsar's death.

The only remaining question, therefore, on this head, is not concerning the learned, but common, Christians, and the rational satisfaction which they are capable of receiving, with regard to these facts, on which the external evidences of Christianity depend. And here I doubt not but they may receive competent satisfaction; that is, they may see much greater reason to believe them than they can possibly have to reject them; which is all the matter requires.

To evince this, let us consider what those facts are on which their reasonings, with respect to the external evidence, depend; for that is properly the precise question. And they are chiefly these: that there was such a person as Jesus Christ,—who founded a religion,—which was received by multitudes of people quickly after his death; (*i. e.* about 1700 years ago;)—many of which converts testified their firm persuasion of its truth by enduring great extremities in its defence:—that among these ancient Christians there were such persons as the evangelists and apostles,—who wrote the chief books of the New Testament;—which books are, in the main, transmitted safely and faithfully down to us:—as also, that when Christ and his apostles lived, the Jews did subsist as a people,—and had in their hands books which they accounted sacred, —in the main the same with those which we now call the Old Testament.

These, Sir, are the grand facts, which we prove by testimony, and with which we connect our reasonings in favour of the gospel. What the testimony is by which we confirm these facts, and what the connexion by which we infer Christianity from them, I (among many others) have elsewhere shown at large; and I have too much other business, and too much with you in particular before me, to swell this letter by so unnecessary a repetition.

Now, with regard to common Christians, of whose attainable satisfaction we are treating, I readily own, they cannot be fully masters of that evidence which learned men may receive of these facts, by consulting the original writers: yet they are certainly capable of knowing something of considerable importance even on this head, where their disadvantages must be acknowledged the greatest of all. Every plain reader sees many ancient authors quoted, as testifying such and such things, and perhaps sees at the bottom of the page characters or words which he cannot understand: but he reads the supposed sense of them in English, and is told, if the book be properly written, about what time the author produced is said to have lived. Now, it can never enter into his heart to imagine, that, in an enlightened age, Christian divines, publishing their names with their works, or if they do not, seeming zealous for Christianity, would have so little regard to themselves, or their cause, as to pretend to quote such passages, unless the books from whence they were taken were certainly extant; and the passages to be found there, containing the sense which they give them. The matter does not by any means rest upon our personal integrity: (though, I hope, in reporting a fact, some regard might be paid to that:) were the defenders of Christianity ever so dishonest, it cannot be imagined they would obtrude such palpable falsehoods on the world, while so liable to be contradicted, and ashamed, by those who disbelieve the gospel, and make it the great, though wretched, business of their lives, to oppose it to the utmost of their power, and to revile its preachers and defenders. But are these assertions of ours, as to the passages in question, contradicted? Where is the deist who will dare to say, that Christianity is not an ancient religion; that it did not arise and spread about the time I have mentioned; or that its professors did not early suffer in its defence? Where is the man who will venture to assert, that the most material books of the New Testament were not early received by Christians: or that the authors in which we assert, that we find quotations from them, and references to them, did not really live in the ages and places we assert? Our books are open: and the facts and testimonies on which we build our reasonings, are liable to be examined with all possible freedom by our enemies as well as our friends. If we have recourse to any pious frauds, (as they are scandalously called,) let those frauds be detected; and, in the name of the God of truth, let them be hissed out of the world with a just abhorrence. But the contrary is so plain, that there is not an infidel in our land, that will presume to oppose the evidence of these things, and to set his name to such an attempt: nay, either some remains of modesty, or a consciousness of the hurt which their cause would receive from so shameless a defence, prevents even anonymous authors from attacking us here. The controversy is concerning the consequences drawn from these acknowledged facts; (that Christianity was an ancient religion, and the New Testament early received, &c.) Now, of these consequences the common people are themselves judges, on principles laid down above; and they do not admit them because we, or any others, assert them to follow.

And here, Sir, I cannot forbear admiring the wisdom of Divine Providence, in permitting such perverse opposition to the gospel to arise, and continue: since even its avowed enemies, by the nature and manner of their attack, serve but more effectually to confirm the faith of impartial and intelligent inquirers, and give an authority and evidence which the teachers of Christianity assert, in some measure

beyond what it could otherwise have had. Just as another kind of infidels, I mean the Jews, are also vouchers for the antiquity and authority of the Old Testament, on which so many of our arguments depend; and those arguments of such validity, that, as Mr. Addison well concluded, many who now dispute against the application of its prophecies to Christ, would, no doubt, have concluded them a Christian forgery, and have argued that conclusion from the perspicuity of those prophecies, had not Providence laid in so incontestable a proof to the contrary. "The wrath of man, O Lord, shall praise thee; and the remainder of that wrath shalt thou restrain." I must on the same principle congratulate the happiness of our own country, in which such liberty is allowed, of proposing whatever can be said against Christianity; in consequence of which our modern infidels are deprived of that shrewd pretence, which perhaps might be more serviceable to them than all the rest of their weapons, that they could say something convincing against it, if penal laws did not deter them.

I hope, Sir, these things will evince, that the common people may have some considerable degrees of evidence for those facts, on which the external proofs of Christianity are built, though they are not capable of consulting the original records from whence they are taken. But I must not dismiss the subject, till I have considered an objection, which equally concerns the most learned Christian: I mean, that none of the most rational arguments, in their clearest and strongest view, can give the mind satisfaction; or at least can produce such a degree of persuasion, as should animate us to subdue our passions,—or to endure those extremities in defence of our religion, which we may possibly meet with, and which it indispensably requires us to bear.

You make these three distinct topics; but the former is so evidently included in the two latter, that all I shall say to it at present is, that every man who will reflect in his own mind, must find, that there are degrees of rational proof in which he acquiesces with entire satisfaction. Many Christians testify this to be the case, with regard to the arguments in favour of Christianity, of which great number I must declare myself one; and any one who finds himself dissatisfied, will do well to give his reasons for that dissatisfaction, without making his own case a standard, by which to pronounce on that of every one else. You argue, as if there were no medium between an implicit faith, and perpetual scepticism; but the conclusion is very hastily drawn. You, Sir, may perhaps have known some, who have gradually quitted all religious principles, when they had begun to examine any: I, on the contrary, have known many who have professed themselves to have been greatly confirmed in Christianity by such examination: they have found its evidences, like gold, approved by the severest trials: and it is to me utterly unimaginable how a rational believer should be incapable of finding complacency and satisfaction of mind, in having used his rational faculties on so important an occasion.

Waving therefore all further debate upon this, I shall proceed to what you add under the two remaining parts of this argument; (p. 30—35.) in which you undertake to show, that "no conviction drawn from reasoning can ever have force enough to command our passions, so as on common emergencies" (they are your own extraordinary words) "to make a good Christian,—much less will it serve to produce a faithful martyr, if ever so severe an exercise be demanded at our hands." You employ a great deal of rhetoric on this subject, in the pages referred to above: but I am sorry to say, that, so far as I can judge, it amounts only to this, "That you apprehend something so extremely desirable in the indulgences which Christianity prohibits, and something so terrible in death, in whatever view and cause it is to be encountered, that no rational argument imaginable can induce a man to give up the one, and expose himself to the other."

And is it possible, Sir, that sensual pleasure, and mortal life purchased at the expence of honour, gratitude, and conscience, can indeed appear so exceeding valuable? I would not wrong your moral character so much, as to suppose, that you seriously meant this, and will abide by it; and yet it is difficult to imagine, how it could be written otherwise than seriously, without bearing hard on another part of your moral character too. I will leave it among the other mysteries of your book, and content myself with hinting at those reasons, for which the matter appears to me in a quite contrary view; as I am persuaded, it would have done to Socrates, Seneca, or Epictetus, had they considered it only in theory.

No paradox in human nature appears to me so strange, as that a man, who in his conscience believes, that the arguments in favour of Christianity are unanswerably strong, should deliberately allow himself in the violation of its precepts; or should, by any temporal considerations whatsoever, be induced to renounce it. All the pleas of duty, gratitude, and interest, are so weighty in favour of a constant and resolute subjection to it, that one could hardly imagine, did not fact demonstrate the contrary, that any temptation of allurement, or of terror, should, with a rational creature, who believed the gospel, triumph over them.

Nor is a life of Christian obedience that violent and constrained thing, which you seem to suppose. Were I to judge by those pages [illegible] I should imagine you had never read the New Testament, and did not know how the views of a Christian are animated and raised. O, Sir, the rational believer

is in his heart and conscience persuaded, that to all the bounties of his common providence, God has added the riches of redeeming love. He is fully persuaded that the Son of God descended from heaven, to deliver him from everlasting ruin; that he has generously purchased him with the price of his own blood; and that (if he be conscious of a true faith in him) Christ has taken him as his peculiar property under his guardian care, with a gracious purpose of conducting him safely through life and death, of receiving his nobler part in a very little time into the abode of holy and happy spirits, and at length of raising his body from the dust, and fixing his complete person in a state of immortal glory and felicity. Now when this is really believed, and the conviction is firm and lively, (which I hope a rational conviction may very possibly be,) what can be a more natural effect, than that an ardent love to God our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, should be excited by it? And it is easy to imagine, that this love must make obedience easy: and when the mind is taken up with such sublime and delightful views, and those devotional exercises which is so natural to ingraft upon them, it will not be so hard a matter as many seem to imagine, to conquer the irregular propensities of animal nature, or the exorbitances of passion, where only the little enjoyments and interests of this transitory life are concerned. Or rather, many of those exorbitances will be superseded, or, as the apostle justly and finely expresses it, crucified by the cross of Christ; and the affections, without any painful struggle, will generally flow on in an orderly and pleasant channel.

And where this is the temper and character, martyrdom may not appear so dreadful a thing, as you, Sir, have taken pains to represent it. It may rather be the habitual judgment of such a Christian, that it is to be esteemed an honour and favour, which our great Lord bestows on some of his most beloved servants. To be excused from the melancholy circumstances attending death in its natural form; to have an opportunity of turning the common lot of mortality into an occasion of manifesting heroic gratitude and fidelity to the best of Masters and of Friends; to die with those warm sentiments and elevated views which such a condition so naturally tends to excite and suggest; would not surely be, as you seem to insinuate, the death of a fool: (which I cannot think even that of Socrates to have been:) surely, Sir, on second thoughts, you must rather judge it a consummation of labours, cares, and sorrows, inseparable from human life, to be devoutly wished for, rather than dreaded. I will on the other hand grant, that hellish acts of cruelty may be invented and practised, under which the resolution of an upright mind may faint, and even reason itself be overborne, unless God were pleased to interpose by extraordinary supports, which there is great encouragement to hope he would in such a case do: but while reason remains undisturbed, I should imagine, that death in its most horrible form, when met in the cause of such a Saviour, who had so graciously borne it for us, should appear more desirable than life in its most agreeable circumstances; and surely, then, infinitely more desirable than life purchased by base ingratitude to him, and worn out under the sense of his just displeasure, and the sad prospect of being finally disowned by him, as an apostate and a traitor.

This I think to be solid reason; and I bless God, there are numberless facts which confirm it, and show that persons not pretending to any such immediate revelation as you assert to be necessary, have conquered the greatest difficulties on these principles, and, after having adorned the gospel by a most exemplary and holy life, have steadily and cheerfully sealed it with their blood. And every fact of this kind is so unanswerable an argument against all that you allege here, that I do not judge it necessary to pursue this part of my plan any further.

With this therefore I conclude what I had to offer in vindication of the perspicuity and solidity of those arguments in proof of Christianity, to which the generality of its professors among us may attain: and I hope it will be allowed, that I have fairly and candidly, as well as seriously, considered what you object against it, and so have answered the first part of your pamphlet, which I take to be by far the most plausible and dangerous.

Your endeavour to prove, that Christianity itself avows, that it is not built upon argument, but on a revelation to be immediately made from the Spirit of God to every Christian, by which all argument is superseded, and all possibility of doubt and error excluded, is such a direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the New Testament, that I hardly think you would be understood seriously to mean it. It is sufficient that you have shown, you have wit enough to give a varnish to so wild a notion. Yet lest any should be so weak as to imagine there is any solidity in what you have so adventurously advanced on that head, I am willing plainly to discuss it with you; and at the same time to inquire into what you say, with regard to the awful sentence which the gospel passes on those who reject it: a circumstance which you every where represent as totally irreconcilable with a religion to be rationally proved and defended; but which, on the contrary, appears to me most wisely adapted to the rest of the scheme, and, when compared with it, an addition rather than abatement of its internal evidence. This, and several other particulars in yours, I should be glad to examine; but I wave it at present, because this letter is already swelled to a

pretty large size. I therefore reserve what I have further to say to another opportunity, and I hope a few weeks more may afford it. But I choose to send you what I have already written, without any further delay; because I am conscious of the many hinderances, which, in a life like mine, oblige me often to postpone, much longer than I intended, the execution of attempts to do what little I can towards serving the world, by promoting the interest of Christianity in it; and because I really think your piece has been already too long unanswered. If you please to offer any thing in reply to what I have here proposed, I shall give it a serious consideration: and hope that I shall, in the whole course of this controversy, endeavour to write like a Christian, and then I shall not forget any other character which I could wish to maintain. At present, Sir, I conclude with assuring you, that it is with sensible regret I have found myself obliged, for the honour of the gospel, and the preservation of men's souls, to animadvert on what you have written, in the manner I have already done. Should you prove, which may possibly be the case, some old acquaintance and friend, I hope I have written nothing which should make me blush at any interview with you; and should you, as I rather apprehend, be an entire stranger, I am, on the common principles of that faith, which it is the great glory of my life to profess and defend, with sincere good wishes for your temporal and eternal happiness, in any thing which may conduce to either,

Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Nov. 5, 1742.

LETTER II.

Sir,

Though my former Letter considered what I thought most essential in your late treatise, yet there are several other things in it, which, however designed, have so plain a tendency to expose Christianity to suspicion, and even to contempt, that on the principles which led me to animadvert upon it before, I find myself obliged to give you this second trouble.

I proceed therefore without any further ceremony, to consider the pains you have taken, under the second general head of your tract, to represent the gospel as pleading guilty to the charge of not being founded on argument; or in other words, not being generally capable of such rational proof, as its disciples may be able to receive.

You would seem indeed at one view to by your manner of introducing this topic, to think this is doing great kindness to the New Testament, as it delivers it from the absurdity of saying, "Judge whether you have time or not;—judge whether you are judges or not;—judge all for yourselves, and yet judge all alike." (P. 3.) But I hope, Sir, before I have finished my letter, to show, that all, whom we can suppose to be concerned in any demand of judging, i. e. all persons of common understanding, to whom the gospel is, or has been faithfully and intelligibly preached, can have no just plea from the want of time, or capacity, and must, on the supposition of an honest and diligent inquiry, all judge alike, i. e. all agree in receiving it as a divine revelation.

To illustrate and confirm the view you have given of the matter, you undertake to show,—that Christ did not propose his doctrines to examination (p. 36—38.)—that his apostles had neither leisure, nor qualifications, for such a method, i. e. for the use of reasoning and argument in the propagation of the gospel, (p. 38—40.)—and that the very supposition of such a proceeding is evidently preposterous from the nature of the thing. (P. 41—46.) In opposition to all which, it is one of the easiest tasks one can imagine, to show, that Christ did propose the great doctrines he taught to examination: that the apostles did the same, urging (as their blessed Master had done) most cogent arguments in the proof of them:—and that any other method of proceeding had been preposterous, and must necessarily have exposed the gospel to the contempt of all reasonable people. It seems hard, indeed, to be put upon proving things so conspicuous as these; and it cannot but be some trial of temper to one who honours and loves the gospel to see it and its glorious founders, placed in so ridiculous a view, as that in which your assertions and arguments represent them: that is, described as wild enthusiasts, running all over the world, at the expense of their own lives, to urge men, on pain of damnation, to receive a religion, for which they did not pretend to give them any reason. But out of respect both to you, and the cause in which I am engaged, I will keep myself as cool as I can. And in the following pages seem to my reader unnecessary, I must beg him to distinguish, how much was needful to convince you, and what was sufficient to confute you.

But before I proceed to hint at the evidential proof of the three propositions, which, in opposition to yours, I have laid down above, I beg leave to premise, that all you say on this subject seems to me founded on an artful and sophistical shifting the question. The grand matter in debate is whether Christianity is founded on rational argument, or whether the only reason which a person of the

gospel can generally have to give for his belief of it, must be, that God has immediately revealed it to him by his Spirit, and testified the truth of it to him in a manner, which as, on the one hand, he cannot suspect, so, on the other hand, he cannot communicate or explain? Instead of discussing this question, you put off the reader with another very different, (p. 36.) Whether Christ and his apostles submitted their doctrine to examination? which is a very ambiguous manner of speaking; and when you assert that they did not, I must beg leave to ask, what you mean by their doctrine? Do you mean this general doctrine, that they were teachers sent from God? Or do you mean those particular doctrines, which in consequence of that general assertion they proceeded to teach? If you mean the former, it is indeed to your purpose; but, as I shall presently show, is a proposition entirely and notoriously false. But if you mean the latter, which the course of your arguments seems to imply, then it is foreign to your purpose: for Christianity may be founded on rational argument, though the first teachers of it, when they had proved their mission, should have put the credit of particular doctrines on their own authorized testimony alone, without discussing the several branches of their system, in such a manner as it would have been necessary they should have done, had they proposed it only as a theory, destitute of external proofs.

Now that our Lord Jesus Christ did not expect, that it should be believed merely on his own testimony, that he was a teacher sent from God, and one whose doctrine was consequently true and divine, but set himself to prove it, is so evident from the history of the evangelists, that I believe few readers need so much as to be reminded of particular passages on this head. No words can be more express than those, in which he has disclaimed this. If (says he) I bear testimony of myself alone, my testimony is not true or valid; but my Father who hath sent, he beareth testimony to me. And you well know, that he illustrated and argued this testimony of the Father, partly from the predictions of those sacred writings which they acknowledged to be the word of God, in which Jesus declared he was described and foretold; and partly from the attestation of John, whom they generally acknowledged to be a divinely inspired prophet; but principally, from a yet more sensible argument than either, the works which the Father had given him to perform, and which (said he) bear witness of me. And all these he represents as illustrated by the excellent design and tendency of his preaching, to which he plainly refers, when he says, the word which I have spoken, shall judge the unbeliever another day.

These were various and cogent arguments, some of them so very plain, that one single day, or hour, might make a man master of them: I mean, that arising from his miraculous powers, and the tendency of his doctrines to promote real goodness. The argument from John's testimony was, even by the confession of his enemies, known to all the nation; and as for that from prophecy, he submitted it to their candid and deliberate examination, urging them to search the Scriptures, and assuring them that if they did so, they would there find a convincing testimony concerning him, which was to shine with growing evidence. And on the whole, he expostulates with them, in language utterly irreconcilable with your scheme; And why, even of yourselves, from plain appearances, and without further explications and remonstrances from me, judge you not that which is right? pleading that the signs of the times, marking them out to be those of the Messiah, were as discernible as those of the prognostications of the weather, which all the world had observed, and formed into common proverbs. So that, in consequence of all, their continued unbelief, in the midst of so many united testimonies and palpable proofs, was not only an irrational and criminal, but a most inexcusable, thing. If I had not (says he) come and spoken unto them, and done among them the works which no other man did, though their disobedience to the law of God had been justly punishable, yet, in comparison of their present case, they had not had sin; but now, they have no cloak for their sin. Could they have pleaded, as you, Sir, it seems, would have taught them to do, "We never had any reason offered to bring us to believe;" I suppose, it would have been no despicable cloak for their infidelity. I cannot forbear saying, that it is a grievous outrage upon the character of our blessed Redeemer, to suppose him capable of talking in so wild, so false, and so inconsistent a manner, as this wretched hypothesis would imply. I should have too great a respect for the memory of Socrates, to advance, or admit, any thing so injurious to it.

That the apostles also reasoned in the defence of their mission, is as certain, as that they preached and wrote; and indeed the fifth book of the New Testament is almost as much the history of their reasonings, as of their acts. The second chapter contains an account of their reasoning at Jerusalem, from the fact of the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, in comparison with the predictions of the Old Testament, both with respect to that, and to the resurrection of Jesus; from whence they strongly infer, that all the house of Israel might know assuredly, that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters, relate their reasonings before the people and the Sanhedrim, from the cure of the lame man in the temple,

as wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified. And it would be tedious, rather than necessary, to continue the enumeration of particular passages, in which we read of Paul's reasoning in confirmation of these great points: as we are told he did at Damascus, at Jerusalem, at Antioch in Pisidia, and particularly at Thessalonica, where when his reasoning with the Jews out of the Scriptures for three successive sabbaths is spoken of, it is said to have been as his manner was. You cannot but know, that as he continued this practice at Berœa, the inhabitants of that place are greatly commended, for examining the force of his arguments, and searching the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. His reasoning with the philosophers at Athens, from natural principles, to demonstrate the absurdity of image worship, is so conclusive and so noble, that I cannot suppose it to have escaped your notice or memory. I am sorry to be under a necessity of reminding you, that at Corinth, where he continued for a year and a half, he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, at least for a considerable part of that time; that at Ephesus, he preached in the synagogue for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God; and after this, having separated the disciples, he disputed daily in the school of one Tyrannus, continuing this practice for the space of two years; that he made his defence with great presence of mind, before the Jews at Jerusalem; that he reasoned with Felix of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, in such a manner that he made him tremble, and pleaded with such strength of argument before Agrippa, that he almost persuaded him to be a Christian. And the history closes with his appointing a day to the Jews at Rome, in which they attended him at his lodging, and he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. What the force and validity of these reasonings were, is not at all the question between us: it is sufficient, that the passages referred to demonstrate, that reasonings were used, and objections heard, directly contrary to what you, Sir, have been pleased to assert, (p. 39.) with as much confidence, as if you had never read these passages, or never expected that what you have written should be compared with the records to which you appeal.

It is equally easy to show, that the apostles reason in their epistles; and with what force, many valuable commentators have shown at large. But as it would be out of my way to consider those reasonings now, I content myself with mentioning one passage, as a specimen of many more: "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." A text, in which there seems to be a spring, that will not easily bend to your interpretation. But the whole New Testament is so full of reasonings, that it is quite superfluous to enumerate particulars.

Now when these things are thus evident to fact, it signifies little to say, that the apostles had not time, or qualifications, to maintain an argument, and that in the nature of things it would have been preposterous for them to have attempted it. If what you say on these topics (p. 38—45.) were conclusive, when compared with what I have produced above, the conclusion would be something very different from what you professedly labour to establish:—it would show, that the apostles acted in an irrational and preposterous manner. But I am in no pain for their reputation on this head, in consequence of any thing which you have asserted; for all your reasonings are built on a forgetfulness, or misrepresentation, of those topics of argument, on which the apostles laid the great stress of their cause.

It is very true, that many curious and subtle questions in pneumatology, metaphysics, and ethics, might have been connected with some articles which the apostles taught, and a whole life might have been spent in canvassing all that a disputatious caviller might have objected. It was indeed beneath the dignity of an apostle's character, and inconsistent with his important work, to unravel all these cobwebs, thread by thread. Yet God was pleased to furnish them with the proper and rational means of sweeping them away, as it were, at once. Inspiration could, no doubt, have furnished them for a minute discussion of every artful sophism, and have taught them to range metaphysical arguments with an accuracy far exceeding that of Aristotle: but the generality of mankind was not capable of entering into such curiosities; and therefore it was an instance of great wisdom and goodness in the great Author of our religion, to furnish them with a much nobler kind of arguments, equally convincing to all candid and upright minds, which might soon be set in a very strong and easy light. And accordingly they insisted upon these.—They asserted, that God, having sent Christ into the world to be a divine teacher, raised him from the dead, after he had been cruelly slain by wicked and incorrigible men; that, quickly after this, he received him into heaven, from whence he had sent down upon them an extraordinary divine influence, to instruct them in the truth, and to enable them to preach it to the world in a very convincing manner: in consequence of which men were no longer under the necessity of investigating divine truths by the slow progress of philosophical argumentation; but were to come, with humble simplicity of soul, to hear and receive what God by them taught concerning himself, and his Son, and the way of obtaining final and eternal happiness

They never expected that so important and comprehensive an assertion should be taken on the credit of their own word; but to show, that God was indeed with them, and that he himself taught mankind by them, they wrought such miracles as sensibly demonstrated his extraordinary presence and agency. And that this might appear a scheme long since formed in the divine mind, and intimated to men long before it opened upon them, they produced passages in the ancient and sacred books of the Jews, in which their prophets had plainly described this Jesus as the Messiah, and marked out various particulars, which had an evident accomplishment in him; waving many other predictions, which could not so easily be ascertained and illustrated at that time, though future ages and occurrences have made them very considerable to us.—The apostles also urged, or frequently referred to, the excellent tendency of their doctrine to promote real virtue and goodness in the world, and the happy influence it had on those who sincerely entertained it, which made the acceptance or rejection of it a test of characters; as they often intimate, and sometimes expressly assert, that it was.* And from all these things, which were plain and evident, they most rationally inferred the obligation which their hearers were under, to submit themselves to those doctrines, laws, and institutions of Christ, which they, as his authorized messengers, brought them, and to adhere to his cause whatever it might cost them. And all this they confirmed by communicating to great numbers of their new converts different gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost, that produced sensible effects; which might also tend to convince others, that the doctrine they had received was supernatural and divine.

These particulars constituted what one may call the apostolic demonstration; and they allowed their hearers a competent time to examine it. It is true indeed, the time and labour of these holy men were of too great importance to permit them to make a long stay in places, where the inhabitants would not so much as receive them, nor give them a hearing, nor would the mild and peaceful genius of their religion allow them to endeavour, even by miracle, to force their continuance in any place, from which the magistrates and people joined to expel them. In cases of this nature alone, they were directed to quit them, with that striking circumstance, which you so much misrepresent, of shaking off the dust of their feet, in token of their looking on such despisers as devoted to certain destruction. But yet in other places, where any of their hearers desired their stay, and the rulers permitted it, they abode awhile with them; and if we may judge of the conduct of others by that of the apostle Paul, who seems one of the most active and itinerant of them all, that stay sometimes extended to months, and sometimes to years. During this time they were, so far as we can learn by the New Testament, willing to dispute publicly with all opposers, and to answer any objections which could be urged against the truth of their doctrine, and the authority of their mission, whether by Jews or Gentiles. And if, which we have no reason to imagine a common case, they sometimes cut short the debate, by inflicting on perverse opponents miraculous judgments, those punishments carried a rational conviction of the authority of the apostles: but I recollect no instance of a miracle of this kind on such an occasion, but that of Elymas the Jewish sorcerer, who probably opposed the gospel, either by lying wonders, or by misrepresentations of the Old Testament, of which a Roman governor could not easily judge: on either of which suppositions, there would be a remarkable propriety in this extraordinary step; in which instance, by the way, great gentleness was intermixed with the apparent severity, as it was only for a season he was deprived of his sight.

If in cases and with proofs like these, thousands were converted at a single lecture, as you express it, it is certainly to be ascribed to the validity of their arguments, in concurrence with the operation of God's Spirit, to subdue their prejudices, and make them willing, cordially to embrace, and courageously to confess, the truth; of which, many who did not profess it, were no doubt in their consciences inwardly convinced. Yet I cannot think after all, that its success on the day of Pentecost, where so many peculiar circumstances concurred, is to be looked upon as a specimen of the rapidity with which it commonly prevailed.

This, Sir, appears to me a just representation of the case: that which you have been pleased to make, in the pages last referred to, is very different; and I apprehend, it will be easy to show, there are two material errors which attend it. It supposes the case to be determined much more difficult than it really was, and the assent universally required much more immediate. And as these two palpable fallacies run through several other passages of your book, I must take the liberty to examine them a little more particularly.

You represent the question concerning the truth of Christianity, as taught by the apostles, to have been much more difficult than it really was. "Eternal relations, moral differences of things, and a precise delineation of the religion of nature and its obligations, were all" not only material, but (as you say in p. 42) "indispensable, articles to be treated of in the way, and inculcated as the foundation of such a superstructure." Now here I would first ob-

* Compare Rom. i. 16—18. v. 12—20. viii. 3. xi. 22. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 12. iv. 2. Gal. iv. 19. 1 Pet. i. 10—12. v. 12. 2 Pet. i. 19—21. 1 John ii. 11. iii. 10. iv. 16. 1 Thess. i. 4—10. v. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 10. 1 Tim. i. 11. vi. 3—11. 1 Pet. i. 11. 2 Pet. i. 3—11. 1 John i. 1—3. ii. 7. iii. 2. 3. 14. 23. iv. 2. 20. 21. v. 1—5. 10. 13. 2 John 9. 3 John 4.

serve, that so far as the Jews were concerned in this matter, a great part of these preliminary controversies was quite superseded. They already believed, that there was one God, the supreme Lord of all, whose law required universal virtue, and had denounced an awful curse against every instance of wilful and presumptuous disobedience: they likewise believed, that in various preceding ages this God had raised up prophets, with miraculous powers, first to introduce, and afterwards to confirm, the religion which they professed: and they were also fully persuaded, that the Messiah was to appear about that time, to establish the cause of God and of righteousness in the world. To such the apostles presented themselves as messengers from the God of their fathers; turned them to passages of their own sacred books, in which the sufferings as well as the triumphs of the Messiah were evidently foretold; and showed them, by the account they gave of Christ, confirmed by the miracles which they wrought in his name, that they must submit to his authority, on the very same principles on which that of Moses was acknowledged by them; and that they must hearken to him, or, according to the testimony of Moses himself, must expect to be cut off from among the people.

Where idolatrous Gentiles were to be addressed to, there was indeed a great difficulty; yet it was by no means equal to what you, Sir, would represent. Bad as they were, they had not lost all distinction between virtue and vice, nor all notion of a supreme Governor of the world. The popular religion received among them was so flagrantly absurd, as to admit of being easily exposed. And when they heard that those vices, which, contrary to the light of their own consciences, they indulged themselves in, exposed them to the divine displeasure; and saw such sensible proofs of his presence and power, as the miracles of the apostles afforded, proofs so unparalleled and so striking; that principle of conscience which God had implanted in their natures, and to which their own writers bear an abundant testimony, would probably be alarmed: and there could be no need of a long deduction of philosophical arguments to convince those of them, who had not imbibed philosophical prejudices, or were not incorrigibly hardened in their immoralities, that such kind of teachers deserved to be attentively heard. They would evidently see, that God was with them, a God far superior to, and quite different from, those indolent inactive deities which they had been taught to adore. And it needs no great labour to convince a man's understanding, that when the Lord of nature speaks, he should hear and obey.* In consequence of this, as soon as the Gentiles heard one discourse of the apostles, and as soon as they saw a single miracle, or heard the probable report of it, they had reason to pause, and to set themselves seriously to inquire into this new doctrine: and if they did so, then supposing as we must here suppose, that facts were as the New Testament represents, it is impossible but they must have stronger reasons to receive the gospel, than they could have to reject it. Ignorant as they were of the true principles of natural religion, they could not be able at first to discern the force of that argument for the truth of Christianity, which arises from its agreement with those principles: but that it was proposed and attested by him, who evidently appeared to be the great Sovereign of the world, they might immediately see, by those instances, in which the stable laws of nature were controlled in subserviency to it. And they must also see, as soon as they heard the plan, that it was admirably calculated, by strong motives before entirely unknown, to make men honest, benevolent, and temperate: virtues, which have always been esteemed among heathens, how little soever they have been practised. And having embraced it, they would come to have juster and more extensive notions of the beauty and glory of its internal evidences, as their experimental acquaintance with it increased, and their understandings improved with their graces.

Thus, I hope, may make it evident, that it was not so difficult a thing, as you suppose, for those to whom the apostles addressed, to enter into some rational proofs of Christianity. I must now add, that the assent which these divine teachers demanded, was not so immediate as you represent it to have been. You say indeed, "There were no concessions of time for doubt or deliberation; one declaration of the terms of the covenant was often thought sufficient; the least standing-off gave up the unbeliever to reprobation;—they must comply without the least hesitation;" and the like. (P. 38, 39.) Now I own, that if frequent positive assertions could pass for proofs, the point would be clearly demonstrated on your side of the question. But I think, the whole history of the Acts, and many things in the Epistles, lead us to consider the matter in a very different light.

The man indeed, who, on viewing such credentials as I have mentioned, and hearing so much of the gospel as in one hour he might learn, should in the force of preconceived prejudices, whether speculative or practical, refuse to give it any further

* Dr. Stebbing, in his late sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, has especially considered the miracles of the Apostles as an application before their hearers, to conduct the apprehend God and dislike [illegible] wisdom. And it is certain they did [illegible]

consideration, and, as some of the wits of Athens did, answer merely with scorn and ridicule, might justly be left to perish in his delusions. And if this were the case universally in any city or town into which the apostles came, (which one would hope it seldom was,) the apostles must of course leave them, and not force themselves on those who rejected their pretensions with disdain. But if others received them, they generally (as I observed before) made some stay at a place; and as they continued to teach and dispute publicly, those who at first derided, might if they pleased hear them again and again: and I can see no argument to prove, that any degree of contempt or opposition, with which any of them had at first rejected the gospel, would seal them up under reprobation, if they afterwards came to a better temper.

If these very men, as well as any others, expressed a desire of being further instructed; if they urged their remaining doubts, not as with a proud disposition to cavil and insult, but as persons that desired further rational satisfaction, that they might act as in the sight of God, and as answerable to him in a point of so great importance; and if they attended these inquiries with prayers for further divine illumination, which both the principles of the Jewish revelation, and of natural religion, might easily have taught them; light would gradually break in upon their minds, and they would know, if they followed on to know the Lord. I challenge you, Sir, to produce any one line in the New Testament, that intimates the apostles would discourage such persons as these; on the contrary, that humanity and gentleness, that meekness and humility, which every where appear in their conduct and writings, and for which they so justly celebrate their great Master, would no doubt teach them to treat such inquirers tenderly and kindly, and to cherish them as hopeful persons, who were not far from the kingdom of God. A little time would probably lead a candid upright mind through its difficulties, amidst so many shining evidences, which must impress and convince, in proportion to the attention with which they were viewed. And if the public concern of the churches did require the apostles, as they possibly might, to quit such modest and humble inquirers as these, before they arrived at full satisfaction; they would, in every place where they had planted a Christian church, leave persons behind them, furnished with miraculous gifts, who might build on the foundation they had laid, and complete the work which they had begun, in such honest and teachable souls.

There might indeed be a third sort of persons, whose state was a medium between that of these, and of the scorners we mentioned before: I mean, such as were indolent about the matter; neither positively persuaded that Christianity was false, nor quite convinced that it was true, nor solicitous to bring their doubts to an issue; but concluding, that whether it were true or false, they might find out a path to happiness without it. This was probably the case of many of them, as it undoubtedly is the case of many in our days. Now such as these were not to be looked upon as fair inquirers, but as triflers in the most serious of all affairs; and as acting the most absurd and inconsistent part: for as Christianity pretended to be a matter of the utmost importance, in neglecting it they acted as if it were assuredly false, while yet they confessed that they knew not but it might be true. A conduct, which was rendered especially inexcusable by that grand apparatus, with which Providence interposed to introduce it, which if it proved any thing at all concerning it, must prove it to be of infinite moment. Persons of the sceptical turn, which you know, Sir, to have been very common among the ancients, might perhaps sometimes amuse themselves with proposing their doubts to Christian teachers, as they came in their way; but it is not to be wondered, if they lived and died in this wavering state, which was indeed a state of folly and of vice, and no doubt ended accordingly. But I cannot find a line in the New Testament, which should lead one to suspect, that they would ever have it to plead before the tribunal of God, that they were condemned for rejecting the gospel, before they had time to look into its proofs, though honestly and seriously disposed to have done it.

I have in the whole course of this argument mentioned miracles, as awakening and convincing proofs of a divine mission, without any particular regard to what you have insinuated to the contrary. (P. 46—50.) But now, Sir, I shall give it such a notice as I think it requires; which will be the less, as you seem to lay but very little stress on it yourself, and write, so far as I can judge by what follows, in a consciousness of the weakness of your own objections. You say, "they were not meant as arguments, but were natural effects of gospel benevolence;—and plead their being used by impostors;—that care was often taken to keep them private;—and that the seeking them was discouraged." All which you would seem to think inconsistent with their being proofs, especially important proofs, of the truth of the revelation. The New Testament, that grand magazine of weapons for the defence of Christianity, furnishes me with such easy answers to all these suggestions, that my only fear is, lest the reader should be wearied with the illustration of things in themselves so plain, as what I have to advance in direct contradiction to all these insinuations of yours.

That the miracles which Christ and his apostles performed, were really intended by him and them, as proofs of a divine mission, is so plain from the

appeals made to them, and the stress laid upon them, that it would be quite superfluous to dilate upon it here, especially after what Bishop Fleetwood, Dr. Chapman, and Mr. Chandler have so judiciously urged on this head. Nor need any reader who has not had the pleasure of an acquaintance with those learned and accurate writers, go any further than the texts I have thrown into the margin to prove it beyond debate.* So that the tendency of your remaining objection must be only to show the argument, which Christ and his apostles most largely insisted upon, to be inconclusive, and the stress laid on it unreasonable. How far the prosecution of this design is consistent with the warm zeal you profess for the gospel, it is not worth while particularly to urge. I cannot see what its greatest enemy could say, more directly tending to subvert it.

You assert, in a manner which I confess surprises me, "that miracles were but the natural effect of their doctrine, instead of any supernatural proof of its veracity." (P. 47.) I acknowledge myself quite at a loss to find out the sense of this extraordinary passage. By a miracle we generally mean a supernatural event: now I cannot conceive, how this should be in any case the natural effect of any doctrine, be it ever so divine, or ever so important. But if there were a doctrine, whose natural effect it was, to endow its professors or teachers with a power of performing such operations as Christ and his apostles did, it would surely be a proof of its veracity convincing beyond all dispute or comparison. However, we know not of any such doctrine; nor can we conceive of any necessary connexion between the knowledge of truth, and a power of such performances. I suppose therefore your meaning must be, that when a person was endowed with these miraculous powers, the exertion of them would be what so benevolent a religion as Christianity would naturally prompt him to, even though he should not intend by it to demonstrate the truth of that doctrine. But when the passage above is thus explained, which I can but guess to be your meaning in it, I would entreat you to show us what inconsistency there is between these two views, that you have so strangely opposed to each other. Would it not be a glorious proof of a divine mission, that God gave to Christ and his apostles a power of exercising their benevolence in so extraordinary a manner! Would not miracles of a benevolent kind appear the most congruous proofs of so benevolent a scheme? And would not miracles intended as proofs of a divine mission be equally an exercise of benevolence: may indeed, would they not be much more eminently so, than if no reference to that mission had been intended? Surely an unprejudiced mind must see the view you are guarding against, to be the crown and glory of the whole. By curing a painful and dangerous disease, by opening the eyes of the blind, and the like, to lead the afflicted creature into the way of truth and duty, and so into salvation; and by his means to instruct every spectator, every one who heard the credible attestation of the fact, must enhance the benefit beyond all expression; extending it to a far greater variety of subjects, and, if it were duly improved, producing in each a far superior degree of happiness, than the cure alone could afford to the person who was the subject of it.

That Christ took care to conceal some of his miracles, is indeed apparent; which, to be sure, was to avoid ostentation, and to prevent the people from rising tumultuously in his favour: and that he silenced the devils who bore witness to him, was an evident instance of his wisdom, to cut off every colour for the malicious and blasphemous charge advanced against him as a confederate with them. But you well know, that many of our Lord's miracles were wrought in a most public manner; some in the streets of Jerusalem, and many more before vast multitudes who were crowding around him, in the fields, and the mountains. This is notorious. And give me leave, Sir, seriously to express my astonishment, how you could venture to say, in the face of such obvious evidence to the contrary, "that our Lord was always remarkably on the reserve in this respect, whenever he happened to be among unbelieving company." (P. 48.) A known falsehood, liable to conviction in the eyes of the whole world, is what I am very unwilling to charge upon a gentleman and a scholar, though ever so unacquainted with his person and character. I will therefore impute this, and some other passages of this kind, to mere inattention and forgetfulness. But permit me, Sir, to say, that you ought to have read the New Testament with more accuracy, and to have fixed the contents of it more deeply in your mind, before you had thrown out so many public reflections upon it. How must it surprise and pain you, to be told from thence, and to see how plainly it is there asserted, that our Lord not only cast out devils before the Pharisees, who charged him as a confederate of Beelzebub with that very miracle before their eyes; but likewise, that the paralytic was healed in Capernaum, while there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, when the power of the Lord was also present to heal several more, and the crowd was so great, that the friends of the paralytic were obliged to take a very peculiar method to get him laid before Jesus! How you could fail to know this, or knowing could forget it, is strange: as also, how it could have escaped your notice or memory, that

* John v. 36, x. 24, 25, 37, 38, xiv. 11, xv. 24. Mark ii. 10, xvi. 20. Matt. xi. 4, 5, 20, 21. Acts ii. 22, x. 38, xiv. 3. Heb. ii. 4.

Lazarus was raised before a great multitude of people, some of which were the friends of the chief priests and Pharisees: or that a few days before our Lord's death, when it was no longer necessary to use such precautions as he had formerly done, the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them; and the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did.

But to dismiss a head on which I could not have wished that you should have given me such advantages, I must just touch upon your other objection against the validity of the argument from miracles, taken from Christ's rebuking those that sought them. In some circumstances, it is evident that he did: but all that we can infer from hence is, that there were some circumstances, in which they were unreasonably demanded. Thus for instance, when he had in the presence of multitudes, (who are, by the way, expressly distinguished from his disciples,) healed the lame, the blind, the dumb, and the maimed, and *many others*, who had been cast down at his feet; and after that, had fed four thousand, with seven loaves, and a few small fishes: we are immediately told that the Pharisees and Sadducees came tempting him, and demanded that he should show them a sign from heaven; thereby insolently taking upon them to prescribe to God himself, what kind of miracles they would have wrought for their conviction. On this he very justly called them a wicked and adulterous generation, and referred them (with greater propriety than most commentators have been aware) to the grand miracle of his resurrection, which was attended with a most illustrious sign from heaven; the descent of an angel, in the sight of the Roman soldiers, who guarded the sepulchre: which they themselves testified to the Jewish rulers, and perhaps to some of these very persons who now presumed on so unreasonable a demand.—He elsewhere blames those, who would not believe unless they *saw* signs and wonders; that is, who would not yield to the most credible testimony of others, though the witnesses were ever so numerous and worthy of belief, unless they had that of their own senses added to the rest.—It is very probable, some very indecent things had been said by his enemies while questioning with his disciples, to occasion such a severe expostulation as that, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? We cannot suppose, from the known candour of our Lord's character, that this was said without some peculiar reason; and as the words refer to much condescension and long-suffering formerly used, in giving them much ampler satisfaction than they could strictly have demanded, so we see, that whatever insulting airs any of his enemies might have put on, when they found his disciples baffled by so stubborn a dæmon, Jesus rebuked him with an air of irresistible authority, and immediately cured the child in their presence, and that of all the multitude.

Now, when these facts are set in this just and easy light, I leave it, Sir, to your invention, fertile as it seems, to show how it follows as a conclusion from these premises, that our Lord judged miracles not to be proper proofs of a divine mission, and did not perform his miracles as such proofs. I shall only add, that as God never intended every individual person should be an eye-witness to miraculous operations, it seems an amiable instance of wisdom and goodness in such cases as these we have examined, as well as in that of Thomas, to check the petulancy of such, as in those days would not yield to any testimony, but that of their own senses, on such an occasion.

All that remains to be examined under this class of objections, is "what you say concerning the possibility of miracles being used by impostors." (P. 46.) This is indeed an important topic, and has been handled with that accuracy which it deserves by those who have professedly written upon it. Some persons of great eminence in the learned and Christian world have so very lately examined it, that it is quite unnecessary for me to resume the controversy here: and you touch but slightly upon it, conscious as it seems, that after what they have said, it deserves little stress. I shall, therefore, answer, in almost as few lines as your own, only saying,—that I see no reason to believe, that the phrase "lying wonders" in Scripture signifies, as you in your objections suppose, true miracles to confirm a lie;—and that the patrons of Christianity challenge all its enemies to produce any instance of miracles wrought expressly to confirm a falsehood, which have not been immediately, and on the very spot, opposed by superior miracles on the side of truth; and these attended with such visible degrees of superiority, as to render the triumph of truth more sensible, and more illustrious, than, in those instances, it could have been without such opposition.

What follows in your 51st page, concerning the degree in which antiquity impairs the weight of miracles said to have been wrought many ages ago, has in part been obviated already; and has been so often urged by the enemies of revelation, and so largely considered by its learned defenders, that I think myself fairly dispensed with from insisting further upon it here. I shall only add, that it must be a sensible pleasure to those that wish well to Christianity, to see its opposers reduced to the wretched necessity of attacking it with such arguments, as, if they will prove any thing against it, will also prove that we can have no rational evidence of any thing that was done before we were born; or indeed of any thing which we have not seen with our own eyes: an absurdity, which I

suppose no man living can practise upon his own understanding, so far as deliberately to admit it, though infidelity can sometimes remove its mountains, and bury them in the depths of the sea.

But there is another very different medium, by which you endeavour to prove that Christianity is not founded on argument, i. e. that we are not to expect rational proof of it; which will require a larger and more particular discussion: I mean, "that we are required to believe it on so high a penalty." It seems, methinks, at the first proposal, that this medium is of a very extraordinary nature. One would imagine the argument lay the contrary way: that if God required our assent to it on pain of eternal ruin and condemnation, he must have made the evidences of it very clear and strong, and such as every upright mind must be able to see the force of, on a diligent inquiry, which such minds will not fail to make. However you, Sir, are pleased to insist upon it in a contrary light, and to argue from it, that something more convincing than any argument, even an immediate revelation, must be necessary to justify such a demand.

The terms in which you urge this consideration are so triumphant, that they rise even to insult. "With what regard, with what patience rather, can one," who expects reason for his faith, "be supposed to attend to questions propounded to him, under the restraints of threats and authority? to be talked to of danger in his decisions, and have the rod held out with the lesson? to have propositions tendered to his reason with penalties annexed?—He disdains, with all justice, an attempt equally weak and unjust, of frighting him into a compliance out of his power." (P. 8, 9.) It would be tedious to repeat a great deal more which you say in the same strain; in which I heartily wish, that the ignorance which you seem to discover in the state of the question, may another day be allowed as some excuse for the rashness and arrogance of the language in which you treat it; which will not universally pass for demonstration, though some may be weak enough to be carried away with the torrent.

I know indeed, that the sentence which the gospel pronounces against unbelievers has been thought by many a considerable objection against the Christian scheme; on which account I the rather take this opportunity of opening my sentiments upon it, especially as I apprehend it has often, on one side or the other, been set in a very wrong point of light.

Now here I shall not attempt to solve the supposed difficulty by pleading, that the denunciation only refers to the case of those, who should refuse to admit the testimony of the apostles, confirmed by miraculous works of which they were themselves eye-witnesses. The answer would not be allowed by you, since your objection lies against the demand in any circumstance of evidence: nor do I indeed think the foundation of the solution just and true; since whatever reference one text in question* might have to the testimony immediately borne by the apostles, there are many others which cannot be so evaded. I therefore encounter the objection in all its force, allowing that every one who finally rejects Christianity is in a state of condemnation, and that there remains for him only a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.† But I conclude, on the principles of common equity, that this only extends to those who have capacities and opportunities of inquiring into its evidences; since ignorance absolutely unavoidable is a plea so considerable, that it must have its weight before a wise and righteous God. In the instance of idiocy and lunacy, all the world allows it; and as the only reason of that seems to be, that ignorance is then unavoidable, wherever it is so, it must certainly, on the like principles, be allowed. But with these limitations I freely declare, that the sentence which the gospel passes on unbelievers, is so far from appearing any objection against Christianity, that I apprehend it greatly increases its internal evidence, when taken in conjunction with the rest of the scheme; though considered alone, it would to be sure be very absurd, to pretend it to be any proof at all.

For the illustration of this, I must first remove one mistake, which seems to me a source of perpetual confusion on this head, and on which most of the confident things which you have ventured to say on this awful subject depend, and with which they fall to the ground; I mean, that an assent to the truth of Christianity is the main thing intended by the word *faith*, and required under so high a penalty. On the contrary, nothing is more evident to me, than that (as I have largely shown elsewhere,) faith in such passages of the New Testament as are here in question is considered as a practical thing, which includes in it, what the word exactly expresses, an act of trust, or committing the soul to Christ, to be, under his influence and care, formed for happiness, and conducted to it, according to the method of salvation exhibited in the gospel.

It is true, indeed, a persuasion of the speculative truth of Christianity must be the foundation of such a faith, but it is far from being the only, or indeed the primary, property of it; nor is it that, which is chiefly referred to in these passages in question. I readily agree with you, that such an assent of the understanding, simply considered, could not, without great absurdity, have been demanded under so high a penalty, or indeed under any penalty at all.

* Mark xvi. 16. † Heb. x. 26, 27.

and this is all that your arguments and defiances amount to. But if provision be made, that (excepting as above, all to whom the gospel comes, shall on due consideration see irresistible evidence to determine that assent, they may justly be threatened with fatal consequences as unbelievers, whether that speculative assent be or be not produced. Since it will appear, on that supposition, they have either on the one hand, notwithstanding fair and solemn warning, criminally omitted taking those measures which would infallibly and necessarily have produced a conviction of the truth; or on the other hand, being convinced of it, have acted contrary to what they knew in their own consciences that reason and duty required.

Taking the matter in this view, it may perhaps seem so clear, that some of my readers may wonder I should pursue it any further: yet as you lay so great a stress on this supposed difficulty, and as so many other persons have seemed shocked with it, and some, (as I have been informed,) have carried it so far as to reject Christianity, because they were threatened with damnation if they did not believe it, I will more particularly open to you that view of things, which convinces me that these damnatory sentences increase, rather than weaken, the internal evidence of that gospel to which they are annexed. And here I shall more particularly show, first,—that there is not in the general any absurdity, in supposing such a sentence may attend a revelation from God; and then,—that there is a peculiar propriety in it, when connected with such a sort of revelation as Christianity in other respects appears to be.

For the illustration of the first of these, I would desire you, Sir, calmly to consider, whether it be in the nature of things absolutely impossible, that an infinitely wise God should contrive such evidence of the truth of a revelation, as should be sufficient to convince every honest inquirer, who is capable of exercising reason in the common affairs of life; and such only as are here in question. Can a mathematician invent a demonstration, which almost every one of a common genius shall with due application infallibly understand; and cannot the great Former of the human spirit find out a way of effecting the like, by a proof of another kind? Or if no one argument which omniscience could furnish out, can have such a universal effect, (which I think it would be great petulancy and folly to assert,) could not this wise and glorious Being exhibit a complication of arguments so adjusted, that some one of them at least should be suited to strike every such inquirer, and to convince him? Nay, to bring the matter yet lower, when a strong complication of various arguments is provided, it is absolutely impossible, that an all-comprehending mind should contrive a scheme of providence, in consequence of which every sincere and honest inquirer should, either by some external occurrence, (as meeting with a book, or friend, in some critical moment of doubt or danger,) or by some inward impression, (his thoughts being fixed and guided, as it seems to him, in a natural way, and without any particular revelation,) be led into such views of the evidence as shall engage his assent; while at the same time a mind under the strong force of vicious prejudices, shall be left to harden itself against opening proofs, to turn away from the increasing light, and to aggravate trifling objections, till it utterly rejects a most salutary scheme. I ask you, Sir, and I ask every reader, whether you, or he, will venture so to limit an all-wise and almighty Being, as to say, that it is absolutely impossible he should adjust matters, as on any one of the three former suppositions? But if you cannot say, and prove it to be so, then be pleased with me to reflect on the consequence of supposing any one of these to be a possible case.

On such a supposition, I would ask you, whether it would not be just with God to condemn those who should reject a revelation attended with evidence so adjusted and supported? that is, on this hypothesis, to condemn those who through vicious prejudices should refuse an upright and candid inquiry into the truth, and perhaps into the evidence of it, attended with some circumstances which tend powerfully to strike the mind, and awaken examination and attention? I see not, how the justice of this could be denied on any principle, which will not infer, that God cannot punish any vice of a sinner's mind, or any irregularity of his life, and will consequently overthrow natural religion.

Let us then imagine, in hypothesis at least, (since it appears no impossibility,) the evidence adjusted as above, and the resolution of punishing the infidel formed; I would further ask, whether in such a circumstance it was, or could be, unworthy the divine Being to declare such a purpose and resolution? Some valuable ends, which might be answered by such a declaration, are obvious enough. It could not indeed convince any man's understanding, that the doctrine so enforced was true; and I do not know that any one was ever weak enough to pretend it: but it might in some degree awaken the attention of an inquirer; since though he could not believe the threatening till he discerned the evidence of that revelation of which it makes a part, yet he would easily see, that if it should indeed prove true, it must be a truth of vast importance; and would also see, that whatever degrees of probability appeared to be in its favour when first proposed, there must be equal degrees of probability that he would be miserable in consequence of rejecting it. Besides, this declaration might excite the persons employed to publish the

revelation of which it made a part, to act with greater ardour and spirit, and to suffer with greater courage and resolution, when they knew that the happiness of mankind was so intimately concerned in it. It might also awaken in all who embraced this revelation, a concern to keep it pure and unmingled with any thing, which by a wrong association of ideas might occasion a prejudice against it, whether from the absurdity of its supposed doctrines, or the immorality of those who received and maintained it; since such prejudices might prove so fatal. Now each of these appears to me a very important end, of which many objectors against this part of Christianity seem to be very little apprized.*

On the other hand, Sir, if no such threatenings were annexed, and the purpose of God to execute his deserved pleasure on the rejecters of this revelation should at length take place, would not the unhappy creature have room to make some such reflection as this, when he was plunging into a final destruction? "Why was I not admonished of the danger of unbelief in such a case as this? When so many other things were declared, and so many other messages sent, why was not this one article added, by the messengers who brought the rest?" Now though conscience might tell such a wretch, that every vicious prejudice was penal, and that if mercy were indeed offered and slighted, the consequence must be dangerous and fatal; yet it seems congruous to the divine wisdom and goodness, to foreclose such a plea as this, even in the mouth of a perishing sinner.

On this view I hope it will appear not incredible in hypothesis and speculation, that a revelation might come from God, the evidence of which should be so adjusted, that all who have an opportunity of examining into it might be required to receive and submit to it, on pain of God's highest displeasure; though you, Sir, have been pleased to paint this as a supposition in itself flagrantly absurd. Nay, I apprehend, it must follow from these principles, that the very supposition of a revelation in general implies, on the one hand, sufficiency of evidence to every candid inquirer; and on the other, certain divine displeasure against the rejecters of it, which if not expressly declared, will at least be implied.

But how far this is from a real absurdity, may further appear by viewing the matter in an opposite light. Let me imagine, a man should profess to bring me a divine revelation with great solemnity; and yet at the same time should declare, that I might reject it without any danger. I know not how others might judge, but I am sure this would appear to me so incoherent, that I should hardly give myself the trouble of inquiring into his credentials, unless some very striking circumstance appeared at the first view. For it would be natural to conclude, it may be true, or it may be false. And if it be true, by the confession of the messenger I have no great concern in it; I may be happy without paying any regard to it. It is therefore comparatively a trifling concern, and by consequence so much less likely to be the subject of a divine interposition.

Take it therefore in any light, and it appears to me, that an obligation on some high penalty to inquire into credentials, and by consequence to receive and obey the command, is in the nature and reason of things to be supposed as the counterpart of the honour of receiving a message from God; and, as the law speaks, *the end runs where it comes to a man*, (if I may be allowed the expression,) with this awful encumbrance, "He must *expect it at his peril*." And agreeably to this remark, we always find, so far as I can recollect, through the whole series of the Old Testament, that where the message sent from God was disregarded, some signal punishment was inflicted on the person to whom it was addressed, which I mention, not as arguing from it, but as a circumstance illustrating in one view the threatenings above, and in another receiving illustration from them.

These, Sir, are the principles, on which I said above, that threatenings against those who should disbelieve and reject a revelation in question, are so far from being any arguments against its being reasonable and divine, as some have vainly pretended, that on the contrary, they are so suitable

* Agreeable to what I have said above, of the various use of such threatenings, it may be observed, that many of those passages of the New Testament which express the divine purpose of punishing the rejecters of Christianity, are not immediately addressed to unbelievers, (from whom they are at other times, as was very reasonable, solemnly warned;) but to those who were to be preachers of the gospel, whom therefore if any such read this passage, I presume will endeavour in the bowels of Christ seriously to consider them. Thus it is a fearful charge to the twelve apostles, (Matt. x. 15.) and to the seventy disciples, (Luke x. 12.) that our Lord represents to believers as entirely as would be so dreadful a destruction, that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. And it was to the apostles also, that, when risen from the dead, he says, that after remission to go and preach the gospel to every creature, (Mark xvi. 16.) He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, but HE THAT IS UNBELIEVER NOT, SHALL BE DAMNED. Many passages of the same purport in the Epistles, are addressed to Christians as themselves in danger from their awakening their utmost attention to the case of those wretched creatures who were in so extreme danger. Compare 2 Thess. i. 7—9. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. and Jude ver. 23.

I must also take the liberty to add, that there appears to me a very beautiful propriety in the manner of our Lord's expressing several of these denunciations, which is not in a direct but an oblique form; which particularly became that gracious Messenger of the most free love, who sought the world, not to condemn, but to save it. Thus the awful doom of Capernaum and Bethsaida is addressed to Christ, not when speaking to them, but when distant from them, in the form of a lamentation over them. Matt. xi. 20—24. So likewise is Jerusalem lamented over, as abandoned to destruction for the murderous and perverse unbelief, over which Christ was at the same time weeping. Luke xix. 41, &c. and other words, when such expressions, and the like, as from mount Olivet, Luke xxiii. 42. "Now that all these things were to be predicted in broken language, and with a flow of tears, expressing on the one hand the benevolence of our Lord's temper, and engaged him to mourn over the direful consequences which sinners could bring on themselves; and on the other, the inevitable certainty and unutterable terror of that destruction which was coming upon them. It is one instance among a thousand, of that great wisdom which runs through all our Lord's behaviour, and appears in almost every thing, that his cause should meet with no unnecessary prejudice among many who set up for critics in the Christian writings, and be favoured with the decorum, and the beauty, of a dress. I have known a reserved hearer touched, and even charmed, with the tenderness which a faithful friend shown in passing a capital sentence upon him: and I wonder it should not be the case here.

to a wisely-concerted scheme, that the omission of them would rather be an objection against a pretended revelation, than any argument in its favour.

I shall beg leave, Sir, to detain you a little longer on this head, while I attempt to show that these reasonings, which appear of general force, have a peculiar and singular weight when applied to Christianity: which will appear from considering the degrees of evidence to which it pretends, and several other circumstances attending the scheme itself, and the manner in which it was introduced into the world.

I have discoursed at large already on the kind of evidence with which Christianity was attended, during the ministry of Christ and his apostles, and have referred to several passages in which the rejection of it is charged on such vicious prejudices, as must render men highly criminal before God; and some other passages to the same purpose may be seen in the margin.* I shall only add here, that I apprehend, our blessed Lord (who said nothing in vain, and in whose short sentences there is often a weight far beyond what the generality of his enemies, or his followers, have considered) seems expressly to have asserted the most extraordinary of all the suppositions made above to be fact; I mean, that of a divine superintendency over every well disposed mind, to lead it into the evidences of the truth of his doctrine. And this, you will observe, he hath spoken in terms suiting not only the period of his own, or the apostles' ministry, but future ages too. You will perhaps, from this general hint, recollect that important passage;† If any man will do his will, i. e. the will of my Father, εαν τις θελη ποιειν, "if he be resolutely determined upon it," (as I have elsewhere observed the phrase plainly signifies,‡) he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. And the prophet Isaiah seems long before to have represented the matter much in the same view, though, according to his manner, in more figurative terms; when he says, An high-way shall be there; and it shall be called the WAY OF HOLINESS;—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

I might also show at large, if I were not afraid of running out this letter to too great a length, that not only those degrees of evidence to which Christianity pretends, but also several other circumstances attending the scheme itself, and the manner in which it was introduced into the world, render the threatenings annexed peculiarly suitable to it, beyond the degrees in which they might, on the principles above, have suited a revelation in these respects different from the gospel.

It is very material for the illustration of this point, to recollect that the Christian scheme supposes mankind under guilt, and obnoxious on account of it to misery, to dreadful final misery; and accordingly makes its proposals not only under the notion of a benefit, but of a remedy; of a remedy without which men were perishing. Now the necessary consequence of this must be the death and destruction of those who reject it. In this view the sacred writers with great propriety sometimes place it. God sent his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish; and therefore he that believeth not on him, is condemned already, because he hath not believed:—it plainly appears from his unbelief, that he is actually under sentence; and as it follows afterwards, The wrath of God, that wrath from which he might otherwise have been saved and rescued, abideth on him. And to this purpose Christ declares elsewhere, If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins; shall perish with the guilt of all those transgressions on your heads, from which I was so sincerely willing to have delivered you.

The threatenings in question are also congruous to the importance of those blessings, which are offered to all who embrace and obey the gospel. These are well known in speculation; but were they duly considered, they would appear to have much greater weight than many are aware. A full pardon of all the most aggravated sins which the true penitent has ever committed; the communication of divine influences, to enable us to conquer the power of sin to which we were enslaved, and to fit us for happiness present and future; an admission into the family of God, and a participation of all the joys and privileges of his children; the reception of our separate spirits into the presence of God, and to the most glorious society, enjoyments, and services there; and at length, the resurrection of our bodies, and the eternal happiness of the whole man: such favours offered to condemned sinners by the offended Majesty of heaven and earth, must certainly have drawn after them severe punishments on the presumptuous creatures by whom they were slighted and despised, had they been notified and proposed by the meanest inhabitant of the celestial world, or even of our own, as an ambassador from God. But when to all this it is added, that a person so glorious, so excellent, and so divine, as the Son of God himself, his only-begotten Son, became the messenger of his Father's love and grace to us; and that he might testify it in a more effectual manner, became also, for many succeeding years, an inhabitant of our low world; and at length submitted to such extreme evils, even to death itself, to a death attended with such astonishing circumstances of ignominy and torture, for this great reason among others, that he might affect our minds with powerful sentiments of religious

* Acts xiii. 46. xviii. 6. Rom. ii. 8, 9. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 1 Thess. ii. 14-16. 2 Thess. i. 6-9. ii. 10-12. Heb. iii. 7-14. vi. 7, 8. 1 John v. 10.

† John vii. 17.

‡ See Family Expositor, vol. ii. p. 47.

veneration, of gratitude, and love; who can wonder, if there be an awful counterpart to all these miracles of condescension and mercy? Who can wonder, if the contempt of such a gospel, so circumstantiated, and so sealed, be penal in proportion to the degree in which it is criminal? Can it possibly be imagined, that the Son of God should become incarnate, and bleed, and die; and that his Spirit should afterwards be sent down from heaven, with all that splendid apparatus of various languages instantaneously taught, and miraculous powers every where exerted; and all this to make way for a discovery, which those to whom it was sent might trample upon with impunity? that they might reject and deride it themselves, and perhaps make it almost the only serious business of their lives, to expose it to universal contempt; and yet, though living and dying impenitent, partake in the day of final retribution, with that Redeemer whom they have rejected and opposed, in the joys he will bestow on his faithful servants, and which he will share with them? This, Sir, is such a shocking incongruity even in hypothesis, that you yourself could not forbear exploding it; and I think you have done it with great propriety and spirit. (P. 45.) It is indeed as you represent it: The least intimation of mercy to the finally unbelieving and impenitent would have been a blemish on the whole scheme, and a kind of toleration for that neglect, which in such a case it would probably have met with in the world. Whereas it is now with the most becoming majesty, that such a dispensation of wonders terminates in a day, when this humbled and dishonoured Saviour shall appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; who shall therefore be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Permit me only to touch on one consideration more, which illustrates the congruity of these denunciations, as a part of the gospel scheme; and that is, the difficulties through which that scheme was to struggle in its early infancy. It was wisely ordered by Providence for the establishment and edification of succeeding ages, that the first professors of Christianity should encounter great hardships and sufferings on account of it; and it would be easy to show, that a scheme calculated for universal reformation must expose to such trials, when it made its entrance into so degenerate a world. Now in this view there was an evident necessity, that the fear of him, who after he had killed could cast both soul and body into hell, should be opposed to the threats of cruel persecutors. It was necessary, that the danger of rejecting, deserting, or even dissembling, the faith, should be plainly and affectionately represented; otherwise men would have held themselves fairly dispensed with from inquiring and looking into a scheme, so likely to prove destructive to their fortunes, and even to their lives, in this world, and by its own confession, by no means necessary to avoid greater evils in another.

From all these reasonings it appears to me undeniably evident, that as some severe threatenings to those who reject it must probably in any case attend a divine revelation; so these threatenings are so evidently congruous to the peculiar nature, design, and circumstances of Christianity, that had they not made a part of it, the absence of them would have been a great diminution to its internal evidence, and probably an effectual bar to its propagation in the world.

I am sensible, Sir, the grand objection against all these reasonings is taken, from the appearance of a virtuous and amiable disposition in some who disbelieve the gospel, and from the possibility that a wrong association of ideas in others, leading them to conclude those things to be contained in the Christian revelation which do not indeed belong to it, may engage some to reject the whole from the apparent absurdity which they see in these spurious, though solemn, additions to it; as for instance, in those vast tracts of land, in which transubstantiation and image worship are represented, not merely as consistent with Christianity, but as in a manner essential to it, by those who are its established teachers, and may therefore be presumed best to understand it.

As for the latter of these cases, it must be considered how far the person so mistaken in the idea he has formed of Christianity has fallen into that mistake necessarily, and how far it may be charged on his own negligence or mismanagement. It is possible, that in some countries Christianity may be so misrepresented, and the common people may be so utterly incapable of coming at its true contents, that they may be looked upon as persons unavoidably ignorant of it; and consequently are not included in the number of those, whose case we are now considering. But if any may have recourse to the Scriptures, and will not give themselves the trouble of searching them, to see whether these supposed absurd doctrines are really contained in them, or no, they must stand by the consequences of their indolence and rashness: and I fear, the nobility and gentry in popish countries, (who are the persons among whom deism probably prevails most,) are generally in this case. Such might easily have discovered so much good in Christianity, and so many arguments in its favour, as might have proved it worth their while to have read over the New Testament again and again, with an honest desire of knowing what are indeed the doctrines and precepts contained in it. I question not, but such an employment would have been a much more rational and useful way of spending time, than what

the persons in question have often preferred to it; and it is not so obscure, as to leave a candid reader in such a case capable of imagining it teaches, or requires, any thing absurd.

As for the supposed virtues of some who know the gospel and reject it, I fear, Sir, when they come to be tried by the great standard of true excellence in character, they will be found exceedingly deficient. Virtue is a word of a very dubious signification; and, as it is generally used, that man is denominated virtuous, who is temperate, just, and humane, in his conduct, be he never so destitute of religion. Now with regard to such persons it is evident, that a wise and righteous God will never treat them as if they had been debauched, unjust, and inhumane. Nevertheless, if such as these live without God in the world; if they cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God; if (which the very fact of their rejecting Christianity proves) they will not set themselves to inquire diligently and impartially into the intimations of the Divine Will; if they are unhumbled before God for the various transgressions of their lives, and so proudly conceited of their own reasonings, that they will set their preconceived opinions on particular subjects against all the weight of internal and external evidence attending the Christian revelation, when contradicting those opinions; I cannot see on what ground they can complain, if they be finally treated as persons, who, while they have reverenced men, have forgotten God. Nor can it be imagined, that, under the load of so much guilt, they will have any claim to future rewards, merely because they have had sense and good nature enough, to judge rightly concerning what would generally be the best interests and enjoyments of human life, even if there were no Deity; and so have chosen to live like men rather than brutes, so far as sobriety and mutual kindness are in question.

Had the best of men a suitable and continual sense of the majesty and purity of the divine nature, and of that love, duty, and zeal, which a reasonable creature owes to its Creator, they would, with all their human and social virtues about them, fall down into the dust before God, and say, Enter not into judgment with thy servants, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified! and they would feel a load of guilt pressing on their consciences, and engaging them most attentively to listen to a scheme by which free and full pardon might be expected, in a way most honourable to the rights of the divine government. And if no admonitions can bring those who are now insensible to such a temper, we can only lament, that their conviction is delayed to so late, and probably to so fatal, a day.

But if there be any where in a Christian and protestant nation, a man not yet thoroughly convinced of Christianity, who, on the principles of natural religion, reverences and loves the great Author of his being; who pours out his soul before him in the exercise of public and private devotion; who humbly traces every intimation of his will which he has already received, that he may yield a constant and uniform obedience to it; and seeks illumination from the great Father of lights for the further discovery of it: if there be a person, who though yet in the state of hesitation concerning the divine authority of the Scriptures, will diligently search them, not with a view to cavil and object, but honestly to see what is the genius and design of them, and will also read and consult the ablest defenders of Christianity, in order to gain a fuller information in its evidences; I will venture to pronounce, that such a man is not far from the kingdom of God, and doubt not, but that according to the declaration of our faithful Saviour, he will ere long know that the doctrine is of God. I cannot believe that such a one ever died an infidel; because I have abundantly stronger evidence that Christianity is true, than I have of the virtue of any one who died denying it. But you well know, Sir, that the generality of our deists are quite out of the present question, being most of them such as a Roman censor would not have borne in any of the highest ranks of their citizens, how eagerly soever any may plead for their admission into the New Jerusalem, the presence of God, and the mansions of the blessed.

Nevertheless, it is possible some may object with regard to the person whom we described above, as making so hopeful a progress towards embracing the gospel, what will he be the better after all, when it is embraced? What can the single circumstance of believing Christianity to be true effect towards recommending a man to the divine favour, who is already supposed not only temperate, just, and benevolent, but devout too? This is a question which I have sometimes heard advanced, though I do not recollect that you mention it; but I wonder it should enter into any mind, who knows what the faith which constitutes a man a real Christian is, according to the account given of it above, agreeable to the whole tenor of the New Testament: and, by the way, had you, Sir, considered that, you would have found very little room to triumph (as you do, p. 10.) in our being obliged to pray for its increase. Were it merely a speculative assent, your arguments on this head would be as conclusive as they are foreign to the Scripture idea of it; which is a cordial and practical acquiescence in the scheme of salvation by Christ. This, Sir, evidently includes in it a becoming affection towards the Son of God, that illustrious person, whom, venerable and amiable as he is, every infidel must necessarily neglect, and to whom, when once revealed, God may most reasonably require express homage, duty, and subjection, on pain of his highest displeasure. Faith also,

in this view of it, will be the foundation of such deep humiliation before God, of such ardent love to him, and does, in one word, so illustriously ennoble and improve all the other branches of a lovely and virtuous disposition; that surely no one who has either felt its power, or even studied its nature and genuine influence, can long doubt to what purpose it is demanded and insisted upon. And he that has observed the effects it has produced, and the illustrious as well as numerous victories it has gained over the world, beyond what any other principle could ever obtain, would be unable to depreciate it, without greatly debasing the nature and extent of that moral virtue, which he pretends to exalt in preference to it; as I think it were easy to show at large, if the compass of this letter would admit it.

And thus, Sir, I have given you my deliberate thoughts on the reasonableness, justice, and necessity, of the awful sentence which the gospel passes on those who reject it; and whether it may move you to gratitude, to anger, or to scorn, I cannot dismiss the subject without solemnly and earnestly entreating you seriously to reflect upon it, as your own concern, and to ask yourself, as an immortal creature shortly to appear at the tribunal of God, whether you have not reason to humble yourself before him in the review of this, when compared with the manner in which you have ventured to talk on this tremendous subject? Your heart may perhaps be less impressible; but I am sure that, for my own part, were I to think, I will not say as an humble Christian, but as a sober and religious deist in character ought, if Christianity had never been heard of, I would not for the whole world presume to say, as you have in effect frequently done, "that an infinitely wise God could not give a revelation attended with such rational evidence, as should render every man to whom it came* justly obnoxious to high penalties for rejecting it." Nay, I think it would fill me with astonishment and grief, that a mortal man should be found arrogant and petulant enough to limit the Majesty of heaven by such an assertion; and to declare in express words, a disdain at the mention of his lifted rod, when held out over those who should despise his appointed method of pardon and salvation. May the hour never come when this ill-judged bravery shall be lamented amidst inconsolable horrors!

After so copious an examination of this important question, in which I have laboured to give you, and my other readers, all the satisfaction I could, I have not left myself room to mention many other things in your essay, which might admit and require animadversion. Of those yet remaining unhandled, your account of the agency and office of the divine Spirit seems the most considerable. I leave my reader to consult it for himself, as it stands in your 56th and following pages: in which he will find a mixture of truth and falsehood so blended together, as, on the whole, to amount to a scheme apparently contrary to fact; and in theory so wild, that he will not find it easy to believe it could be seriously proposed by any who enjoyed the use of his reason; or that you in particular meant any thing by it, unless it were to expose Christianity, by representing this as its doctrine, and its grand foundation.

You must at least, Sir, add the sanction of your name to your pamphlet, before you will be thought seriously to teach, (as in p. 59.) "that every baptized person is inspired in a moment with an irresistible light from heaven," which yet, according to your 63d page, may be resisted, and thereby make infidelity criminal; "a light by which our faith is completed in an instant, the most perfect and finished creed produced at once, and made self-evident to the mind in which it is lodged, in a way perhaps little differing from intuition itself; such characters being stamped upon the heart, as no misrepresentation can ever possibly intervene to corrupt, no succeeding suggestions of a different style to dispute the preference, or shake its authority in the mind." In one word, "we are" in consequence of this extraordinary operation, (if we are to take the matter as you represent it,) "brought under a monitor and guardian, which does not leave us for a moment to the possibility of error and imposition." These, Sir, are your own words; and if any reader, to whom I am personally a stranger, should question whether any thing so absurd as the last clause is any where in the world to be found, your 60th page will convince him how faithfully they are transcribed.

I apprehend, perhaps with you, that merely to propose this notion, is to confute it. However, for the credit of the Christian world, I am glad to say, it is no very common one, and may, for any thing I at present know, be quite peculiar; whatever unguarded approaches some good men may have made towards it, or whatever airs of infallibility they may have assumed, which, to do you justice, I cannot but imagine you meant by all this gallimatia to expose. It would be an easy matter to vindicate the Scriptures, which you have pressed in to support this strange representation, but every good commentary upon them may furnish the reader with an antidote against such an interpretation, if his own reflections do not (as might reasonably be expected) immediately supersede the necessity of having recourse to any commentary at all. I shall not therefore at present pursue the matter any further; but leave you to be confuted, I will not say by every rational Christian writer on this subject, but even by every other which any good Christian has called

* N. B. I here suppose extraordinary cases allowed for, as above.

into, on this head, or on any other: for every such error as effectually confutes this notion, as a thousand volumes of the strictest argument could do it.

Nevertheless, Sir, if you still continue to urge the matter, and the public seem desirous of it, I may perhaps take this your third general under as particular a consideration as your two former. In the mean time, I am satisfied, that none who knows me will imagine, that I have declined the task from any suspicions which I entertain concerning the reality or importance of the operations of the blessed Spirit on the mind, to enlighten and renew, to sanctify and strengthen, to cheer and to guide, the children of God, and the heirs of glory. I am continually bearing my testimony to this great and weighty truth in my sermons and writings; as I can never expect that any course of preaching or writing can be useful to the souls of men, in which so glorious a doctrine of Christianity is either denied or omitted.

There are many other particulars in your letter, about which I shall have no controversy with you at all, but shall willingly leave those deities to plead, whose altars you have cast down. The imputation of the faith of sureties to the baptized infant;—the necessary connexion between the administration of that rite, and the communication of some extraordinary influences of the Spirit;—the power of the magistrate to determine articles of faith, and to impose forms of worship by sanguinary laws, or laws in any lower degree penal;—the compelling young persons to declare their sentiments on some of the nicest theological controversies, before they can be supposed at all to have examined them,—and frowning severely upon them, as soon as they appear to suspect, what they never had any convincing evidence to engage them to believe:—these, and some other particulars, (which lie between the 95th and 101st page of your book,) I confess you have rallied with a just severity. And I am particularly pleased with the serious air with which the raillery on these heads is carried, even to the defence of fire and faggot in the cause of religion; from which I presume, Sir, you apprehend yourself to be in no danger. It will, no doubt, be of service to those readers, who, without such a key, might, in the simplicity of their hearts, have been led into a wrong judgment of your views, from those airs of devotion and orthodoxy, which you assume in other passages.

A design to overthrow natural religion, as well as revealed; to confound the nature of virtue and vice, and subvert, so far as a mortal can do it, the throne of God among men; to destroy all the foundations of truth, justice, and benevolence, which arise from a persuasion of his divine presence and providence, leaving us to all the absurdities, the temptations, and miseries of atheism, is so black and so horrid an enormity, that I would by no means charge it, by any train of consequences, even on a nameless author. And indeed I will not allow myself so much as to think, that you were capable of setting yourself about it, as our law expresses it in matters of much less importance, "knowingly and with malice forethought." Charity teaches me rather to hope, that it was in mere sport, and wantonness of heart, you have thrown about these firebrands, arrows, and death. But what the sport has been, the weapons themselves shall show: and whatever you meant, I think it my duty, before I conclude, to show, that you have, in fact, laid the foundation of the Temple of Confusion, (if I may be allowed the expression,) and pointed out the way to the utter destruction of religion, in every form, and in every degree. I hope, therefore, Sir, that how ungrateful soever the subject may be, you will give me a patient hearing, while I spend a few moments in the illustration of it; partly lest some unthinking people, dazzled by the sophistry of your boasted arguments, should implicitly follow you, not knowing whither they go; and partly, as I insinuated in the entrance of my former letter, that I apprehended your pamphlet had such a tendency; for I should think I acted unworthy my character as a Christian and a divine, if I left such an insinuation entirely supported. And indeed, Sir, if your pamphlet has those views, which (so far as I can learn) are universally imputed to it, I should hope nothing might be more likely to convince you of the weakness of those arguments, by which you attempt to shake the foundation of Christianity, than to show you, that if they prove any thing, they prove a great deal too much; prove, what I hope you would abhor, as infinitely the most pernicious of all falsehoods.

In order, if possible, to make you sensible of this, give me leave to suppose an atheist, or if that be too great a monster to be supposed, a sceptic, who has, and will have, no fixed sentiments in religion of any kind, addressing himself to you, or to some patron of natural religion, on your own principles, and in many of your own words, to some such purpose as this:

"It is a most absurd thing, so much as to pretend to offer any defence of religion, so far as even to argue the existence of a Deity from the works of nature, or to go about to prove that we lie under any obligations to sobriety, honesty, or mutual kindness. If such disputes as these be allowed, there is no ensuring conviction. (P. 5.) If the motives, even to these virtues, may be examined and considered, they may be innocently rejected too: for who shall ascertain the moment when I am to become virtuous, if I am allowed to examine why I am to be so?' (P. 93.) Your boasted rational evidence of these things is a false, unwarranted notion, without the least ground to support it in nature.

(P. 7.) You say, all men are to think alike upon these topics, all to acknowledge, there is an original, intellectual Being, endowed with all natural and moral perfections, and that all the rules of virtue and duty are to be inviolably observed: but how should these reasons of yours, whatever they are, and which therefore I will not condescend so much as to hear, produce this unity of opinion in these important articles? I disdain to bestow a second thought on so preposterous a scheme. (P. 8.) Tell me not, that by neglecting to inquire into the existence of a God, and thereby running into an utter disregard to all that gratitude, veneration, and obedience, which, you say, I owe him, I may incur his displeasure; or that by refusing to inquire into the nature and obligations of virtue, I may incur a thousand other inconveniences;—I cannot have patience to be threatened into consequences, to be talked to of danger in decisions, and to have the rod held out with the lesson. (Ibid.) It is impossible there should be any such thing as rational religion; for if it be necessary at all, it must be equally necessary for all men, and at all times. Children must love and fear the Deity, before they could know any thing of him: and their knowledge, if built upon such principles as these you offer me, would come quite too late to regulate the practice. (P. 13.) You say, you find religion reasonable in speculation; but I tell you, in your own words, that is nothing to the purpose: the question is, Whether I, and every man, be bound to believe it? (P. 18.) And who can imagine this, who considers, how few men are qualified for reasoning; (p. 17.) and how possible it is, that if the examination of these things were to be attempted, a man might not live long enough to go through with the proof? (Ibid.) What if indeed it be so, that the perfections of the Deity, and the obligations of virtue, may be rationally demonstrated; yet, you know, the generality of apprehensions extend not beyond a simple proposition, and are thrown out at once at the very mention of a medium: (Ibid.) nay, the very ablest and best of men are (as you have taught me) disqualified for fair reasoning by their natural prejudices. We atheists have contracted a partiality for particular objects and notions, familiarized to us by long acquaintance: an honest and natural fondness for Hobbes, and Spinoza, and the rest of our old friends, will never permit us to exert our judgments in a disinterested manner; not to say, how many of the living may be concerned in the event." (P. 23.)

"Besides," might your atheistical or sceptical disciple say, "it is an immense task you would assign me, a task for which years will not suffice, to run through all the acute and metaphysical writers, masters in Israel, who have each of them had their darling argument, and many of them perhaps written whole folios to illustrate it. Or if you would lead me to quit the high priori road, (without examining which, it is nevertheless plain that I can have no full idea of the subject,) and would argue from second causes and the harmony of nature, how can I judge of this without understanding the laws of nature? and how can I attain the knowledge of those laws, but by a deep and long attention to mathematical studies? As I must take the faith of a Deity in the way to complete virtue, according to your circular argument, that he who comes to God, must believe that he is; (p. 78.) so I must also take Sir Isaac Newton's Principia, after a great many other preparatory books, in the way to that faith. And however the gentlemen of the Boylean Lecture, on whom you so pleasantly exercise your talents of raillery, may confine their hearers to examine only into the evidence on one side of the question; I hope you, Sir, will give me leave to hear what my brethren, the atheists and fatalists, have said to destroy religion, as well as what its votaries have said in its defence."

"Now," may he proceed to say, "if by some happy conjunction of circumstances, I have genius, and learning, and resolution, and leisure, and fortune enough to go through this encyclopædia of ethical and physico-theological studies, it is not the happiness of one in a thousand; and yet according to you, natural religion and morality are matters of universal concern. And which is worse than all, when I have finished this course, in some future distant period of life, if I happen to attain it, the event of this examination is quite uncertain. Perhaps all my labour may be lost, and I may find myself obliged to sit down in my present infidelity; or if I attain to any notion of these things, they may be changeable with every wind of doctrine. (P. 26.) Nay, if I continue to believe, my faith will administer no comfort in the reflection; for I shall continually forget the fundamental principles, on which I have formed my determination; (p. 29.) and even while I remember them, my faith will never influence my practice. (P. 13.) You," may this importunate echo of your philosophy and wisdom retort, "you, who have studied what virtue is, tell me it will require me to deny my appetites, and to bridle my passions: but what will all these principles (even the rational apprehensions of the presence of God himself, a view to his favour, and the expectation of immortality) do, when weighed in the scale against demonstrative good, (p. 32.) i. e. the pleasure of sense, and the ties of secular interest? The most valuable mortifies to be of small regard, when compared with that which is actually before us. To what purpose then should I lay [illegible] to be [illegible] vessel, which, even while you talk [illegible] the plan of it, you tell me will founder in the first storm [illegible] be not saved by miracle?"

And now, Sir, arise and plead the injured cause of God and of virtue, against all this train of wretched sophistry; and I will venture to say, that the arguments, and the distinctions, by which you confute the atheist, shall be your own answer. You will not, for shame, acknowledge that he reasoned justly, in a speech like this, which I, or rather yourself, have put into his mouth. You would not urge him to throw up all thoughts of the reasons and evidences of natural religion, and to wait "till he be inspired in a moment with an irresistible light from heaven, by which his faith should be completed in an instant, a perfect creed produced at once, and made self-evident to the mind, in a way little different from intuition." (P. 59.) I charitably believe you would think the subject too serious for such kind of jargon, and forgetting your harangue to your Oxonian friend, you would gravely inculcate very different principles.

You would, no doubt, show your antagonist, that he talked in a very crude and indigested manner, and confounded things, which should by all means be carefully distinguished, and indeed are very easily distinguishable.—You would then to be sure own, and urge, that all mankind are capable of some reasoning, unless they be lunatics, or idiots, who are confessedly out of the present question: and that the great proofs of religion are so plain, that a few words, and a little time and labour, may clear them beyond all reasonable objections.—You would remind him, that common sense might teach him in general to distinguish between what is essential, and what is merely circumstantial, in an argument, and might find out a medium between being exquisitely learned in the history of controversies relating to the Deity, and utterly unacquainted with any reason for believing his existence.—You would tell him, that the great Author of nature, having given him some hints of his being and perfections, (which the very questioning of them, or even the denial, would prove he in fact had,) might justly require, that he should seriously and candidly weigh at least the most obvious proofs which, if he did, he would undoubtedly see his obligations to believe and practise accordingly. And when he urged the inefficacy of these persuasions to influence his practice, you would perhaps add, before you were well aware,—that if a rational creature could commit such an outrage upon reason, as to rush on to prohibited gratifications, in the apprehended presence of God, and at the known expense of his favour, he must charge the fatal consequence on himself alone; and might, in the mean time, be ashamed to confess himself so mean a slave to every irregular propensity of appetite and passion, and to talk of the demonstrative good of those baits, which he knew in his own conscience to be the instruments of final destruction.

In short, Sir, not to swell this recapitulation, into which I am thus accidentally fallen, to the length that you have yourself given, (p. 109—111.) I think you must answer him by the very same considerations, which I urged in my former letter, when replying to you, and by consequence must confute yourself. And as one who knows the importance of the matter, and wishes nothing more sincerely than to see you extricated from these labyrinths of sophistry and error, I do now beseech you, that you would enter into your own conscience, while the matter stands in this point of light, and ask yourself, how you could possibly, on your own principles, reply to this enemy of natural religion? I dare say, the public would be pleased to see how you would manage the debate. But if you could not defend even natural religion without confuting yourself, then consider how you will answer it to God, and to the world, not openly to renounce tenets that must be so utterly subversive of it.

You are pleased, Sir, in one of your concluding pages, (p. 112.) to intimate your purpose of offering up in behalf of your young friend "your most ardent prayers at the throne of grace, that God would illuminate and irradiate his mind with a perfect and thorough conviction of the truth of his holy gospel." But if the end of your letter be indeed, what I find every body I converse with supposes it was, to overthrow what you here call "the holy gospel," and presently after, "that divine law dictated by the Holy Spirit;" I cannot forbear saying, that such a speech as this would become an atheist much better than a deist. It is, in that case, so notorious an insult on the majesty of God, and the throne of his grace, as one would imagine no creature should dare to commit, who apprehended but a remote possibility that he might at length be obliged to prostrate himself before it, and ask the life of his soul there. It would pain my heart so much to think you should be capable of carrying impiety to such a height, that I am sometimes ready rather to forget all that looks like infidelity and profaneness in what you had before written, and charitably to hope, though against hope, and though it be perhaps at some expense of my character that I should mention it, that you are indeed a devout though irrational believer of the gospel, and that your treatise is to be numbered amongst the wonders which enthusiasm has wrought. But whether you wrote this passage in earnest or in jest, it is with all seriousness I now assure you, that I pour out my ardent prayers before the throne of grace for you; that by the secret influences of the blessed Spirit on your heart, (to whose agency no prejudices are invincible,) you may be led into a wiser and happier way of thinking than you seem at present to entertain; and that God may not charge to

your account the ruin of those souls, whom this unhappy pamphlet, whatever was intended by it, has so palpable and so fatal a tendency to destroy. Could what I have written, in either of these Letters, be at all subservient to the accomplishment of this wish, it would be one of the most sensible pleasures which can ever reach the heart of,

Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE.

Northampton, Dec. 1, 1742.

LETTER III.

SIR,

WHEN I concluded my last Letter to you, I was not determined upon this Third Address: but I make it in compliance with the request of several of my friends, who think, that in order to do full justice to the work I have undertaken, I ought to consider your Third Part. This they the rather urge, as it may give me an opportunity of vindicating an important doctrine of Scripture, which some of the friends of Christianity have unwarily represented in such a view, as to encourage its enemies to endeavour to plant their artillery against the gospel, on that ground, from whence, if there be due care taken, it is most capable of being defended. I am the more willing to comply with this request, because I find your ingenious correspondent at Oxford (whose letter to you has, I doubt not, given the world a great deal of pleasure) has modestly omitted the discussion of this, as well as of several other points, which I have examined at large in my two former letters.

I proceed therefore directly to the consideration of what you have advanced in the third part of your book; in which you undertake to show, that Christianity cannot be founded on argument, i. e. that we cannot be obliged to exercise our reason in discovering its evidences, or judging of its doctrines, because God has prescribed another, and very different method of coming at the knowledge of divine truths; which is (as you represent it in the 56th and following pages) the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit upon our minds, infallibly dictating to us the whole scheme and system of them, in such a manner, as to leave nothing to be done by ourselves, but merely to receive and assent to doctrines seen by their own light, under the influence of his teachings.

Now here, Sir, had you separated some things, which you offer in illustration and proof of this general assertion, from the rest, I should have been very ready to have acknowledged their truth and their moment, and, had it been necessary, (which I am well aware it would not have been, to have joined with you in this defence of both,) you will easily see by what I am further to offer, and must indeed well perceive from what I have already written in this controversy, even though you should be ever so much a stranger to my other writings; in all which I am continually referring to the necessity of divine influences on the mind, to form it to knowledge and holiness; and in some of which, (particularly my seventh Sermon on Regeneration,) I have set myself to defend the doctrine at large, in a manner which must certainly appear very sincere, and will, I hope, be found thoroughly convincing to all, who will seriously weigh it, and will abide by Scripture as the standard of their faith.* But my complaint is, that what you teach on this head, though in many places very true, and expressed with great propriety, is intermingled and connected with other assertions, which seem to me quite unscriptural, and extravagant; and which, if they were to be admitted, must necessarily end in the subversion of Christianity. For all your scheme centres in this, "that these influences and assistances of the Spirit of God are of such a kind as to contain an ample revelation of the whole system of Christianity, to every particular person who is the subject of it, so as to supersede the necessity of any rational inquiry into the evidences or contents of religion; and in such a manner as to place him above all dependence on Scripture, and, in one word, to make him absolutely infallible."

That the reader may not imagine I mistake your meaning, and aggravate the matter beyond due bounds, I shall transcribe a few passages of yours, in which it will plainly appear that you carry the matter to this extravagant height. And whoever attentively considers the connexion of many of these passages with the rest, will immediately find, that what is most extravagant in these assertions, is so essential to your scheme, that were these passages to be moderated, the mention of this doctrine would be quite foreign to your purpose.

such an influence, you call it, in the general, " A constant and particular revelation, imparted separately, and supernaturally, to every individual." (P. 112.) And elsewhere, (p. 56.) you speak of the Spirit as " the great Dictator, and infallible Guide, who is the promised Oracle to attend believers to the end of the world, to irradiate their souls at once, as the all-sufficient Origin of faith, in opposition to the aids and advices of reason." This you call (p. 58.) " the light of inspiration, and infused evidence, which is of immediate influence, and operates, as in the case of Saul, (as if that were to be considered as a common standard,) without delay :" " A principle, which effects conversion" (you must, I suppose, mean, to the belief of Christianity as a speculative truth) " by an irresistible light from heaven, and flashes conviction in a moment ;—producing," as you express it, (p. 59.) " the most perfect and finished creed at once ;"—so as to be " the sum and substance of all argumentation, and" (whatever that sublime expression may mean) " the very spirit and extract of all convincing power, of a nature, perhaps, but little differing from intuition itself ;—in consequence of which there is nothing in the suspicious repositories of human testimony," (in which, it is evident from other passages, you include Scripture,) " that can deserve the least notice, or be thought worthy of a moment's attention on this subject." You call it, (p. 60.) " a present and standing miracle of our own, in consequence of which we stand no longer in need of any of the credit of ancient miracles." You tell us, it produces " such indelible characters stamped upon the heart, as no misrepresentations can ever possibly intervene to corrupt." And say, " that this faithful monitor and guardian has promised to continue this office to the end of the world, that we may not be left liable one moment to a possibility of error and imposition." So that, (not to multiply citations from many parallel passages,) as you express it, (p. 90.) in as strong and determinate terms as can be imagined, " actual infallibility is the only title whereon to ground any plausible claim to our discipleship."

Now, Sir, I seriously apprehend, that every intelligent reader will immediately conclude, that if this representation of the matter were indeed the genuine doctrine of Christianity itself, this third part of your treatise, separate from the two former, which I hope have been already sufficiently confuted, would alone be an unanswerable demonstration, that Christianity was false. If this be its language, and these its engagements, it is evidently condemned out of its own mouth, for surely all Christians are not in fact infallible. Every error, and every contradiction, maintained by any of them, on one side the question or the other, evinces this ; unless both parts of a contradiction could be true. You must therefore, on these principles, reconcile error and infallibility, which it seems very difficult to do ; unless you should think fit to evade that necessity by saying, that they only, among all the contending parties, are to be acknowledged for Christians, who are free from error ; from any error, of any kind, or any degree, in any question in which religion is concerned. And this surely, in the judgment of every candid and impartial man, would be no other than acknowledging, that there is no such thing as a Christian now in the world. And this would consequently prove Christianity itself false, as it is confessedly a part of the scheme, that it was to be perpetuated to all ages by a succession of faithful disciples ; which, according to the whole of your argument, it was the design of this extraordinary agency of the Spirit to secure.

The absurdity of this is so flagrant, that I suppose you will rather choose to say, that the reason why Christians fall into error is, because they do not follow this infallible guide. But you must give me leave to remind you, that you have cut yourself off from this retreat, by asserting this light to be irresistible, and to flash conviction in a moment ; and by saying expressly, that it is an indelible character, instamped (as it seems by what you elsewhere maintain) at our baptism, and incapable of being corrupted. You cannot surely imagine such a subterfuge consistent with saying, (as in the place quoted above,) " that actual infallibility is the only title to the claim of being a disciple." An actual infallibility, liable for want of due attention to be mistaken, is as incoherent an idea, as that of a square circle, or a cylindrical cone. Christianity must appear ridiculous, if it taught such a doctrine ; and you will, I hope, Sir, examine your own conscience, as to the view in which you wished it should appear, when you fathered such a scheme upon it.

As I cannot remember ever to have seen the doctrine of the Spirit's influence set in so injurious a light, and turning so visibly to the reproach of that gospel, to which, when duly explained, it is so distinguished a glory, I shall therefore set myself to canvass this point at large : and hope to show, that this misrepresentation of what the Scripture teaches on this head, is as gross as the scheme itself is inconsistent and absurd.

Now that this point may be set in as clear and easy a light as possible, I shall endeavour to show,

First, That the Scripture may say many very important things of the agency and operation of the Spirit on men's minds, without carrying it to such a height as you suppose.

Secondly, That it says many things concerning these influences, and the persons under them, utterly inconsistent with your scheme. And,

Thirdly, That the passages on which you build your hypothesis, will none of them, if fairly inter-

preted, support it, and several of them are in themselves sufficient to subvert and overthrow it, though they have been unnaturally pressed into a contrary service.

Most of what I have further to offer in reply to your Letter, will be comprehended under one or other of these heads: but before I enter into the discussion of them, I must take leave to premise one preliminary; which is, That the question we are debating, is not by any means to be decided by human authority. I am very sensible, Sir, that some eminent divines of the Roman communion, and of the established church at home, as well as among our nonconformists, have, in the zeal and humility of their hearts, expressed themselves in a manner which cannot be defended, and thereby have given too plausible an occasion for your dangerous and fatal misrepresentations. Yet I am not aware, that any of them, even Bishop Beveridge, or the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray himself, ever ran your lengths; and their other writings show, how utterly they would have abhorred some of the consequences which you have drawn or suggested, from these principles. But my business is with the *law, and with the testimony;* and where these holy and excellent men have not spoken according to that rule, I cannot believe that celestial light to have been in them, or suppose their minds under the guidance of that Spirit, whom, though by ill-judged methods, it was undoubtedly their sincere and affectionate desire to glorify. Taking the matter, therefore, as the Scripture represents it, it will be very easy to show,

First, That the Scripture may say many very high and important things concerning the agency and operation of the blessed Spirit on the hearts of believers, without carrying it so far as you represent, or laying any just foundation for the arguments you would build on such passages.—Many things may be said of the Χαρισματα, or the extraordinary gifts and powers of the apostles and primitive Christians, which were so peculiar to that age, that we have no personal concern in them at all:—and many things might be said of those operations which were to continue in all ages of the church, which though of great moment and universal concern, may fall very far short of what you assert, and must maintain, in order to establish the consequences you would connect with these principles.

It is of great importance here to recollect, (though you have artfully contrived, if possible, to keep your readers from such a view,) that many things in Scripture, which relate to the operations of the Spirit of God on the mind, have a reference to those extraordinary gifts, which were peculiar to the apostles, and in which we of these later ages have no further concern, than as the general knowledge of them may establish our regard to the writings of those eminent servants of Christ, who were wisely and graciously distinguished by their divine Master, by such extraordinary endowments, to fit them for the extraordinary office they sustained: an office, by which they were called out to plant the gospel, amidst a thousand oppositions, discouragements, and dangers, in countries where it was before utterly unknown; and also to draw up those important and sacred records, by which the knowledge of it was, in the purest and most comprehensive manner, to be communicated to the remotest ages and nations. It would be quite foreign from my purpose, to enter into a nice enumeration of their peculiar gifts and powers. It plainly appears congruous to the general scheme of Providence, so far as we can judge of it, that persons destined for such a work should have some uncommon furniture for it; not only beyond what could be expected by Christians in future ages, when the gospel was settled in the world, and many ordinary helps provided, of which the church was then destitute; but also beyond what could be pretended to by private Christians, or even by subordinate ministers, in those early days: and accordingly, modest and humble as the apostles were, we frequently find them speaking in their writings as the authorized ambassadors of Christ, who bore unequalled credentials from him; to whose decisions therefore, both churches and their ministers were to submit, if they would not incur the guilt of despising their common Lord.

It will on these premises therefore be very readily granted to you, that these holy men might, as you speak, "have many particular revelations, separately and supernaturally imparted to each;" and that in such a manner as, while they were receiving them, might so far supersede the exercise of reason, as to leave them only to observe, report, and record, the oracles of God, delivered to them, as of old to the prophets, who spake as they were immediately moved, or borne on, by the Holy Ghost, though all the Israelitish people had no warrant to expect to be so immediately instructed and favoured. Whatever were the peculiar signification of the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, which were given to the apostles by the Spirit, concerning which there has been, and perhaps still may be, much debate,) it is put out of question by many evident passages in the New Testament, that the apostles were divinely assisted in the interpretation of the sacred oracles of the Old, and were also favoured with such comprehensive views of the whole Christian scheme, as they could not have learnt by any human methods of investigation, or even by the personal instructions they had received from Christ in the days of his flesh, who expressly referred them to the Spirit as the great Teacher, by whom they were to be instructed in many things which then

he was with them, they were not able to bear. These were such things, as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive them; and it is easy to imagine, that with respect to these, they might very properly say, in a sense peculiar to themselves, God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God: for we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God; which things also we speak, in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, so as to be judged by no man, because we have the mind of Christ.

These, Sir, were glorious apostolical prerogatives, in the highest sense which the words will bear; yet I cannot but observe, that, so far as we can judge by the New Testament, the degree of inspiration granted to them would not warrant some of those expressions which you use, when describing that which you suppose common to every Christian. You will find it hard to prove, that all this conviction was flashed into their souls in a moment; that a finished creed was produced in their minds at once; and that none of them were for a moment left liable to a possibility of error. I think the contrary is demonstrable, even with regard to them; though I doubt not their being at length led into all necessary truth, and qualified to transmit it to us, without any mixture or alloy of falsehood.

The Scripture may also, without establishing your peculiar doctrines on this head, further teach, (as I am well satisfied it does,) that the Holy Spirit was to continue with the church in all ages, even to the end of the world; that it was to be his stated office to convince men of sin, to direct their believing regards to a Saviour, and to glorify Christ, by taking of his things, and showing them, not only to the apostles, but to succeeding believers. It may teach us, that, by his influence, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, to give the knowledge of his glory, as reflected from the face of his Son; that he irradiates our understandings, and sanctifies our affections, so that in consequence of this, when we commence cordial believers, we are born of the Spirit. The whole genius of Scripture may lead us (as I am fully persuaded it does) chiefly to ascribe unto his gracious influences our understanding in divine things, as well as our dispositions to comply with the method of salvation which the gospel exhibits, and with the precepts it establishes. All this may be granted, may be asserted, may be contended for, without maintaining "a constant and supernatural revelation, to be imparted to every individual, so as to be the all-sufficient origin of faith," not only in neglect of the aids of reason, but "in opposition to them." There may be all that I have here supposed, and yet there may be no "irresistible light, to flash such a conviction in a moment, as to produce a finished creed at once; so that from that illustrious era of illumination, "Scripture should be thought unworthy of a moment's attention, and a standing miracle produced, which should supersede our necessity of attending to those which were anciently wrought in confirmation of the gospel." Great encouragement may be given, in the use of rational means, to hope for the continued influence of the Spirit to improve our knowledge; though we may be, not only for a single moment, but during every moment of our lives, liable to err in the circumstantials of religion: nay, I see no reason to ground the claim of our discipleship upon any pretence at all to actual infallibility.

Prove Sir, if it lies in your power, the necessary connexion between what I have here acknowledged, (I think, with most other Christians in all ages,) and that part of your scheme, which I here deny to be by any means a consequence from it. For you must easily see, that these controverted branches of it are the only foundation of that conclusion, towards which you are all along driving: since upon any other hypothesis, but that which the extravagant language I have so often repeated expresses, the humble and diligent use of our own reason in matters of religion is so far from being superseded, that, on the other hand, it will (as I shall presently show more at large) appear a most necessary duty, in consequence of this very promise of divine assistance; if we would not turn it into an ungrateful insult on those natural methods of information which Providence has given us, and to the improvement of which the promises of grace were intended to animate us.

Having thus illustrated and confirmed this general remark, which may be applied to a multitude of texts in the New Testament, which it may not by any means be necessary particularly to enumerate in this debate, I now proceed,

Secondly, To show that the Scripture says many things concerning the influences of the Spirit, and the persons under various degrees of them, which are utterly irreconcilable with your representation of them, as stated above.

And here the leading thought is, that the New Testament, (of which we here especially speak,) frequently supposes, and expressly requires and institutes, the use of such means, in persons under the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, as you suppose to be entirely superseded by those influences.

And for the truth of this, I appeal to the whole tenor of the sacred writings, in which you find such exhortations and instructions given, and such regards required to them, as must certainly prove, how far the Christians to whom they are directed, were from such an extent, and such an infallibility

of knowledge, as you suppose inseparably connected with a claim of discipleship, and necessarily to result from the teachings of their divine Monitor. But it would be tedious and useless to take up my reader's time with particulars: let him read over the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians in particular with your principles in his view, and judge whether almost every chapter, and in some places every verse, does not strongly declaim against them. Indeed, according to your representation of the matter, nothing could have been more superfluous, than the very institution of a stated ministry in the church. According to St. Paul's view of it, this was a great and important design of our blessed Redeemer, when after the triumph of his ascension he distributed the royal donative of his Spirit, and gave under its influence, besides apostles, prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers;—to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, in order to the gradual edification of the body of Christ; till all should come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, even unto the complete measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, or to the state of a full-grown Christian. Reconcile this, Sir, if you can, with your scheme of their shooting up at once, into the full knowledge of every thing relating to religion, into actual infallibility, and such a glorious independency on all the methods of human instruction.

The contrariety of this to the whole scheme and tenor of Scripture is so plain, that I shall add on this head only one remark, as a specimen of many more which might fill a volume: I mean, that such advices are given even to those who were appointed the teachers of others, and consequently must be supposed to have a peculiar share of divine and supernatural illumination; whereas, on your hypothesis, they would have been unnecessary, even to the least and meanest of their charge. Thus, when Paul takes his leave of the elders at Ephesus, he solemnly commends them to the word of God's grace, as what was able to build them up. And in terms yet less liable to objection, when writing to Timothy, (though as an evangelist, superior by far to the class of ordinary ministers, and endowed with miraculous gifts nearly approaching those of the apostolic office,) he charges him, in his First Epistle, to give attendance to reading, and to meditate on the divine things he had learnt: and yet more expressly in his Second Epistle, as Timothy from a child had known the Holy Scriptures, which the apostle testifies were able to make him wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, he solemnly charges him to continue in the things which he had learned; that is, no doubt in the study of those Scriptures, as well as of those instructions he had received from Paul; each of which would, according to you, have been equally superseded. And then, instead of talking of "manuscript authorities, and paper revelations, the suspicious repositories of human testimony, in which to a man illuminated from above, there could be nothing of consequence enough to engage a moment's attention," (your own never to be forgotten words,) the apostle closes the period with this remarkable testimony; All Scripture (or the whole Scripture) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, as well as for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God, i. e. not only the Christian, but the minister, the evangelist, the apostle, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words.

And thus, Sir, by the review of these passages, in comparison with a multitude more which might easily be added to them, we are taught the true Scripture doctrine of the illuminating influences of the Spirit; (which are now chiefly in question;) and I shall endeavour in a few words to propose it, without the assistance and encumbrance of those technical phrases, which modern divines have introduced; and which, how profitable soever many of them may be esteemed, I suppose are absolutely necessary, to any who regard the Scripture as a complete rule.

Now I apprehend the substance of it to be this: God is the great Father of lights, the Author of all the understanding divided among the various ranks of created beings; who, as he at first formed the minds of angels and men, continues the exercise of their intellectual faculties, and one way or another communicates to them all the knowledge, of every kind, which they possess.* But whereas there were certain points, which it was necessary for men to know in this fallen state, in order to their recovery and final happiness, which they could not possibly have discovered by the most accurate and intense use of their natural faculties; God was pleased by his Holy Spirit, in a manner which we cannot particularly explain, to reveal them to the apostles; and after having furnished them with sufficient credentials, to prove, to all impartial inquirers, that the extraordinary doctrines they taught, were not the reveries of a heated imagination, but indeed instructions from heaven, he directed these apostles, by an extraordinary influence on their minds, to record the history of such facts, and to write such instructions to the churches with whom they were immediately concerned, as should happily contain an exact, practical, and full representation of the genuine Christian doctrine, as well

* [illegible]

as of the manner of its being introduced into the world, and established in it. This grand design is so happily executed, that I doubt not but every person of common capacity might, on reading the New Testament, understand, by the mere use of his natural faculties, what the institutions of Christ are; as well as he might understand those of Solon or Lycurgus, by reading the writings of Xenophon, Plutarch, or any other ancient historian.

But I further apprehend, that as the gospel was a scheme, in which the divine glory and the salvation of men were so intimately concerned, the Spirit of God, which had in a more imperfect degree operated on men's minds under the Mosaic dispensation, to assist their understandings in apprehending the sense of the sacred oracles, and to affect their hearts in conformity to their practical design, did, and does, in a yet more abundant manner, interest himself in the preservation and efficacy of this nobler institution, in the first establishment of which he had so illustrious a part.

There is reason to think, that in the earliest age his interposition, even in those who were not the original depositaries of this revelation, might be more sensible and remarkable than now. It seems very congruous to the nature and circumstances of things, so far as we can judge of them, (for I take not upon me absolutely to assert it,) that among the other miraculous gifts bestowed by the apostles on the first ministers, whom they settled in new formed churches, some of them might immediately relate to the understanding and memory of the persons so ordained; in consequence of which they should, for the benefit of the flocks respectively committed to their care, more readily apprehend, and more exactly retain, what the apostles taught them, than in the mere strength of their natural faculties they could have done.

Yet, as the Spirit was to abide with the church always, and all true Christians are, agreeably to that promise, represented as born of the Spirit, as led by it, and, by virtue of its operations, as one with Christ, it seems to me apparent, that to confine his operations to the miraculous gifts and powers of those early ages, is in a great measure to subvert Christianity, or at least to rob it of its greatest glory, and its professors of their noblest support and encouragement. But, if we grant his continued influence on the minds of Christians in any degree, as we cannot suppose it to be a blind and irrational impulse, urging us to what we see no just reason to pursue, it is very analogous to the reason of things to suppose, that he operates upon our understandings, as well as on the other faculties of the soul.

We readily allow, that the manner of these operations cannot be clearly and fully expressed, as neither can we explain that of sensation or memory. But this ignorance of the particular manner does not, as one would imagine some apprehended, leave men at liberty to assert, at random, whatever they please about it. We may reasonably conclude, that it is not the stated office of the Divine Spirit to reveal new doctrines, which the Scripture does not teach; for if it were, God would undoubtedly, as when he formerly added to prior revelations given to his church, furnish the persons to whom such discoveries were made, with proper credentials to authorize their report: and if this cannot be proved, it ought not to be asserted. Nor can we imagine it his office to reveal by an immediate suggestion, the doctrines already delivered in Scripture, to those who may have daily opportunities of learning them from thence. My First Letter proved, that there is in the nature of things no necessity for this, since the truth of the revelation may to such be known without it; and to say, that where that truth in general is known, there is a necessity of such a revelation of particular doctrines, in order to their being understood, is making a sad compliment to the written word of God, and is indeed making it quite an insignificant and useless thing. If any such facts can be produced, let the evidence of them be laid before the world, and all due regard shall be paid to them; but in theory it seems improbable, because so plainly unnecessary, that God should do that in a miraculous, which he has so amply provided for in an ordinary, way. Of this at least I may be very confident, that he hath never given any encouragement, either in the Old Testament, or in the New, which should lead men to expect and hope, that he should thus come, and whisper in their ear, by immediate inspiration, the truths and doctrines which he speaks aloud in his word, and which they will neither read nor hear there. I think a man might as well expect, that if, when entering on a course of study, he were to put out his own eyes, God should, by miracle, give him the complete and orderly idea of all the characters of books, which he might otherwise have read.*

Far be it from me in the mean time to deny, that God may, by an extraordinary agency, render men's faculties more capable of apprehension, where divine things are concerned, than they might otherwise be. He may, no doubt, do it: he may also awaken a dormant idea, which lay neglected in the memory, with unusual energy; he may secretly attract the more attentive regard of the mind to it; and give a man both an inclination and an ability

* I must entreat the reader to observe, that I do in the [illegible] Serm. VIII

of tracing its various relations, with an unusual attention, so that a lustre before quite unknown shall be (as it were) poured upon it; while in the mean time prejudices, which rendered the mind indisposed for the search, or admission and acknowledgment, of truth, may be suspended, and even by imperceptible degrees dissipated. In all these particulars, there may be a real operation of the Spirit of God upon men's minds, under which they may not themselves be conscious of any thing at all extraordinary, though it be indeed so. You well know, Sir, that in the natural world, the divine agency accomplishes all by second causes, and yet in such a manner, that hiding itself (as it were) behind them, it is seldom taken notice of: according to that fine expression of Mr. Thomson,

> All the HE works in all: yet HE, alone
> Seems not to work ——

As Christians, we must believe that angels are employed for our preservation from day to day; yet I suppose we generally pass through life, without being able to fix on any one circumstance concerning which we can assuredly say, "This was the effect of angelic interposition." And thus may there be a real operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, to render it more susceptible, or more tenacious, of divine knowledge; while all seems to be done by the regular exercise of the human faculties, in concurrence with which God works. And in consequence of this, a divine truth so learnt, may not, and will not, be considered, as an immediate revelation from God, nor be assented to as on the credit of this operation; but as on the evidence of reason or Scripture, which the mind under this guidance is enabled to discern.

And on this head I desire it may be remembered, (for it is too evident to be disputed,) that our obligation to attend to any particular notice which God has given us, either of truth or duty, does not depend on its being a notice given us in this or that distinguishing way, whether natural or supernatural; but upon that which is common to all kind of notices from God as such. Nor does our obligation to follow any good inclination, which arises in our mind, depend upon its being naturally or supernaturally produced, but simply, or at least chiefly, upon the evidence we have of its being good. Nay, I will venture to say, (on this foundation,) that it seems to me that extraordinary divine influences, imparted in this imperceptible way, are much more suitable to the wisdom and goodness of the adorable Being from whom they come; as they much better agree with a state of trial, and with the general scheme of conducting us by faith rather than sight: as it likewise does, that angels and devils should be invisible to human eyes.

On the whole, therefore, comparing one part of this account with the other, when our minds have been deeply impressed with divine truths; when we have been awakened diligently to attend to them, studying the Scripture, not merely as matter of curiosity, but with a serious desire of learning how the favour of God is to be obtained, when we have felt our hearts strongly impressed with good affections; when we have been animated by an inward vigour, much better felt than described, to vanquish strong temptations, and with patience and resolution to discharge our duty in the midst of difficulty and discouragement; I think, the whole tenor of Scripture directs us to ascribe this, not only to the goodness of Providence, in making us rational creatures, and making us acquainted with the excellent revelation of truth and duty contained in Scripture; but also to the secret and gracious influences of the Holy Spirit on our hearts, in concurrence with those other advantages. And it seems to me quite trifling, to amuse ourselves with nice speculations, where nature ends, and where grace begins, or what specific difference there is between the knowledge we obtain from each, while their operation is united. Should a number of mechanics, to whom their master has allowed two candles for their work, instead of pursuing their business, set themselves curiously to observe the difference between their size and materials; (if such difference there were;) and in consequence of those observations to dispute, whether in the compound light of both they could distinguish the rays of each, by any peculiar purity and lustre apprehended in the one, rather than the other; we should certainly think them very idly employed, and their master would give them very little thanks for so ill-judged a curiosity. On the like principle, I freely acknowledge, it has often grieved me to the heart to observe, how many volumes of polemical divinity have been written on questions, which neither need nor admit determination on this topic, as well as others.

But it is much for the honour of Scripture, that it meddles not with these niceties. It lays down the general principles I have mentioned, and exhorts men to take all proper measures to obtain the knowledge of divine things, by reading, by meditation, i. e. undoubtedly by the exercise of their rational faculties, which it expresses by being men in understanding: and it further directs, that all these pursuits should be undertaken, and carried on, in an humble dependence on God, who giveth wisdom, and out of whose mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He begins the good work in us, he carries it on until the day of the Lord, and worketh in us both to will and to do. Under these influences, we ascribe unto God the glory of every intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainment, humbling ourselves before him, that these attainments have been no

greater; which they undoubtedly might have been in consequence of a more diligent use of the means and opportunities which he has afforded, and to the faithful improvement of which he has given, and limited, his promises of further supernatural assistances; though I am very far from saying, they are imparted only to such as might on these promises have pleaded a claim to them.

This, Sir, I really take to be the Scripture doctrine of divine influence, and particularly of the Spirit's office in illuminating the mind; but you easily saw that this, instead of establishing what you teach of throwing aside the exercise of reason in religion, would utterly have overthrown it, and would (as I observed above) have made the diligent use of that reason, in concurrence with humble prayer, and the use of proper means of information, the only way in which we could warrantably have expected such enlightening and sanctifying influences. You therefore have thought fit to give another representation of the matter, directly contrary to what I have stated above; and you have attempted to prove it by many remarkable passages of the New Testament.

Now I really apprehend, and own, whatever you might intend by this argumentation, that if these Scriptures are rightly applied, and will establish the purpose for which you bring them, Christianity is overthrown; and all I have been saying, in this part of my Letter, must prejudice, rather than support it; since if your representations are just, it teaches a doctrine, not only absurd in theory, and false in fact, but also self-contradictory; and contrives to render entirely vain and insignificant all those grand preparations, which it describes as made for teaching the gospel in a natural way, and the prudent use of which it so warmly inculcates, in a multitude of other passages. And therefore,

Thirdly, I shall consider in this view what you allege from Scripture upon this head; which I shall handle as an objection, drawn from the supposed absurd and contradictory representation of the doctrine of the Spirit's influence in certain passages of it; and show, that those texts on which you build your hypothesis, will none of them, if fairly interpreted, support it, and several of them are, in themselves, sufficient to subvert and overthrow it.

Now here, Sir, it seems proper to observe to the reader, that you have no where marshalled your arguments on this head; perhaps conscious, that they would make but an indifferent figure, when professedly brought together. You choose rather to boast, that they are many and great, than particularly to show us what they are: and therefore, after slightly mentioning a few texts in your 68th page, which I shall presently examine, you gallantly say, "It were endless to recount all the innumerable passages, throughout the whole Scripture, that concur in ascertaining this:" and then you intermingle the mention of several other texts, with the course of your declamation on this subject; not canvassing the sense or connexion of them, nor seeming to attend to any thing more than the sound: for which in the 105th page you make a general, and I think a remarkable, apology: "That in the haste of your zeal you may have laid yourself open unguardedly enough, if the thing were to be examined according to the rules of strict criticism; but that it is enough for your design, if the main drift and scope of your argument may be allowed to be, upon the whole, maintained only with some tolerable degree of propriety, so as to carry just the face of something plausible and consistent."

Your young friend, in his reply, has touched upon this extraordinary passage of yours, in so handsome a manner, as to render it less necessary for me to insist upon it. I am very ready to make you all the acknowledgments, which such a frank confession of your uncertainty, on a point which you have so often confidently asserted, can be supposed to merit. But really, Sir, I cannot agree with you, "that a critical punctuality is not at all material to the purpose in hand." If so desperate a charge be advanced against the gospel, as that it teaches the monstrous doctrine, which I have from your own Letter represented above, I am sure it ought to be proved in the most convincing manner, with such a critical punctuality as shall make it apparent, not only that some passages in it may possibly admit of such a sense, but that those on which you lay the main stress of your argument, cannot with any tolerable propriety bear any other. And if, when both the interpretations were proposed, there were some degree of probability in favour of yours, which I am persuaded will never in any one instance be the case; it would remain further to be examined, whether that preponderancy of probability were sufficient to counterbalance all the arguments in favour of Christianity, which must otherwise be given up as absurd. But this last consideration, which I mention chiefly on account of its great weight in every objection against the gospel, and because it seems to be so often forgot, need not to be insisted upon here; as I believe the reader will easily perceive, when the particulars are examined.

I have therefore given myself the trouble of collecting your proofs, as carefully as I can; and when I have placed them in what I apprehend their most natural order, I shall consider them particularly: and so much the rather, as several of the texts must be acknowledged to have some difficulty attending them, and I apprehend the examination of them may be agreeable and useful to many of my

readers; though it be so unnecessary with regard to yourself, who it seems meant nothing more, than to amuse the world with what might carry just the face of something plausible; a trial of skill, which on so weighty a subject might well have been spared, and which may perhaps on the sequel be found, what attempts on Scripture generally are, rolling a stone which may return upon the mover, and may prove far more burthensome than was at first imagined.

Now here, that we may proceed in something of method, I will range the texts you have been pleased to produce, (either as containing your doctrine, or as referring to it,) in such an order, as I imagine may give the best varnish to the conclusion you would infer from them; at the same time mentioning the page in which you cite them, that the reader may be fully satisfied, they are such as you have thought fit to mention, how needless and how unfortunate soever to your cause the mention of some of them may appear.

In different places therefore you think proper to remind us, that our Lord himself taught, that no man could come unto him, unless it were given him by the Father; (p. 57.) and promiseth the Spirit, who was to testify of him, and to lead his followers into all truth: (ibid.) that accordingly, the apostles declare, that faith is the gift of God; (ibid.) and that he who believeth, hath the witness in himself, (p. 56.) which is so necessary in order to faith, that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; (ibid.) for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, (p. 103.) even by that spiritual man, who judges all things, while he himself is judged of none: to him is made known that internal word, which is in his mouth, and in his heart, so that he need not say, Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep? (P. 79, 80.) In reference to this therefore, he who believeth not, makes God a liar. (P. 54.) Without granting this, you tell us, we can never account for the apostle's pronouncing an anathema on himself, or an angel from heaven, who should preach a contrary doctrine; (p. 11.) or for his exhorting Christians to be all of one mind, and to think and speak the same thing, which without such an infallible universal teacher would be quite impossible. (P. 65.) With reference also to this teaching we are exhorted to become as little children, that we may enter into the kingdom of God; which you seem to understand as a command to lay aside our reason wherever religion is concerned: (p. 75.) in which sense, it seems, every high thing, i. e. every argument, is to be captivated to the obedience of Christ. (P. 84.) And finally, that if faith were built upon any other foundation, it would be utterly absurd to pray for its increase. (p. 10.) and that infant baptism, here taken for granted to be a divine institution, would on any other scheme be unjustifiable and unintelligible. P. 62. These, Sir, are as far as I can find) the grand foundations, on which you build the doctrine I am now opposing; but how precariously, I question not many will see from reading the enumeration I have given in this connexion, which is that I would have chosen for them, if they had been in this view my own arguments. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, we will discuss them a little more particularly.

That we may remember what we are about, I must entreat my reader to recollect, that if the texts above answer your purpose, they must prove an immediate revelation of the whole system of Christianity, to every particular Christian, in such a manner, as to make it unnecessary for him to inquire into any other evidence from reason or Scripture, to evince the truth of the gospel in general, or of any branch of it which might be proposed to his examination.

Having premised this, I hope to make it appear, on the review,—that some of the texts in question do not refer to any revelation of truth at all;—that others were peculiar to the apostles;—and that no one of them will answer your purpose; because there is none but what may be fairly interpreted, in an important and useful sense, far short of what you would give it. I think, every one of the texts will fall under one or another of those three classes. And here, as I am not at puzzling the cause, but at stating the truth in a fair light, I shall at once allow you every where, as much as I do in my conscience think ought to be allowed to each passage in question; though I am very well aware, (as you may perhaps learn from some other hand,) that a great many things might be said to render some things dubious, which in the course of the argument I am ready to grant you.

When our Lord tells us, No man can come unto him, except it be given him of the Father; and the apostle testifies, that faith is the gift of God; it may indeed imply, that any one, who is brought cordially to believe the gospel, and to apply to Christ for salvation, according to the scheme laid down in it, has reason to ascribe it, not only to the divine goodness in granting him a revelation of the great truths of our religion, but also to the secret influence of divine grace upon his heart, so [illegible] his attention to those truths, and affecting his soul with them, as effectually to produce that cordial consent to the terms of the Christian covenant, which is often in Scripture expressed by "believing," or by "coming to Christ." And how many thousands will gladly acknowledge the reality of such an influence on their minds, who pretend to no immediate revelation, and who embrace the gospel because they see and

rational evidence of it, as they apprehend sufficient to convince every impartial inquirer; an evidence within the reach of all who live in a Christian country; nay, actually attained by many, who, clearly as their understandings are convinced, feel nothing of the efficacy of these truths on their hearts!

Again, Our Lord pronounces, that the Spirit shall testify of him. But you will please to recollect, that this promise was immediately addressed to the apostles; and that it would have had an important meaning, if it had only referred to those miraculous works, by which the Spirit confirmed that glorious and convincing testimony, which the apostles bore to the truth of the gospel.—A promise to them, to guide them into all truth, might also be peculiar to the extraordinary office which they sustained, in order to the execution of which it was necessary, that these things should be taught them by an immediate and personal revelation, which thousands more might receive without any such revelation, from their lips or their writings. So that, if such an immediate revelation to every Christian in all ages, cannot be proved from some other argument, it is certain that the mention of this scripture will prove nothing to the purpose, and St. Paul's question, "Are all apostles?" will be a sufficient reply to the allegation of it on this occasion.

It seems indeed much more to your purpose that the apostle John, when writing to a community of Christians, speaks in language bearing some resemblance to this of our Lord, to him and his brethren in that illustrious office, particularly where it is said, that he who believes hath the witness in himself; and that they had an unction from the Holy One, and knew all things. Yet will neither of these expressions, which are some of the strongest used in the whole New Testament with reference to this point, by any means answer the purpose for which you produce them.

The believer may surely be said to have the witness within himself, as his personal experience of the power of the gospel on his own heart affords him a noble internal evidence of its truth. This is the interpretation, which Dr. Watts has at large given of this text, in his excellent Sermons upon it; and what I have said in my First Letter may, I hope, do something towards setting it in its just light. And though I acknowledge, that it is a very possible case, that some Christians may be favoured by God with uncommon operations on their souls, in consequence of which the evidence of their own sincere piety may, in an extraordinary manner, be cleared up, and their dejection and distress of spirit removed; yet I apprehend, *that* given above is the *only sense* in which it can be *universally* asserted concerning every believer, that he has such a witness within himself: as if it had been said, The true Christian, in whatever state or circumstance, has a work within, which, were it to be attentively surveyed in its proper light, would appear a glorious evidence of the divine authority of the gospel, by means of which it was to be produced.—And as this is the work of the Spirit of God upon the Christian's heart, it is an unction from the Holy One, in consequence of which he knows all things: not absolutely, so as to be omniscient, which I think you do not yourself pretend to be the sense of the phrase; but he knows, (according to that lax sense in which the word *all* is frequently used,) whatever is absolutely necessary for him to know, in order to his salvation and happiness, which is to him "all in all." He knows many great and glorious things, of which all who reject Christianity remain ignorant, and which those, who, though they profess it, yet do not cordially believe it, know but in a very lifeless and unaffecting manner, so that it hardly deserves to be called knowledge. In consequence of this, the happy persons spoken of above need not that any should teach them,* i. e. they need not to be taught over again those great lessons, which to the rest of the world are the most necessary of all others, and such as the apostle had been laying down above, that Jesus is the Christ, and that God hath promised us eternal life in him. Yet it was necessary, in the ordinary method of divine proceeding, that, previous to this anointing, they should be taught these things by human methods of instruction, as St. Paul argues; "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Nay, it is plain from other passages in this epistle, that the apostle John thought other lessons might be useful to them, though this unction of the Spirit had been poured out upon them, and had effectually taught them *this*.

I now come to that text of the apostle Paul, which you mention immediately after laying down the proposition of your Third Part, as if it were in so many words a demonstration of your doctrine, and call it "one plain word, by which it is fully set forth," that no man can say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.† But here, Sir, I suppose you will not maintain, that this text means to assert, that it is impossible for any man, without some special assistance of the Holy Ghost, to utter these words, Jesus is the Messiah; or even that it is impossible, without an immediate revelation of the truth of Christianity, to make a hypocritical profession of the Christian faith. Common sense therefore, and common justice, will require, that they be taken in a qualified interpretation of them. And I think, the design and meaning of them may best be fixed by consulting the context: a task,

* 1 John ii. 27. † 1 Cor. xii. 3.

which in this, and every other place, seems too great a drudgery for such a sprightly and free genius as yours; and yet, Sir, quite necessary to every man, that thinks it worth his care not to speak at all adventurous when he quotes Scripture, and especially (as one would imagine) important, where a text is introduced with such a grand parade.

The apostle, in the chapter referred to, is evidently discoursing on the subject of spiritual gifts, or some extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost in the primitive church, concerning which the state of things at Corinth made it necessary that he should give some directions. Now he lays down this as a preliminary, that there was no reason to apprehend, that any but Christians had any room to pretend they were under such operations; and on the other hand, that every true Christian, whether he were or were not distinguished by his miraculous gifts, had however felt the power and operation of the Spirit of God on his heart. And this I take to be the general sense of the 3d verse, on which you lay so great a stress: "No man, to be sure, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed. The Jews, who pronounce their solemn anathemas upon Christ, and blaspheme his name," (to which this phrase seems clearly to refer,) "though they may pretend to the Spirit of God, so often spoken of in their Scriptures, make a vain and impious pretence to it. And no man can call Jesus Lord, i. e. can really and cordially acknowledge his authority, but by virtue of the operation of the Holy Ghost upon his heart. So that some reverence is due in this respect to every Christian, even though his gifts should not be peculiarly bright; nay, though" (which for any thing I can find might often have been the case) "he should have received none of those miraculous gifts at all, about which you Corinthians so eagerly contend." In this easy view of the passage, the remark seems exceeding pertinent. But what imaginable connexion is there, between a sanctifying influence on the heart, productive of real piety, and a full revelation of a perfect creed at once, or of any single article before unknown, "with a light little different from intuition itself, and which renders the assistance of reason and Scripture quite superfluous." The manner in which the apostle addresses to the real Christians at Corinth, abundantly demonstrates, how far he was from supposing *that* to be the case, and how far he would have been from allowing such an inference from any principle laid down by him, here, or elsewhere.

As little to your purpose will you find that other boasted passage of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, which you quote in your 79th page, as if it were the very design of the apostle to establish your whole notion and doctrine in it. Accordingly you say, "But the passage that most fully, and beyond all possibility of misconception, describes to us the true nature of faith, in manifest opposition to that mistaken notion of a rational one, which some had it seems erroneously entertained, is in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the whole question is discussed at large, and thus precisely determined." And then you quote the words themselves, which are these: "The righteousness which is by faith is on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?—or who shall descend into the deep?—The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart," &c.*

Now, Sir, you must pardon me, if I express my surprise, that you should thus pompously quote a passage, in which the clearness of the Scripture revelation is asserted, to prove that it is attended with such obscurity, that it is not to be expected, that any man should understand it, otherwise than in consequence of an immediate revelation, i. e. by miracle. I readily acknowledge, that the passage is something difficult; but it seems to me so far from clearly expressing your doctrine, that I do not see how it can bear to be interpreted so, as in any measure to give it the least countenance.

You well know, Sir, that these words are an allusion to, and a quotation from, the Old Testament;† where Moses, in his eloquent manner, congratulates the people of Israel on their being favoured with so clear and so full a discovery of the will of God in his written law; in consequence of which there was no need for them to say, Who shall go up for us to heaven?—or, who shall go over the sea for us?—The word is very nigh thee, says that illustrious legislator, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it: it is easily understood, easily remembered, and on the whole, admirably fitted to impress and affect the mind. In allusion to this, the apostle, with great beauty and propriety, tells the Christians to whom he wrote, that the revelation of the gospel by Christ was as plain and evident, as that of the law by Moses: The righteousness which is of faith (i. e. the gospel, which teacheth us the way of justification by faith) speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead:) as if he should have said, "Had Christ never descended from heaven, or had he never risen again from the depths of the earth in which he was buried, we might indeed have been at a loss to know the way of salvation, and might have been left, like the rest of the world, in a thousand doubts and uncertainties; but now, since Christ has descended from heaven to bring the gospel, and has risen from the dead to confirm it, we well know the way: and blessed be God, it is very easy and practicable.

* Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. † Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 14.

open to every one that shall receive the gospel, and very nigh him, in more senses than one, in the mouth, and in the heart. Let but the mouth, and the heart, do their respective parts, the one cordially believing in Christ, and the other courageously confessing him, in such a manner as to approve that inward sincerity; and salvation may be obtained, even though the law hath been broken, that awful law, which, intelligible as it was, did still rigorously insist upon it, that the man should exactly do its precepts, who would hope to live by them."* This, Sir, is the assertion and illustration of the apostle; and how widely this differs from the view in which you have introduced it, I am persuaded that you and my other readers will easily see. They will, no doubt, think the turn you have given it an instance of admirable invention and dexterous address; and as you seem not solicitous that it should be thought *solid*, I hope all parties will be agreed.

Another of your texts, which I would by no means leave uncanvassed, and which, at first appearance, seems much more favourable to your cause than the former, though not so much gloried in, is that of St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, &c.† From hence you would infer that it is only by an immediate inspiration from the Spirit, that divine truths can be known, and consequently that reasoning must be quite superfluous in such a pursuit. I shall not here reply, as some have done, that ψυχικος signifies a man who proceeds in his religious inquiries merely on principles of natural reason; while πνευματικος signifies one who admits of a divine revelation, and allows arguments deduced from its authority. If this were to be granted as the sense of these two words, the meaning of the text would be, that revelation teaches some things which reason could never have discovered. This, I think, is the sense Dr. Clagget gives of the passage, in his laboured explication of it; but I cannot acquiesce in it, because it will by no means follow from hence, that the natural man cannot receive them, and they must be foolishness to him: on the contrary, were a man to reason well, he might in many instances discover harmony, beauty, and wisdom, in those doctrines, schemes, and facts, which are known only by revelation. I shall therefore grant, that by the natural man we are to understand, one who is sunk in the animal life ‡ one, who under the influence of those false maxims, which the corruption of mankind has introduced into the world, is rendered carnal, and sensual, and consequently attached to views of secular interest, or vain glory. Such persons are indeed unwilling to admit of such truths as the gospel teaches, and therefore choose rather to object against its evidence, than to submit to its instructions. This the apostle might well assert; and as the counterpart of the thought might lead his readers to reflect, that they who feel these prejudices conquered in their minds, and are brought to discern the beauty and glory of those truths which the gospel teaches, have reason to ascribe it to the influence of the divine Spirit on their hearts; or in other words, to own, that these truths (which were at first revealed to the apostles by the Spirit of God, and therefore are called *his things*) are spiritually discerned. In consequence of which the happy man, almost like one restored to sight among the blind, ανακρινει παντα, discerns all the objects with which he is surrounded, while he himself υπ' ουδενος ανακρινεται is discerned by none of them; but perhaps is proudly censured, by these prejudiced and bigoted creatures, as a mere visionary, for those judgments which are most rationally formed, on principles which every impartial inquirer would understand. If this easy interpretation of the words be admitted, they will appear quite foreign to your purpose, and applicable to multitudes to whom no single truth of Christianity was taught by miracle, but who by divine grace was inclined to receive that gospel, which the apostle tells us, in the preceding verse, he and his brethren taught, comparing spiritual things with spiritual: a care, which, whether it refers to the manner of their investigation, or to that of communicating the sacred knowledge, would be quite unnecessary on your hypothesis. So unlucky for your cause will criticism and connexion be found, in this instance, as well as the former.

That he, who disbelieves the gospel, maketh God a liar, (i. e. rejects his testimony as unworthy of credit,) will be true, if God has borne any testimony to the gospel at all, which is, or might be, known by such a rejecter of it; and will be no less the case, where the external testimony of miracles is in question, than if the inward impression, which you maintain, were to be granted. This text, therefore, by no means determining how the testimony is borne, can be of no service to your cause.—Nor will that cause find a surer refuge in those words of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians: Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a different gospel to you, let him be accursed.§ This is only a strong way of saying, that the gospel, which they had already been taught, was so assuredly true, that any one, who should presume to contradict it, far from being worthy of any regard, would rather be

* Rom. x. 5. † 1 Cor. ii. 14.

‡ This, I think, the etymology of the word ψυχικος may well intimate: and the use of it elsewhere may warrant the explication. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 44. Jam. iii. 15. and Jude, ver. 19. on the two last of which passages it is rendered sensual.

§ Gal. i. 8.

worthy of a curse; and that it would be an argument of damnable apostasy, in an apostle, or even an angel, to attempt to subvert it. Were this passage to be taken in the most rigorous sense that can be imagined, it would amount to no more than this; that the evidence which they had received of the truth of Christianity, was greater than God would ever permit an angel to bring against it, were it possible for one of those celestial spirits to revolt, and appear with a contrary doctrine. And this is what we all believe, upon this general principle, that God will never permit any evil spirit, (and such any angel contradicting the gospel would certainly be,) to work more and greater miracles to overthrow Christianity, than have already been wrought to confirm it. Now this might have been true, even though all the operations of the Spirit had ceased in the remoter ages of the church, or though the illumination of our minds by his immediate influence had been no part of his office.

But you triumph greatly in this thought, that without such a plenary revelation of the truth, to every particular person, by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it would be impossible that all men should be of one mind; which nevertheless the apostle prays that Christians might be, and exhorts them to labour after. But I wonder, Sir, you should not see, that when he offers this petition for them, or addresses them with such an exhortation, he plainly supposes, they were not at present under such a uniting guidance, in consequence of which (as you express it) they were preserved from the least possibility of mistake. So that, even on your own principles, you must be obliged to admit of some qualifying interpretation: and it so easily presents itself, that I think hardly any writer but yourself has missed it. To be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same sentiment, (as I think it is most natural to translate *εν τη αυτη γνωμη*;*) to have the same mutual disposition or affection, *το αυτο φρονειν εν αλληλοις*, as it is elsewhere expressed, † or *εις αλληλους*, as in the parallel passage, ‡) plainly signifies to cultivate harmony, or unanimity, or to maintain a friendly disposition towards each other, notwithstanding some diversity in their taste, opinion, or customs. And that this is the meaning of the expression is evident, from what the apostle elsewhere says, both to the Corinthians and to the Romans, to whom these exhortations are addressed; where he supposes there would be a difference in opinion and practice among them in some things, and yet urges them to think favourably of each other, and to receive one another, § as Christ had received them all, if sincere Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, and how different soever their apprehensions might be, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness, the expediency or inexpediency, of some practices which were in question among them. And thus does the apostle explain himself in that parallel text, ‖ where, when he had so tenderly entreated them, by the consolation of Christ, by the comfort of love, and by the communion of the Spirit, that they should be like-minded, [*ινα το αυτο φρονητε*, that ye may be unanimous,] he adds, having the same love, being of one accord, *την αυτην αγαπην εχοντες, συμψυχοι*, which two phrases explain the former; as if he should have said, Let your souls be joined together in the same love: and then he adds, *το εν φρονουντες*, which if it be not a mere repetition of the first clause, *το αυτο φρονητε*, be unanimous, may perhaps be rendered, attend to and prosecute (the *το εν*) the one thing, that great concern of vital practical religion, the service of God and the salvation of the soul, which our divine Master has recommended to us as the one thing needful. How well this interpretation suits the Greek word, *φρονειν*, used in all these places, you, Sir, if at all conversant with Greek writers, cannot but know. And if you are a stranger to them, which I would not suppose, I am sorry you have been misled by an English translation, to fasten an absurdity upon the sacred writer; as if he was childish enough to imagine, that entreaties could bring people to think alike in disputed points; and this without telling them (which on your supposition must be the case) what that one thing was, in which they were to think alike. Whereas on our easy and obvious interpretation there needed no such explication at all; as the exhortation referred to a charitable temper, recommended in a variety of strong expressions, and not to this or that particular sentiment. And, permit me to say, though by way of digression, Would to God these texts were rightly understood by Christians in general; and that such a divine principle of mutual love, in consequence of our union to Christ, might prevail more, where we cannot in your sense be of one mind, nor unite in one external form, whether of worship or discipline! I would hope, the attacks made on common Christianity are in some measure leading us to this. And I heartily pray, that infinite wisdom may overrule that evil, to the production of so great a good.

The only scriptures in the catalogue which I gave above, which remain yet unhandled, are those which relate to our becoming as little children, that we may enter into the kingdom of God,¶ and to the captivating every thought to the obedience of Christ.** The former of these passages stands more immediately opposed to ambitious views of worldly greatness, than to an overweening opinion of our own understanding; though I readily acknowledge,

* 1 Cor. i. 10. † Rom. xv. 5. ‡ Rom. xii. 16. § 2 Cor. xi. 11. Rom. xv. 7. ‖ Phil. ii. 1, 2. ¶ Matt. xviii. 3. ** 2 Cor. x. 5.

that according to the genius of our Lord's teaching in general, it may well be considered as a warning against the latter, to which the text in Corinthians does no doubt relate. But what can you infer from hence to support the peculiarities of your doctrine? We readily grant you, that such texts remind us of what indeed reason itself would teach, if impartially consulted, that when we have discovered the evidence of a divine revelation, which the natural weakness of our minds might engage us to wish, and to inquire after, we are teachably to submit to its instructions. We are to be sensible, that our own understandings, when compared with the Supreme Intelligence, are infinitely less than that of a little child, when compared with ours. We are therefore humbly and quietly to sit down, as it were, at the feet of the Divine Teacher; and though several plausible objections may arise in our minds, and many things taught may be inconsistent with our preconceived prejudices, and with what through their influence we should have expected, we are to suffer those prejudices to be overruled by so high an authority, and to acquiesce in this, that the Lord has said it: and this is as really our duty, when he is speaking to us by his messengers, as it was theirs when he was speaking immediately to them. So that you can never infer from hence a personal, and much less a complete and instantaneous, inspiration, till you have proved, either that I can never be assured that God speaks by another, or that if I am, I may disregard it, and dispute against it. The latter of which is so notoriously absurd, that I never heard it seriously maintained; and the former has been a thousand times confuted by those who have written in defence of Christianity, and so lately in particular by those who have answered that unhappy creature who called himself the Moral Philosopher, that I need say nothing of it here, especially after what I have written in my former Letters.

But I cannot dismiss the head without reminding you of one important scripture, which illustrates the explication I have given of those last mentioned with a beautiful variety of most proper expression. I mean that in the First Epistle of Peter, where the apostle exhorts Christians, that laying aside all malignity, and debate, and hypocrisy, and envy, and calumny, (so common among some who call themselves Christians, and so often exercised against the most faithful and zealous ministers of the gospel,) they should, like new-born babes, desire (as we render it) the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby.* It is in the original τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, the rational guileless milk. Which is as if he had said, "The instruction we give to those of you who are yet but little children in Christianity, is sincere and unadulterated, as milk that flows immediately from the breast of the mother into the mouth of the infant; and if you will exercise your reason honestly and wisely, you may easily see, how excellent and useful our doctrine and precepts are. Come then, with the gentleness and simplicity of little children, and receive them; while we are ready, with all the tenderness of an affectionate mother for her suckling, to impart them to you; to impart, not only the gospel of God, but, if it were possible, even our own souls also, because you are dear to us."†

This is indeed, according to the wise and affectionate expression of St. Paul, to be at once in malice children, and in understanding men.‡ For I can think of nothing so rational, as diligently to examine the credentials of any thing offered us as a message from God, and then humbly to submit to it without cavilling and disputing, when we are satisfied that it wears the stamp of his authority. Whereas to set at nought all the internal and external evidence of Christianity so often represented, insisting on it as the absolute condition of our believing, that if it be immediately revealed to us from heaven by miraculous, perfect, and irresistible inspiration, is so far from looking like this infant simplicity, that it seems much more to favour of that malignity and haughtiness of temper, which such passages as these were intended to guard us against. So unhappy have you generally been, from first to last, in the choice of those scriptures by which you would just add some face of probability to a notion in itself so absurd, as that which you have advanced concerning the illumination of the Spirit.

There are several other scriptures, Sir, which, in the course of your harangue, you have occasionally touched upon; as if you thought they afforded some countenance to that notion: but the inference is so precarious, that one would really imagine, you mentioned them only with an intent to make your pamphlet as rich as possible in such kind of burlesque. I am sure you will acknowledge, that those I have already canvassed are the strength of your cause. However, for the vindication of the others from that injury you have offered them, I shall touch here (by way of digression) on two or three passages of Scripture, which you, Sir, seem to have brought in merely for the sake of exposing them to contempt: a contempt, of which I think they will appear by no means worthy, and consequently which may fall where it was least intended.

In your 66th page you refer to what is said of the Samaritans,§ and tell us, "It is recorded many believed in Christ *readily* for the saving of the woman." And then you add, with great triumph, "a notable foundation truly for confidence and conviction, and perhaps martyrdom," &c. Now, Sir, it is hard to imagine for what purpose this reflection could be

introduced, unless it were to give a specimen of your good-will to the Scripture: it seems in effect telling the world, that you think St. John has assigned a very ridiculous reason for their faith, and consequently was a despicable writer, in this instance at least. I shall not insist on your quoting the text with the addition of the word *readily*, which is perhaps in Italics by mistake of the printer. But I desire it may be remembered, that we cannot infer from this expression, that these Samaritans were brought to a true and saving faith in Christ, so as to continue in his word, and approve themselves his disciples indeed; which you artfully take for granted, in your manner of putting the case. You will find little reason confidently to infer this, from its being said they believed in him, if you recollect, that the evangelist, but a few paragraphs before, (i. e. in the conclusion of his second chapter,) had spoken of many who believed in Christ, to whom he would not commit himself, because he knew what was in man; i. e. he knew their faith was not resolute and sincere, nor they persons on whose steadiness and fidelity he could depend. So it is very possible, that some of these Samaritans, knowing the woman, might from her report learn to conceive of Christ as an extraordinary person, from whom therefore they entertained some great expectation; though they might not have the resolution to follow him fully, as you suppose they would of course do, even to martyrdom. Indeed when Christ was come into their city, and had discoursed among them, we are told, that many more believed, because of his own word; and they declare, that now they believed, not because of her saying, but because they had heard him themselves; which intimates, that they looked on her testimony as a very small matter, when compared with the satisfaction which their personal converse with Christ had given them. And if any of the persons, who at first declared their regard to Christ on the testimony of the woman, could afterwards be so regardless of him, as not to give him the hearing, though he abode two days in their city, it was surely a very bad specimen of that faith and zeal, which you think would have engaged them to lay down their lives in his cause; as it would plainly show that they apprehended themselves very little concerned with him, how extraordinary a person soever he might be.

Presently after you mention another text, as it seems, much with the same pious design, namely, that in which our Lord upbraids the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, saying, Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe, &c.! * And then you add, "Can any one imagine, all this was merely because a narrative of four hours had not wrought a thorough conviction? Is it to be believed, that God would reproach any of his creatures with a defective intellect, when he was pleased to give them no better?" We have here, Sir, a complication of mistakes: the one (as in a former instance) founded upon the impropriety of our translation, in rendering ἀνόητοι, fools, which (as I have elsewhere observed †) ought to be translated, in a softer manner, thoughtless or inconsiderate creatures; which contains no reflection at all on the natural defect of their intellect, but on their culpable neglect of using the rational powers which they possessed. I cannot forbear adding, that if the miraculous illumination, which you suppose referred to, had been so irresistible and instantaneous, as you tell us it was, there would have been no room for any such reflection, and consequently the text would be left quite defenceless, which on the common interpretation admits of so easy a solution. There is another error in supposing, as you do, that the ground of this gentle reprehension was only, "that a narrative of four hours had not wrought a thorough conviction."‡ If you mean by a narrative of four hours, our Lord's discourse with them as they were walking to Emmaus, it is unlucky indeed. For not to say, how many hours this conversation might employ, which is not very material; it is certain, this reproof was *previous* to the principal part of this conversation, as you will easily see in the passage itself, and referred to the opportunities they had enjoyed for months and years before, of acquainting themselves with the prophetic writings; which if they had diligently and impartially done, they would have judged it no incredible or improbable report, which they had received from the women who had been at the sepulchre, and affirmed that Jesus was risen from the dead.

I shall take notice but of two passages more, which you have in like manner disguised, that you might the more easily expose them. These are what you introduce in page 78, where you say, "That the Scripture test and standard for finding out the spirits of truth is no more than this: Hereby shall ye know them: Every one that confesseth that Christ is come in the flesh is of God. Now, (say you,) this is evidently what philosophers call arguing in a circle, and begging the question;" (which, by the way, are not [illegible] terms;) "but in faith we see it is a necessary preliminary. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is.* As to the latter part of this sentence every body will perceive, that, however dignified by Italics, it is a scripture of your own making. It is indeed said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he who cometh to God, must believe that he is. The

* Luke xxiv. 25.

† [illegible]

‡ [illegible]

sense of which is plainly this, "that a persuasion of the being of a God must be the foundation of all rational religion, and particularly of all devotional addresses." And how a person of your sense could think of representing this as a circular argument, it is almost impossible to imagine; unless it were merely to humour the character you had assumed, of a Christian whose rapturous and enthusiastical divinity might transport him into an entire forgetfulness of his logic, and perhaps teach him to reckon that forgetfulness among the special gifts of the Spirit, which he imagined he had received?—But as to the former, or to speak more properly, the only text of Scripture which you have here repeated, (for the other is merely burlesqued,) I mean that in John,* Archbishop Tillotson might long since have furnished you with an explication, which sets it above this cavil, which I confess, from the mere sound of the words, might easily present itself to the mind of a superficial reader. He justly observes, (if I remember his interpretation right,) that this epistle was written, when Christianity had been for a considerable time settled in the world; and that it might now be considered as a test of doctrines, sufficiently confirmed by a train of most illustrious miracles, and a variety of other evidence. In consequence of this, a person, presuming to teach by any spirit, that Jesus was not come in the flesh, might as reasonably be rejected by Christians, as a pretended prophet among the Jews, who, upon the credit of a dream, or a vision, should attempt to draw them to idolatry. The evidence attending the Mosaic religion was so vastly superior to that, which could be supposed to arise from any pretended dream, vision, or sign, that he might be justly and reasonably rejected without looking into his credentials. But will this, Sir, at all prove, that these persons to whom the apostle addresses, received Christianity at first without any evidence at all; laying it down as a first principle, that it was true, and (resolving nevertheless to reason a little) inferring from thence it was true, and roundly concluding it is divine, because it is divine? This, Sir, is your candid representation of the matter: but I would hope, few readers' heads are weak enough, even after your whirl of words, to be turned round in this imaginary circle.

But to return from this digression, I shall proceed now to examine the only two arguments which I remember on the head I have been speaking to, that are yet unanswered; I mean, that from our being required to pray for the increase of our faith, and that which you draw from infant baptism.

I readily grant you, (without cavilling at the argument as drawn from a particular scripture,) that it is our duty to pray that our faith may be increased: but I think no argument can be drawn from hence, to prove that it is not to be promoted by rational methods; any more than we can argue, that virtue is not to be rationally cultivated, because we are to pray for its growth in our souls. What I have already said of God's operating upon us as rational creatures, and in concurrence with the exercise of our own faculties, when compared with what I have said in my Second Letter, concerning the nature of true faith, is an abundant solution of this objection. Reasonably may we desire, that God would awaken our minds to diligence in searching after truth; that he would present the evidence of it before us in a clear and convincing light; that he would guard our hearts from those corrupt prejudices which might obstruct its entrance into them; and that he would remind us, from time to time, of those great religious truths which we do believe, with such spirit and energy, that our temper of life may, in a suitable manner, be influenced by the realizing persuasion. In such a prayer, methinks, every virtuous deist must join; as I firmly believe, that would men heartily join in it, and act accordingly, they would soon cease to be deists in the negative sense of the word. And in proportion to the degree in which we see evident reason to believe the truth of Christianity, we may reasonably pray, that God, by the influences of his Holy Spirit on our minds, would give us more comprehensive views of its evidence, and would impress a more lively sense of its great principles on our hearts; that our faith may not be a cold assent, but powerful in the production of its genuine fruits.

It is, on the other hand, very true, that a man, who does not see reason to believe the gospel to be a divine revelation, cannot rationally pray to be confirmed in that belief, or even to be brought to it; but it is evident that whatever rule the Scripture gives on this head, it gives to those who profess to admit its divine authority. And a search into rational evidence is so far from being inconsistent with such a prayer, that where doubts and difficulties arise in the mind, which, though they do not entirely destroy the assent, introduce perplexity, such inquiry is the wisest method we can take to secure an answer to our prayers: provided they be reverently, prudently, and candidly made. But this rather belongs to the subject of my First Letter. What I have just now said, may be sufficient to show, that the Scripture, if it encourages us to pray for the increase of faith, (which I readily allow that it does,) gives us no room at all to expect any new revelation in answer to those prayers, which is the only view in which the mention of them could be material to your cause.

I shall conclude this head with asking you seriously, whether you think Simplicius desired or

* 1 John iv. 2.

expected an immediate revelation, like that which you describe, when he prays, "that God would accurately rectify the reason which he has given us, and remove the mist that hangs upon our understandings, that we may discern things human and divine!" If you think such a prayer as this consistent with the use of reason, which he desires might be purified and guided, you will easily see, that we may on the very same principle pray for the increase of faith, without any of those enthusiastical apprehensions, which you represent as essential to Christianity.

There yet remains to be considered the argument you draw from infant baptism, which you apprehend would be very absurd, if it were not supposed to be attended with such a communication of the Spirit, as that which is now in debate between us. "Can a man," say you, "be baptized into a rational religion?" (By which I suppose you mean, Can that religion be rational of which infant baptism is a part?) "Where is reason concerned, when babes accept the terms of salvation by deputy, and are entitled to all the privileges of the most extensive faith by another's act? By the baptismal ceremony they commence true believers at once, and are made heirs of heaven, you know, by the faith of their bondsmen." (P. 9.) And to the same purpose, in your 69th page, "The merits of the most finished conviction are already theirs by imputation," &c.

Now here, Sir, I am obliged to say, that if there be any form of baptism in the Christian world, which justifies such inferences, and such a manner of speaking, I am extremely sorry for it. But I am very confident, the Scripture teaches nothing of this kind, and it is by that, and not by the tokens of any particular church, whether popish or protestant, that the merits of this cause are to be tried.

I cannot see how any sponsor, whether he be or be not a parent, can pretend to answer for a child, that he shall believe or obey the gospel: nor does the bringing children to baptism by any means imply it. What reason we have to conclude infant baptism a rite of divine institution, I shall not now inquire. It is enough if I show, that admitting it to be so, (which I really think it is very reasonable that we should admit,) it by no means implies this absurd consequence. Other ends might be answered by it, valuable enough to justify the wisdom of the ordinance: as for instance, Hereby parents may give a public token of their faith in Christianity, and their consequent desire that their children may partake of its benefits, and answer its demands: Hereby they may solemnly declare their resolution to train them up in the institutions of our blessed Master, and their resignation of them to the disposal of Divine Providence, if God should see fit early to remove them: This also may remain, throughout all generations, as a memorial of the tenderness which our Lord showed to little children, and of the perpetuity of that connexion, the efficacy of which reaches from one generation to another. And to add no more, it may be a proper occasion for affectionate addresses to the children afterwards, as being already listed under the banners of Christ, so far as they could be listed by the act of another; so that they must either confirm, or, in effect at least, renounce, what was then done. All these valuable purposes, and many more, may be answered by infant baptism. But it will by no means follow hence, that this rite affects the eternal state of the child, or that it did affect it, there must be such an extraordinary communication of the Spirit to it, as you suppose. You allow, in express terms, that there is no act of the child at all, and that it believes nothing. How this consists with its having a perfect faith wrought in its mind at once, is not possible for me to conceive. I must therefore conclude, that you meant nothing more than to expose this practice, as you elsewhere expose persecution, by intimating that it cannot be defended, unless your doctrine were to be granted; whence you are sure, every thinking man, who yields to this part of your argument, will conclude that it cannot be defended at all. On the other hand, it seems sufficient for me here to have shown, that your notion is not connected with Christianity, even allowing infant baptism to be a part of it. May the time at length come, when a zeal for the honour of the gospel shall more effectually engage all its ministers, to adhere to the purity both of its doctrines and institutions, and not to overload it with those additions of their own, which furnish its adversaries with matter of triumph! In the mean time, may those adversaries consider that they are answerable to God for the impartiality, with which they inquire into the contents of Christianity, and that they are not to take their notions of it from the New Testament alone, which it pays [illegible] pleased to have done, you would never have mentioned this argument; nor from any thing you could have met with there, could you ever have thought of it.

Having thus despatched the [illegible] of your pamphlet, I do not remember any thing very material in it, which I have left untouched; for little slips, which neither affect the main argument, nor the honour of Scripture, are not proper for the notice of one, who values his own time and his reader's, and seeks not to insult his antagonist, nor to expose him to any unnecessary contempt. Yet I cannot close without a remark or two on what you insinuate, with no small [illegible] concerning "the ingenuous contrivance" [illegible] pleased to call it) of abating the degree of evidence to leave the more room for the merit of voluntary

with the duty of cultivating a pious propensity to the affirmative, soliciting the assent of our own minds, and endeavouring to help our unbelief." (P. 111.) This manner of representation is so ludicrous, that it is not easy to determine your meaning. But I suppose it to be this. Some considerable writers in favour of our religion have often said, what indeed many passages of Scripture seem to favour, "that the degree of evidence attending it was wisely adjusted in such a manner, as to make it as a touchstone to the temper of those to whom it came; and that instead of quarrelling with Providence for not giving it the greatest possible evidence, we ought rather to adore its wisdom in such an adjustment." This seems to be the notion you ridicule; and if it be, I wish, that for your own security from the rebound of ridicule ill placed, you had condescended to show its absurdity.—Seriously to maintain that such a sentiment is contemptible, would indeed be another stab at natural religion, as well as revealed. Do you imagine it, Sir, impossible, that the blessed God should have given any more convincing proofs of his being and perfections, than those which every man now actually sees? I grant, these proofs are sufficient to convince any reasonable person: but I ask it again, Whether God could not contrive any which should be more striking, and in fact more effectual? To say, that he could not, is limiting the Holy One of Israel in so foolish and so profane a manner, that I hope, Sir, you would abhor the imputation of it: and to own, that he could have done it, and yet has omitted it, if at the same time he acts wisely, is in effect owning the notion you so scornfully reject; or, in other words, owning that an evidence attempered and abated in a certain degree is such, as it is fit for God to give, and to prefer, in many instances, to higher degrees in their own nature very possible.—And where, I beseech you, Sir, is the absurdity of thus trying men's integrity, any more than of trying their other virtues in the course of life? Is it not possible, there may be a certain degree of pride, or of licentiousness, so odious to God, that he should give even to his own revelation, only such a degree of evidence as he knows such persons will, through the free and criminal abuse of their own faculties, be ready to reject with scorn; while persons of a more humble and ingenuous temper will see and submit to it? Nay, I will add, must it not of course be so in the nature of things, that the internal evidence of any revelation must strike those minds most, that have the truest taste of moral excellency. One would have thought, that what the sagacious author of "the Analogy between Reason and Religion" has there said on this subject, might have engaged any one who has read it, as you intimate you have done, to treat the topic with more respect; and I shall remit you to a repeated perusal of that solid and useful treatise, with only this one further question, "Whether you do not think there is such a thing in the human heart, as the counterpart to the character you deride,—an impious propensity to the negative, a soliciting the dissent of our own minds, and an endeavouring to promote our own unbelief?" If you think the will has no remote influence upon the understanding as to its inquiry into truth, and that corrupt affections never lead a man into error, from which (had his heart been more upright) he might easily have been preserved, you contradict not only yourself, (compare p. 63, 64.) but the common sense and experience of mankind; and introduce an universal fatality, that worst of monsters, which will swallow up virtue and religion together, and leave the mind an easy prey to every error, and to every vice, which will owe its cheap victory to the air of irresistibility, with which it makes its appearance.

And is this, Sir, after all, the situation in which you would wish to leave the mind of your reader? or is it such a situation, that a wise and benevolent man would think it worthy of his time and labour, to endeavour to bring his own mind, and that of others, into it? I would entreat you, Sir, at parting, seriously to consider, how far you would have reason to rejoice in the success of what you have written, if it should be thus successful. I should think nothing more instructive and edifying to you, than to pause on the consequences. You would indeed thereby gain a triumph: but would you, if you were a soldier, for the sake of that, lay your country in ruins? And what else would your success in this controversy do? Let us suppose men convinced, that neither Christianity, nor natural religion, are capable of being rationally defended, or (if you like the expression better) are founded on argument: and what follows? You would indeed thereby free some, for whom it is possible you may have some peculiar concern, from the great anxiety which the secret apprehensions of religion give them, in the pursuit of their prohibited pleasures: yet could you not secure them entirely from some recoilings of heart, and anguish of conscience, which will sometimes be thrown into convulsions even by these very opiates. At least, in the intervals of these agonies, you would embolden them to lay the reins on the neck of appetite and passion, which, where human laws, or an innate generosity of temper, did not restrain, would trample down every other obstacle, and drive on to the ruin of society. And as for those who are truly religious, you would, as Tully speaks, on supposition of a much smaller evil, (the ruin of friendship,) take the very sun out of their heaven. You would destroy the entertainment of their solitude, the cement of their friendship, the joy of their prosperity, the support of

their adversity, the light of their life, the hope of their death; and would leave the most pious mind of all others the most desolate. For what desolation can be imagined equal, or comparable, to that of falling from so high a hope, from so glorious a prospect, into the gloomy, cheerless, and hopeless state, in which a mind destitute of religion must of necessity find itself? If this, Sir, were to be the certain effect of reading your book, (as I think it must be, if the principles of it were to be admitted, and its consequences pursued,) what a calamity must it have been to any wise and good man to meet with it. I shall not aggravate at large; but only add, that to have been, though ever so undesignedly, the instrument of such mischief, the fatal occasion of grieving the good, of hardening the bad, of subverting religion, and, by an inseparable consequence, of dishonouring God, and of ruining men, is certainly to be numbered among the most lamentable evils.

It is possible, indeed, that you did not lay a plot for all this. If you will permit me, Sir, to speak with all plainness and freedom, I am ready in my own judgment to conclude, from comparing one thing with another, that you are a kind of humourous sceptic, who intended chiefly to amuse the world, and to show your address in puzzling the cause, and attacking Christianity in a peculiar disguise, which you apprehended you could manage artfully on a side which seemed to you most open. Perhaps you attended to no further consequence, than that some of your readers would smile, and some of them would be confounded, and many say you had played your part in a dexterous manner, and cut out work for divines, who, amidst the variety of forms you assume, might find it more difficult to deal with you, than with at [illegible] openly declares war, and wears a habit by which he may more certainly be known. Views like these may amuse and animate a light imagination, and it may look no further. But the effect of action depends not on our foresight. This is certain, either religion, both natural and revealed, must be judged irrational; or your book, whatever you meant by it, must be judged pernicious, and must draw after it a very solemn account in the presence of God. I heartily pray, you may be thoughtful of that account in time, and dismiss you, as you did your young correspondent, with a text of Scripture, which contains an admonition, the weight of which no intelligent heathen could question. How gaily soever you may have affected to sport yourself with these important topics, "be not deceived, for God is not mocked;" but "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A harvest of future glory, I suppose, no man in our age and country expects to secure by opposing Christianity; and I will venture to say, that, so far as I can learn, few of its enemies, various as their forms, and specious as some of their pretences may have been, have for the present raised the character of their knowledge, or of their virtue, among the best judges and examples of both, by any attack they have made upon it. And if you, Sir, how considerable soever your natural talents may be, should prove the first exception to this general remark, it will be a great surprise to

Your most humble servant,

P. DODDRIDGE

Northampton, March 1, 1742-3.

A FRIENDLY LETTER

TO

THE PRIVATE SOLDIERS, IN A REGIMENT OF FOOT,

WHICH WAS ONE OF THOSE

ENGAGED IN THE IMPORTANT AND GLORIOUS BATTLE OF CULLODEN

GENTLEMEN, *April* 16, 1747.

I HOPE you will excuse whatever freedom may attend this Address, as it proceeds from sincere respect and affection. I look upon a brave soldier with great esteem. He is the guardian of his country; and every one who is a friend to it, ought under that character to honour him, and love him: and they in particular, who were, as you have been, the happy instruments in the hand of God, of delivering us from the worst of enemies, and of cutting off great numbers of those traitors and rebels who would have left us nothing worth fighting or living for, have a peculiar claim to our regard.

You, gentlemen, to whom I now write, had your part in the labours and dangers of that glorious day; and blessed be God, you were preserved in it; preserved, I hope, to be further blessings to your country. Divine Providence has now (as the date reminds me) lengthened out your lives to another year: and I should be very ungrateful, if I did not wish, that your years may be happily multiplied, and that God may reward and bless you with present prosperity and future happiness. But to pretend to wish this, and not to endeavour to promote it, were unworthy the profession of a Christian. I cannot therefore allow myself to be silent on an occasion, in which I am sure both are nearly concerned.

Give me leave to speak plainly to you. It is the character of a brave man, to love to hear the truth without reserve or disguise: it is the character of an honest man and real friend, to speak it. I had ten times rather commend than blame; but as circumstances at present stand, I will do so much violence to my own inclination, as plainly and boldly to tell you, I am extremely grieved to see, that so many of you have so little sense of the goodness of the blessed God, your protector, and that you take no greater care to secure his favour, upon which your safety and happiness both for time and eternity does so evidently depend.

You will however observe, that I charge nothing that is amiss upon the whole body of you. I have the pleasure to be informed, that there are some among you of a very worthy character, who seem to have a sense, not only of decency and morality, but of true religion; and I hope, that such will always meet with the distinguished respect and encouragement which they deserve. No single man among you therefore would have been charged, nor consequently injured, if I had mentioned the name of your regiment, or the town in which you are now quartered: but out of my tenderness to you, I forbear this; and suppress my own name, as of no importance in the present address. And with this precaution, which (if you think at all) you must see proceeds from great respect, I will now go on to tell you as plainly as possible, what it is that offends and grieves me; and what, if God may bless this weak attempt, I sincerely desire to be the instrument of reforming.

The evil which I have most immediately in view, is, that you do in such an open, contemptuous, and indeed outrageous manner, profane the great and glorious name of God, and mock at his most awful judgments. I write to you in the warmth and anguish of my heart, under a very late and lamentable instance of this; which is one, among many others. In walking out, not an hour ago, a few yards from my own house, I have heard one company of you swearing on the right hand, and another on the left. I have heard the same abominable language from the windows of the houses where you are quartered: and it often reaches me, and wounds

my ears, as I sit in my study.—You are calling upon God to damn you; to damn your souls; to damn your blood: and this is your language to each other; the wish you are forming for friends, as well as enemies. My heart burns with indignation, and melts with compassion at the same time, while I hear this foolish, this detestable language. I know, that to reprove you as I pass by you in the streets, would be more likely to provoke and exasperate, than to reform you: and therefore I do humbly and meekly, yet earnestly, beseech you, to hear me a little, while I address you in this manner, that I may deliver my own soul at least; and that, if it be possible, I may contribute towards delivering yours.

Permit me therefore to ask you, Sirs, Do you believe there is a God? and that there is such a thing as damnation?—If you do not, how absurd is it to talk of it, and to wish it to yourselves and each other!—If you do, as I dare say you do, let me beseech you to consider, who this God is; and what is damnation.

Do you not indeed know, that God is the greatest and best of all beings? that he made you? that he preserves you every moment? that he gives you breath, while you use it thus to his dishonour? And have you never been told, or have you forgot, that he said once from the midst of the flames, while the mountain was trembling, and a whole mighty army were ready to die with fear; "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain?" Have you not often heard this? And have you not often said, on hearing it, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law?" How monstrous then is it, thus insolently to break it continually, almost with every breath! Who are you, that dare thus boldly to provoke God Almighty to his face? Can you possibly imagine, that you are able to resist him? If you were ten thousand times as many as you are, could he not bring you in a moment all down together to the dust of death, and to the flames of hell?

Let me ask you again, do you know what damnation is? Did you ever consider what it signifies? Why, to be damned, is to be pronounced accursed by God in the great day of judgment. It is, for God to say to a poor creature, Depart from me accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It is, to be plunged into that lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, and burns for ever, which is the second death. It is, to go to that place, where Christ tells us, the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. And do you indeed wish this to yourselves? Do you think you could bear it? Poor creatures! How have I seen some of the strongest and boldest men in our army ready to faint, when they have been hung up, perhaps not for an hour, by one hand, while their foot has stood upon a precipice! Can you not then bear that trifling punishment? And can you bear damnation! If you cannot, why do you call for it?—Could you wish it to the worst enemy you had in the world? Surely you could not do it deliberately. And yet, you wish it to your friends; you wish it to yourselves.

Take heed, Sirs, take heed: you wish it in the presence and hearing of God; of that God, who can send it upon you. And let me tell you, your oaths and curses are all set down in the book of his remembrance: he cannot possibly forget one of them: and he will bring you into judgment for them. And what will you do in the day of that judgment? The laws of man you despise; the laws of your king and country; though you pretend a great deal of regard for your king, and for the nation. You trample upon their authority every day; and your fellow-subjects have not courage and virtue to attempt to bring you to justice for it. But do you think, that therefore you shall trample on the law of God, and go unpunished? Take heed, Sirs, as you value your souls, take heed. He may execute his justice upon you much sooner than you think of it.

You drown your senses in liquor. Often I see that likewise, with the greatest concern; though to be sure, this and your swearing escape the view of your officers, or they would not bear it. But reflect again, can it escape the observation of the great and blessed God? And will it be any excuse before God, that you added sin to sin? That when you dishonoured him, and profaned his great and terrible name, you also dishonoured your own nature, and made brutes of yourselves? Will it not rather provoke God so much the more?

Oh, Sirs, by the grace of God set yourselves immediately to repent and reform.—Do it while there is room to do it. You may perhaps be called abroad in a few months, and whole ranks of you may be mowed down at once by the artillery of the enemy, or distempers at home may be as fatal. And what will you do, when your separate spirits come to stand before God, and you must answer to him for all this wickedness; for all this unprofitable wickedness, which you have committed upon no temptation! which with respect to swearing is so evidently the case.

Sirs, the hour is certainly coming, when it will be too late to think of repentance and asking pardon. But I hope it is not too late now: God is gracious and merciful, that God, whom you have so often affronted, and challenged to throw you. He is a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. If you now humble yourselves before him, if you seek his pardon through Christ, and seek his Spirit and grace to teach you to forsake sin, and to love and

practise your duty, there is still hope concerning you.

It is the business of this letter, seriously to exhort you to do it. I know your hearts are hardened by the practice of sin; but if you are a little alarmed by what I have now been setting before you, perhaps God may soften them. Yea, he will surely do it, if you earnestly, and seriously, and resolutely ask it.

I have no interest at all in representing these things to you. I am at some expense to do it. It proceeds entirely from a real regard to the honour of God, and the salvation of your own souls; and indeed, I may say, from a regard to your own reputation too. For this is a most mean and infamous practice; quite below your character, as gentlemen. And accordingly I must here remind you, that I have never heard your officers fall into such language; nor heard it commonly reported of them, that they use it. No; they are sensible that it belongs not to gentlemen, but to the lowest and vilest of the people, to the very dregs and refuse of mankind. The wretches who die by the hand of the hangman, have generally been accustomed to such language, as that of which I now desire to cure you; and perhaps, it is by the judgment of God upon them for swearing and cursing, that they have been left to commit other crimes, for which they die, and are made a curse. This consideration might, methinks, teach you to scorn it: but the others, that I have urged, are of infinitely greater importance. Your souls, your immortal souls, are as it were murdered by these hellish weapons, with which you pierce yourselves through every hour, or almost every minute. Adore the divine goodness, that you have not been taken at your word; and that experience, dreadful experience, has not taught you, to know what damnation is. I pray God, that it never may. I pray God, to bless this plain, affectionate, and well-intended letter, as the means of doing some good on some of you. And if this evil can be endured, there will be more room to hope other happy consequences may follow reformation in this respect.

But while I am thus speaking to you, let me add a few words more, to entreat you to a religious observation of the Lord's day, to a careful attendance upon the public ordinances of God, and to a readiness to receive good instructions from any one, who will be charitable enough to give them you. But above all let me urge you, to pray to God, that he would pardon you, and teach you better things. Yes, Sirs, having called upon him so often to damn your souls, now begin to cry to him to save them: and rest not, till that cry be answered; as, if you persevere in the request, you will find it most certainly will. God grant that it may be so! and that as you have been in one respect, you may each of you be in another, like a brand plucked out of the burning! It is, I am sure, the earnest desire, and by the grace of God it shall be the frequent prayer, of,

Gentlemen,

Your affectionate friend,
and faithful servant, &c.

LETTERS,

FROM

THE REV. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

WITH

NOTES EXPLANATORY AND BIOGRAPHICAL.

LETTERS.

From a volume of Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge, published in 1790, by Thomas Stedman, M. A.

LETTER I.*

From Mr. Doddridge to Mr. Hughes.†

Kilworth, December 21, 1721

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED both your letters, and had set apart this afternoon for answering them. My fond heart would easily have dictated enough to fill a sheet of paper: but Mr. Cope tells me the roads are so bad that he must set out almost immediately, if he intends to reach Duffield by to-morrow night. I am obliged therefore to be much shorter than I intended, but I hope you will put no unkind construction upon it.

I am charmed with the profession you make of your friendship; for I value it so highly that I can never think I have too many assurances of it; and yet I have not the least suspicion of your sincerity. I know the generosity of your temper, and I perceive I love you so well, that I can easily persuade myself, that I have a share in your affection. I know the last argument is not logical, but I am so well satisfied with the conclusion, that I do not examine how I came by it; and especially as you have furnished me with many better arguments.

I am extremely glad to hear that you are so well recovered from the small pox. I could not but have a thousand tender apprehensions for your safety, and return my thanks to that kind Providence, which by so seasonable an interposition hath delivered you from so much danger, and still continued you to be the joy of your friends, the glory of your family, and ornament of the church.

I am very much pleased to hear that your situation at Findern is so agreeable; and particularly that you have such a companion as Mr. Cater. I am charmed with the character you give me of that gentleman; and indeed when I heard of the fineness of his imagination, and the strength of his judgment, the sweetness of his temper, and character of his morals, I should have said,—this gentleman is Mr. Hughes's friend,—though I had not been told so. How glad should I be to make the third among you, and how agreeably does it flatter my nature to think, that I have sometimes the honour of being the subject of your discourse.

I never doubted but that when you came seriously to peruse the *inspired writings* you would be sensible of the charms of them; for no man has a better relish for fine writing than yourself. I have lately been perusing Solomon's Song; and upon the whole cannot but think it an incomparable composure, and that the author was as much the noblest of poets, as the deepest of philosophers and the wisest of kings. The sixth chapter is not inferior to any of the rest of it, and I am particularly pleased with the tenth verse, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" I never read these charming words but with a double pleasure, when I remember the inimitable grace with which I have heard you repeat them.

I have lately been reading Sprat's History, and the greatest part of Sir William Temple's Works; and my sentiments of them are entirely the same as yours and Mr. Cater's. I am now perusing Scott's Christian Life, and I find so many new pleasures in it, that I cannot forbear giving you the mortification of thanking you again for it.

I could add a great deal more of this nature, but Mr. Cope frees you from any further trouble by calling upon me. I conclude, and subscribe myself

Your affectionate friend,

and obliged humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

* From the author's short-hand copy.

† Mr. Hughes's father was a dissenting minister at Wem in Herefordshire, and his grandfather, Obadiah Hughes, was ejected from his Studentship in Christ Church, Oxford, by the Act of Uniformity, in 1662. I take him to have been related to John Hughes, Esq. agent for the Siege of Dunkirk, and who wrote several papers in the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian.

LETTER II.*

To the same.

Jan. 8, 1722-3.

Dear Sir,

I expect to see Dr Latham† or Mr. Benyon‡ to-morrow; and therefore answer your letter so soon. I can hardly prevail with myself to condole with you upon your misfortunes, since I perceive that while only two or three particular persons are treating you unkindly, the rest of the world do ample justice to your merit. I have heard of you again and again by several of my acquaintance, who speak of you as the ornament of Findern: I am very glad to hear that your character is so well established, and that those who go about to attack it are likely to do themselves more mischief than they can do you. I think the Spectator somewhere tells us, that "no music is so sweet to a man as his own praise;" methinks he should have excepted the pleasure that an honest and generous mind takes in hearing his friend commended. One thing I can confidently affirm, that though I passed the holidays very pleasantly, at least some of them, in the company of a very agreeable lady, and you know I was always an admirer of the sex; yet nothing gave me so much satisfaction, as a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Benyon, when the discourse turned upon you.

He told me, among other things, that you were making yourself master of the French language. I am heartily glad to hear it, because it will give you an opportunity of entertaining yourself with some of the finest writers in the world. Many of them had certainly very great genius, and were intimately acquainted with the ancients, those great masters of eloquence and poetry. Of all their dramatic poets, I have met with none that I admire so much as Racine. It is impossible not to be charmed with the pomp, elegance, and harmony, of his language, as well as the majesty, tenderness, and propriety, of his sentiments. The whole is conducted with a wonderful mixture of grandeur and simplicity, which sufficiently distinguish him from the dulness of some tragedians, and the bombast of others. One of his principal faults is, that the jingle of his double rhyme is frequently offensive to the ear. I lately met with the Archbishop of Cambray's Reflections upon Eloquence, which I think one of the most judicious pieces I have ever seen. There are some fine criticisms at the end of it, which well deserve your perusal.

As for the French sermons, they are, as far as I can judge of them, very much inferior to those of our English divines. Bourdaloue's, though much regarded, appear to me little better than empty harangues. Cheminais' are many of them very good; but I never met with any of them that are to be compared with those of Mr. Superville, the protestant divine at Rotterdam. He especially excels in the beauty of his imagery, descriptions, and similes; and some of the most pathetic expostulations I ever saw. In short, I believe he is perfectly to your taste; only there is one thing which will displease you as much as it did me, which is, that many of his arguments are very inclusive, though generally as good as high Calvinism will bear. I hope you will not be displeased with the freedom I take in advising you to entertain yourself with him and the other authors I have mentioned, as soon as they fall in your way. And yet perhaps there may be something of vanity in this advice too. French is a language which I have been acquainted with for many years, and you, Sir, have just began to study it; and so I am willing to improve this short interval of superiority, because I am sure, it will be but a little while before you excel me in that, as much as you do in every thing else. I must not add any thing more, but that I earnestly desire you will take care that you do not impair your health, by rising so very early in the morning, for I will assure you it is one of the dearest things in the world to

Your affectionate friend,
and obedient servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

LETTER III.§

To the same.

Hackney, 1722-3.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge there is a great deal of spirit in the turn you give to the concluding words of my letter, though it be extremely different from the sense in which I meant them. You tell me that I am a good preacher, but a very bad prophet, when I say that you will quickly understand French better than I do. I am very much obliged to you for giving me a character, which I should otherwise perhaps have been puzzled to make out a title to: but you must give me leave to say, that in the latter part of your sentence you hardly do me justice. It is true, I do not lay claim to the gift of prophecy: but I think I shall be very capable of supporting it, if all my predictions are as well made out as that which concerns you. I assure you, that though I judge by your own account of it, which is expressed in the

* From the author's short-hand copy.
† My learned friend, and the author of a volume of sermons on various subjects.
‡ A gentleman of a very good estate, and Dr Samuel Benyon, a celebrated minister, and father of Shrewsbury.
§ From the author's short-hand copy.

most modest terms, you have already attained a much better acquaintance with the French language than I can possibly pretend to. It is true, I have had an opportunity of conversing with several French people, and so am not entirely a stranger to the pronunciation; but I assure you that I never read half the books that you mention. Indeed it shames me out of my own negligence, when I consider the improvement you make, and the business you despatch, while I am afraid I am not improving my time to half so good a purpose. Besides, the character that you give me of many of the writers that you mention, which I know is entirely to be depended upon, will engage me to read them whenever they fall into my hands; especially Bouhours, Patrou, Pelisson, and St. Evremond.

I do not know what character my friends may have given you of my sermons; but I am sure, if it be a very advantageous one, it will be my most prudent way to take care not to undeceive you, by preaching before you; for if I may be admitted to be any judge of my own performances, they will by no means answer your expectations. They are all upon the plainest and most practical subjects, and it is happy if they are at all calculated, as I am sure they were principally intended, to inform the judgment and awaken the consciences of the lowest of the people, and to fix their resolution for a course of rational, steady, and undissembled piety. It is not because I despise the charms of eloquence, &c. that I have entirely laid them aside. I know that I am not at all master of them, and so choose rather not to attempt them, than by an awkward imitation to darken the subject to the vulgar part of an audience, without approving myself to the nicer judgment of the more polite. In short, I am grown very familiar with the old puritans, and consequently I am a great favourite with the old women. Pray congratulate me upon this good fortune, which is entirely beyond my expectation or my hope.

But after all, you must not imagine that I have entirely lost all relish for finer compositions; on the contrary, I assure you, that I attended on Dr. Latham's sermon at Leicester, with pleasure, and frequently with transport. The most rational and pathetical thoughts were delivered with such elegance, propriety, and harmony of language, as could not but charm even stupidity itself; my attention was so entirely engaged, that I had no room for reflections of any other nature, except for this one, "How much does Mr. Hughes admire Dr. Latham, and how capable is Dr. Latham of relishing the performances of Mr. Hughes!"

You cannot imagine how much I miss your company at Hinckley. Mr. Cope and Mr. —— left us at Christmas, as you very well know. Mr. Some is not returned; so that, in short, I have not one person in the house that I have any intimate acquaint-

ance with. You know nature designed me for a sociable animal, and I am sure you will pity my misfortune. I am forced to converse with the world, because I want agreeable company to converse with; and it is happy that I can meet with entertainment in the closet when I can find none in the hall, the parlour, or the garden.

You inquire about Mr. Sault's poems. I only know in general, that he intends to print them by subscription; but what the price is to be, or how the subscriptions are to be obtained, I have not yet heard. However, when I know, I will not fail to inform you. I am very glad to hear that you are commencing a familiarity with the Muses, because you are very well qualified to be a favourite with them. I assure you, that I will give you my opinion of your performances with a great deal of freedom, if you will honour me so far as to make me a judge of them. I pretty well know what I have to expect, and therefore I long for a sight of them.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

P. S. My most humble respects to Dr. Latham, if he honours me so far as to remember that he saw me at Leicester.

LETTER IV

To the same.

[illegible] Monmouth.

DEAR SIR,

I received your last of the 3rd instant the morning after it was written. I own I [illegible] a little at that severity with which you there complain of me, for the circumstance of the note you referred to. To have two folio pages with two lines, is indeed a very compendious, but not profitable, commerce. However, you must remember that I then told you, I quickly intended you a [illegible] more. [illegible] you see I have began them; but when I shall end I know not. I hope you [illegible] three pages and then you will be paid at the rate of [illegible] two hundred per cent.; for I have not been a quarter of a year in your debt. If you [illegible] so accurate a computation, you must recollect, that a few months ago I had thoughts of [illegible] which naturally led me into some speculations of [illegible] and contempt, which had not been before familiar to me.

As for yours of the 20th of April, I have read it over [illegible] that I can say a good deal of it by heart. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your [illegible]

pondence. You know that I am naturally of a social temper, and you contrive, in the abundance of your humanity, not only to give me pleasure in perusing your letters myself, but in entertaining my friends with the communication of them. I read the greatest part of them to several persons of taste and politeness, with whom I am acquainted, and they all seem to be charmed with them. Though they become perfectly familiar to me, I always read them with new pleasure; and am as much transported at the twentieth, as I was at the first, perusal of them. A love for my friends makes me participate with them in that elegant entertainment which they must receive from your writings; and my affection to you makes it very delightful to me, to see those whom I particularly love and value, forming such a generous idea of your genius and temper, as your letters must necessarily produce. But perhaps after all, this satisfaction in part arises from the pride of my own heart: I fancy people must needs entertain a very honourable opinion of me, when they hear a man of so bright a wit, and so amiable a character, addressing me with so much tenderness and respect.

You recommended Pliny to my perusal: I immediately procured him, and there is seldom a day in which I do not read two or three of his Epistles. I had before heard several high encomiums upon him; but nothing gave me so lively and so just an idea of his excellences, as to observe the perfection to which you had formed yourself by the study of him. Every letter of yours is a panegyric upon Pliny, though you do not mention his name. Let me entreat you to go on thus to recommend him, and to increase the pleasure with which I always take him into my hands; however, be sure when you do, not so far to exceed him, as to spoil my relish for him. At the rate you go on, it seems highly possible that you may; and if you do, you rob me of one of the most elegant amusements of my life; nor can I imagine how you will be able to make me amends any other way than by the frequency of your own letters. I say nothing of Henley's translation, which is lately fallen into my hands, and which I often compare with the original. I can say but little by way of commendation; and I know it would not be agreeable to the known candour of your temper to be severe upon a man, who honestly intended to entertain the world, and unveil the charms of your favourite author. However, if you would know my sentiments of this and several other pieces which I have lately read, I must refer you to a letter which I lately sent to Mr. Clark, which will save me the trouble of writing over again, what I am afraid you will think it was hardly worth while to have written at all.

Your sentiments on the head of *retirement* are very agreeable to that modesty and gentleness of temper, which make a very amiable part of your character. It is indeed an argument of the greatness of your soul, that you can despise fame, and retire with indifference out of the air of popular applause, when master of all the talents that may attract and command it. But after all, my friend, you must not think of passing through the world like a *subterraneous stream*, as you beautifully express it, or of spending your life in a *hermitage*, in this learned and polite luxury. God hath endowed you with capacities, which are not always to be buried in retirement. So bright a lamp was not lighted up to consume in a sepulchre, but to be fixed on an eminence, where its rays may be diffused with public advantage, and conduct many through this gloomy desert to the regions of eternal glory. . I hope therefore, and believe, it is your constant care to make all your studies subservient to the views of such services. When Providence calls you to a more public appearance, I hope you will be willing to quit your *cell*, charming as it is, that you may enter upon employments at least more important, if not more delicate, than those which you now pursue. This is a piece of *self-denial*, which duty requires us to submit to; and which will be acceptable to God in proportion to our fondness for those elegancies, which we are contented to interrupt and postpone, that we may attend to the advancement of his kingdom and interest. We know the applause of our heavenly Master will be an abundant recompense for all the pleasures we have given up for his sake; and before we receive that public remuneration, we shall find such entertainment in the exercise of benevolence to our fellow-creatures, and the hope of promoting their everlasting felicity, as we shall never find, in conversing with Virgil or Tully, Pliny or Addison, or any of the favourite attendants of our solitude. Popularity is in itself a most contemptible thing; but in this view, it may justly appear desirable: however you, my friend, need not be solicitous about it; do but appear in public and follow nature, and it will flow in upon you without further care. I cannot but think but that I may, with the utmost propriety, apply to you what Pliny says to Caninius Rufus, (L. i. Ep. 3.) "In modo enitere ut tibi ipse sis tanti, quanti videberis aliis, si tibi fueris."*

I cannot but acknowledge that I read with great pleasure your "reflections on that period of our existence," as you very emphatically call it, which passed before you left Mr. Jennings's. They are extremely agreeable to what I have often thought with relation to both of us at that time. It is happy for us that we see our mistakes. *Percunt et imputantur*, would be a melancholy thought indeed,

* Do [illegible] those excellent talents you possess, and the world [illegible] me will certainly do so too.—*Hamilton's Translation.*

if divine grace had not awakened us to improve some of our time like rational creatures and like Christians; and if we did not hope, by future diligence, in some measure to recover what we have lost. I was talking with Mr. Some this evening about our conduct then, and read him what you say of it. He heard it with great satisfaction, and remarked, that "the remembrance of former negligence and mistakes is often of considerable use throughout the remainder of life."

I have not yet seen Mr. ——. He will be very welcome whenever he comes, but doubly so if he brings you with him. If he does not make haste I may prevent him, for though I have two congregations upon my hands on account of Mr. ——'s illness and absence, I hope to take a tour to St. Alban's about the beginning of September: and believe me, that except it be the pleasure of seeing so worthy a friend and so generous a benefactor as dear Mr. Clark, nothing is so great an encouragement to me to undertake the journey, as the prospect of spending a whole day with you at Childwick; when I expect most delightful entertainment from your collection of books and letters, but above all from your company.

You desire an account of my studies. I may, perhaps, some time or other, find an opportunity of laying open the whole course of them to your censure and examination, but at present have only left myself room to add that I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

Pray give another name than that you propose, and let me know what your polite correspondents call you. I will not allow of Heraclitus.

N. B. This letter is more than half as long again as yours. I heartily thank you, that you were not curious in your writing, because it furnishes me with an excuse for not transcribing this, which I fear is hardly legible. Dr. Atterbury's translation of the Banishment of Cicero seems to me admirably well done. The language is exceeding beautiful, and many of his translations from Tully are as graceful as the Latin.

LETTER V *

To Mr. Hughes, on his ill success in the Lottery.

Nov. 29, 1725.

I HAVE just been looking over the account which my dear Atticus gives me of his misfortune in the late most disadvantageous *Lottery*. I will not remind him how many more were as unfortunate as himself since that, to a man of his temper, would be rather an aggravation than a relief of his affliction. And yet your own Pliny says, that when he was in danger of being destroyed by that eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which proved so fatal to his learned uncle, "Possem gloriari,—nisi me cum omnibus, omnia necum pericula mortemque contemnere humanitatis solatio credidissem," L. vi. E. 20. which is so odd a saying for a heathen his moral or humanity, that I could not forbear mentioning it, to ask your opinion of it. However, my good friend, I offer you no such miserable consolation. No: were I to speak of others as concerned in the same adventure, I would rather suggest, that it is possible Providence may have ordered the *wheel* so, that while you seem to be neglected, other persons of a less worthy character, but in more necessitous circumstances, may be relieved. It is possible, that in consequence of your drawing a blank, some honest family may have been insensible of all its bounty, but is awakened by so apparent an interposition in its favour, to know and adore its munificence, and so is engaged to consecrate, not only his new acquisition, but all his former possessions, to the honour of God, and the benefit of mankind. If this should be the case, the world would receive greater advantage from his success, than it could have done from yours, as you would have only been possessed of the riches of the mind, in laying in a considerable stock of wisdom and knowledge, which this opportunity would have afforded you, and have laid out but little more than the value of your prize in works of generosity and charity. Not to say that this happy adventurer, on this supposition, has gained the pleasure of a virtuous life, and a happy immortality, by this little damage which you have sustained.

You imagine that your loss is [illegible] to your friends. But perhaps it is upon the whole a happiness Providence might know that *I* in particular, had not attained to such a strength of virtue, as to be able to bear such an accession to my fortune, as would have been the consequence of your getting one of the golden numbers. And so may have assigned them to others, whose friends are more fit to receive the advantage of them, or otherwise are not the objects of so tender a care. We ought not only to be contented but thankful for this.

I may more certainly add, that with relation to your own *personal* concernments, your heavenly Father, in his abundant wisdom and goodness, meant you kindly by such a disappointment. Perhaps he saw that so tender and so complaisant a

* From the author's short Catalogue.

temper was not sufficiently prepared to withstand the temptations of a plentiful fortune; and that you might have grown too fond of the world, which had opened so many new charms for your entertainment, and have been less mindful of that glorious end, which you are advancing towards in so pleasant a way. O, who knows that the way would in fact have been more pleasant to you? More external ornaments of life you would certainly have had, but not therefore certainly more inward content. Providence, no doubt, intends by this dispensation, to teach you to moderate your expectations, to submit to disappointments, to contract your regards for this world, and transfer them to the glories of a future state, and the durable riches which you will then possess; and if this divine temper be improved in your mind, by the loss of a few pounds, believe me, my dear Atticus, it will contribute more to promote the happiness of life, than the gain of so many hundreds or thousands with the injury of such a temper.

Perhaps you will tell me, what I verily believe, that nothing in this affair is so afflictive to you, as that you are deprived of the *pleasure of doing good* with what you have lost, or expected to have gained. But I need not tell you, that in all our acts of benevolence, we ought not so much to regard the present indulgence of natural temper, as the approbation of God, and the reward of a future state. Now God sees all the secret generosity of your soul, your tender compassion for those that are in misery, your hearty desire of relieving them, your affectionate prayers to the fountain of good to communicate to them those seasonable supplies, which are not in the power of your own hand to give; and he has particularly been acquainted with all the generous projects you had formed for the public good, on supposition of the success of your late adventure. Now you know, that he does as graciously approve you, and will as bountifully reward you, for this honest and liberal sentiment and intention, as he would have done for the actual execution of them, if he had given you an opportunity for it.

And as such a generosity of soul, acting in proportion to present circumstances, is equally agreeable to God, and will produce as gracious a harvest in a future state, so it is attended with some *considerable degree of the same satisfaction at present.* You may now perhaps give a shilling with as true overflowing of soul, and almost as much joy too, as you could give a guinea if you were twenty times as rich. For as we are much impressed by present objects, the satisfaction which we find in the performance of a generous action towards any determinate person, seems to be proportional to that degree of pleasure which we imagine he will find in receiving the benefit.

Now a virtuous and generous *beneficiary* rejoices in the favour that is done to him, not merely according to the value of the favour abstractedly considered, but according to the degree of moral beauty which is to be found in the act of conferring it: and this is in a great measure to be estimated by the consideration of the circumstances of the benefactor. Therefore a man may receive a shilling from you now, with almost as much pleasure as he could receive a pound of you, were you twenty times as rich; and therefore you may in this respect bestow as much. Q. E. D.

Perhaps I have been a little too abstruse in my reasoning upon this head, but I think there is some meaning at the bottom, and my assertion is confirmed by my own experience; for I have found as exquisite pleasure in receiving some little services from my friends, when attended with circumstances of generosity and endearment, as I ever did in any of greater importance. And it seems to be the thought of Solomon, when he says, *The desire of a man is his kindness.*

After what I have said with relation to your loss, I must tell you that I am heartily glad you are so much more successful in the far nobler pursuit of learning and virtue. I have much to say as to other particulars, but you see I have but just left myself room to add, that I am

Your most affectionate

HORTENSIUS.

LETTER VI.*

To Miss ——— , on breaking her arm by a fall from a horse.

November 18, 1727

Dear Madam,

I have just received the melancholy news of your fall, and the sad consequences with which it has been attended. Mrs. W. who gives me this unwelcome information, adds, that though you are on the mending hand, you still continue very ill. I cannot set myself to any other business till I have taken a few minutes to tell you how sensibly I sympathize with you in your sorrows. As my obligations to your excellent family are very great, I cannot but have an undissembled affection for every member of it, and I am sure dear Miss ——— has always had her full share in my heart; as indeed, who could forbear to admire and love so much piety and good sense, when set off by the ornaments of a beautiful form, and a most engaging temper? I know too, that my friendship for you was both sincere and tender, but I was never fully apprized of its degree

* From the author's short-hand copy.

till since it pleased God to visit you with that affliction, which now lies so heavy upon you, and gives you the justest title to the compassion of strangers, and much more of friends. But, alas! how vain is the compassion of human friends in a case like yours; and indeed in any case! when it is left to itself, it can only sit down and weep over calamities which it knows not how to relieve. I do therefore, Madam, most importunately recommend you to the compassion of that God, who can easily raise you out of all your troubles, and can make your affliction the means of your happiness. How happy should I esteem myself, if I might be in any degree a worker together with him, towards promoting so excellent a service as your spiritual improvement by this afflictive providence. Permit me, Madam, humbly to attempt it, and hastily to mention a few *hints of a serious nature*, which I imagine peculiarly suitable to your present circumstances.

It may seem nowise unsuitable to the occasion of my writing, to urge that *submission to the divine will* which becomes us under every chastisement. But this is, no doubt, the matter of frequent reflection and discourse with you; the known piety of your general character, and the remarkable meekness and sweetness of your temper, make it less necessary for me to insist upon it. I am fully persuaded, Madam, that you do not allow yourself to murmur and repine against the Lord who smiteth you. But pardon me if I ask, whether you be not too ready to forget your obligations to *love and praise?* I look upon it as one of the greatest defects in the character of good people, and as the foundation of many more visible irregularities, that they delight in God no more, and that they praise him no more. Too much is this excellent work neglected in the midst of health, prosperity, and cheerfulness; but when affliction comes, and especially when it comes in so terrible a form as this which has lately visited you, a Christian is ready to imagine, that it is enough to be quiet and resigned, and that he is fairly excused from such delightful exercises of soul, which seem unsuitable to so gloomy a season. But let us learn to correct so unreasonable a thought, and surely a little reflection might teach us to correct it.

With regard to your present circumstances, you, Madam, are exercised by the anguish of a *broken bone*, which may probably exceed the imagination of those who have not known it by fatal experience; but is it not just foundation of joy and of praise, that your life is still prolonged to you? It is true, your behaviour, so far as I have had the opportunity of observing it, has been such as could not deserve so much as the tenderest reproof of a friend; but you will humbly acknowledge, what no human creature can deny, that an omniscient and a holy God has seen many offences in a life which to men has appeared most unexceptionable and most amiable. And you are not to learn, that the smallest violation of his sacred law may justly expose us to all the miseries of a future state. And is it not matter of praise that you are yet in the land of the living, and within the reach of pardon and of hope? Nay, I do verily believe that, through divine grace, you are already in a state of reconciliation and favour with God, and in the way to everlasting happiness; and when you think of the glory that shall be revealed, and think of your own interest in it, surely your heart might overflow with thankfulness and joy, though your present agonies were multiplied upon you. These, Madam, are noble resources of consolation, which should not be forgotten in your most painful moments—that God is your Father, Christ your Saviour, and heaven your eternal inheritance.

But further, when you attentively survey the present dispensation, you will certainly find, that there is a *mixture of mercy in it*, and all that mixture of mercy is in a proportionable degree matter of praise. You have broken your arm; but had not mercy interposed, you would not have survived to have been sensible of it. A very small alteration in the circumstances of your fall might have made it fatal to your life. You are made to possess days of anguish, and wearisome nights are appointed to you; but does not an indulgent Providence surround you with comforts, which mollify your sense of that distress? I need not to insist upon those instances which so grateful a heart cannot overlook. You recollect the piety and tenderness of your excellent parents: you observe the respect and affection of many other agreeable and valuable friends: you review that affluence of worldly possessions which, through the divine goodness, is flowing in upon you, and furnishes you with the most judicious advice, the most proper remedies, and the most agreeable accommodations and entertainments, which your present circumstances can require and admit. And in the force of these united considerations, you own, that it is reasonable even now to praise the Lord, who is daily loading you with his benefits, and vastly overbalances your affliction with mercies.

But what if I should proceed still further, and maintain, not only that it is your duty to praise God for his other mercies, though he has afflicted you, but to praise him for *this affliction* as a mercy? I should say no more than the Scripture warrants, when it exhorts us "in every thing to give thanks," and tells us that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God."

I know, Madam, and I persuade myself you seriously consider, that the interests of the soul are vastly more valuable than those of the body. Now it is certain, that such a calamity as this may be the

means of *great improvement and advantage to your soul*. It may wean your heart from the world, and fix it upon God more than before: it may make you a more lively and zealous Christian, and by consequence, more happy and useful in life, and more glorious throughout all the ages of eternity. And if it has a tendency to promote so exalted an end, you have certainly reason to bless God for it, though it be attended with some trying circumstances; as you would approve and be thankful for the setting of a broken bone, though it were a very painful operation, since it was so subservient, and indeed so necessary, to the pleasure and usefulness of life.

As all afflictions have, by the divine blessing, a tendency to lead the mind into some serious reflections, so every particular trial has its own peculiar advantage, which it is proper for us to study while we are under the pressure of it.

That I may give my dear and excellent friend all the assistance I can, I will mention *some heads of religious contemplation* which occur to my thoughts, as peculiarly proper to dwell upon while we are in actual pain. And if it please God to impress them deeply upon your mind, you will find, Madam, that it will be worth your while to have borne the smart of an affliction, which may prove so instructive and so beneficial.

1. It is now peculiarly proper to think, how insupportably dreadful must *the agonies of hell be!* If one drop of the divine displeasure, or one stroke which he inflicts in love to his child, be sufficient to throw us into so much distress, what must it be to fall into the hands of God, as an irreconcilable enemy, and to stand the shock of that horrible tempest which he shall pour out upon the finally impenitent? If it be so difficult to bear the disorder of one single limb, where other circumstances around us are just as we could wish them, and the tenderest friends are doing their utmost to ease and delight us under our sorrows, what must it be to dwell for ever in that region of horror, where every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul, shall be the seat of torment, and every surrounding person and circumstance conspire to aggravate and inflame it? "Fly, O my soul! from so dreadful a condemnation; abhor the thought of any thing which would expose thee to it; and adore the riches of redeeming love, by which thou art delivered from going down to the pit."

2. Another very proper reflection in our painful hours may be, *how rich was the love of Jesus Christ, who would bear so much pain for our salvation!*

"Do I find it (you will say) so difficult a matter to bear up under my present anguish, though only one member of my body suffers, what then did my Saviour feel, when he was expiring under the agonies of the cross! What was it to have the tenderest parts of his body pierced with thorns and with nails, and to be stretched out upon the cross, as on a rack, till almost every joint was out of its place, (which you know, Madam, was the common pain of crucifixion;) besides all that more intolerable torment which he bore from the immediate hand of his Father, which threw him into a bloody sweat, when no human agony was near him! Little, O my Redeemer! little can I conjecture of the bitterness of thine agonies, from the pain I now feel, but since that which I now feel is so acute and so grievous, let me take a few moments from my sorrows and my groans to admire and celebrate thy inconceivable love, which bore the sorrow which was infinitely more dreadful."

3. When we feel ourselves in pain, it is peculiarly proper to reflect on the *great mercy of God in having formerly given us so much ease.*

"How many have been continued in life while surrounded with innumerable calamities and accidents, which might not only have been painful, but mortal, to me; and in all this year how many days, how many weeks, have there been in which I have enjoyed uninterrupted ease; or rather, how few hours and moments have there been in which I have felt even the slightest pain! If God has changed the dispensation of his providence towards me, I feel the value of that mercy I was so insensible of. Let me now praise him for what I formerly enjoyed, but undervalued; since it might probably be the design of this present affliction to rebuke my former insensibility, and recover that tribute of praise which I had neglected immediately to pay."

4. When we feel pain taking hold of us, we may reflect *how much reason we have to pity the pains and the sorrows of others.*

"I have too often been forgetful of them when absent, and have been too negligent in praying for them, though perhaps their case has been attended with lamentable circumstances. Now I know, by my own experience, a part of what they feel, and perhaps no more than a part. Let me, after the example of my Redeemer, learn by my own sufferings, to sympathize with my brethren in theirs; and let me impart such compassion to them as I would now desire from those that are around me."

5. When we are under pain of body, it is proper to reflect, *how vain is every thing in this world, and how infinitely preferable an interest in the divine favour.*

One such day as many of those have been which you have lately passed, may serve instead of a thousand rational arguments to convince you of this. How has the accident of a minute impaired your relish for those entertainments which before were exceedingly agreeable to you! Those things, in which the greater part of mankind place their supreme happiness, are little or nothing in these afflictive moments. The delicacy of food, the orna-

ments of dress, nay, even the conversation of friends, are not now what you thought them a few days ago, but you find, Madam, that your *God is still the same*, and the thoughts of your interest in him grows more and more delightful, in proportion to that degree in which the charms of created objects fade and disappear. Yet, when your health and strength are completely restored, as I pray they may speedily be, created vanity may grow charming again, and tempt your heart to a forgetfulness of God. But then I hope, Madam, you will recollect the view in which they appeared in the days of weakness and of pain: and the more carefully you attend to that view now, the more likely will you be to recollect it with advantage.

6. In your present affliction, it is peculiarly proper to think of that *heavenly world*, which is, as I verily believe, the great object of your hope, and through grace, your eternal inheritance.

All the storms and tempests of life should force us into that blessed harbour. And I am persuaded our views of heaven would be more affecting, if we were to consider it as a place, where we shall be free, not only from all trouble in general, but from that *particular* trouble which at present lies heavy upon us, and therefore is apprehended in all its aggravations. It is proper under such an affliction as this, to reflect on the New Jerusalem: there shall be no more pain. "O my soul! dwell upon the thought, and in that view breathe after it, and rejoice in the expectation of it."

If these thoughts, Madam, which appear so proper in your present circumstances, be seriously attended to and pursued, you will soon see the advantage of them. Your heart, which is already so pious and excellent, will come like gold out of a furnace of fire, purified seven times; and upon the whole, you will reap such happy fruits, both for time and eternity, from these sad calamitous events, that you will no longer have room to question, whether it be the proper object of praise.

I am surprised to see, that before I was aware, my letter is swelled into a sermon. But I find, Madam, in this as in other instances, that it is easy to speak out of the abundance of the heart, which I am sure I always do, when I give vent to any sentiments of friendship towards you. There is a plainness and freedom in what I have written, which to some other persons I might think it necessary to excuse, but I will not make any apology to you, for I am sure you have so much good sense as to see, and so much candour as to believe, that this freedom proceeds only from that inexpressible respect and tenderness with which I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most affectionate

and most humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

LETTER VII

To a Young Lady, proposing for a companion to the Author.

[illegible]

Monday.

Though I have not the happiness of a personal acquaintance with you, your good mother informed me at large of your character and circumstances, and it is by her desire that I use a freedom in addressing you which would not otherwise be pardonable in one who is a stranger. You will easily imagine that your concerns lie with a very great weight upon her mind. She is tenderly solicitous, that whithersoever you go the gracious presence of a heavenly Parent, and a pious sense of duty to him, may always accompany you. And as she knows you must resign some of those religious advantages, which you have long enjoyed, she has been urgent with me to put something into your hand which may be reviewed whenever you please, and which by the divine blessing may be useful to you, as being peculiarly suited to your present circumstances.

On my part, Madam, I undertake the task with a great deal of cheerfulness; not only to oblige her, who is my valuable friend, but with some encouraging hopes that it may be serviceable to you. And I will freely own, that I enter into the case with some [illegible] of a peculiar tenderness, as it relates to a lady in the bloom of life, of an agreeable person, and a promising character. I have had a great many anxious thoughts about you since your mother and I talked of you, which we have frequently done; so that you and your affairs are grown very familiar to my mind. And I begin to enter into them with something of the affection of a brother.

I hope this concern may sufficiently justify a plainness, which in such a case becomes almost unavoidable; and I persuade myself, Madam, that when you consider it as proceeding from such a principle, you will not be offended at it. I tell you that I almost tremble to think of the variety of dangers to which you are going to be exposed. I am young myself, yet I have already found by too frequent experience, that in the pursuit of [illegible] especially [illegible] sometimes with pleasing appearances, we are even on what is most delightful a dangerous prospect. But either entirely overcome with dangerous and threatening, or at most hurried by a transient glance upon it. You, Madam, [illegible] with a great deal of pleasure of meeting a variety of new objects in a new country, [illegible] [illegible] way, [illegible] [illegible]

you have never yet seen,* but who has expressed the tenderest regard for you at so remote a distance. You are charmed with the prospect of meeting him in a place where he knows not any superior, of sharing with him in his plenty and magnificence, and being treated by all about you with the respect due to a Governor's sister. I own there is something very splendid and striking in such a view, and I heartily congratulate you upon it. But let me entreat you, Madam, to consider how possible it is, that you may never reach the country which is to be the scene of so many entertainments. There are unknown hazards in the voyage to the Indies; and it is possible that before you have despatched half of it, some unexpected event may happen to put a period to these hopes and to your life. Or, if you reached ——— it is certain that dangers will attend you there, and dangers which will be so much the greater, as you are the less sensible of them. I know that many of our foreign Governors live in a kind of princely grandeur and magnificence, so that you really need almost as much wisdom and goodness as if you were going to Court. You will see a great deal of vanity and pomp, and no doubt a great deal of luxury too, if not in the Governor himself, of whom I hear a very respectable character, yet at least in some of his retinue. You will hear a great deal of flattery, the shame of our sex, and the ruin of yours, and the dangers which conceal the sharpest and the most fatal stings, are those which will accost you with the softest airs and the most smiling countenance. On the other hand, Madam, it is very uncertain what advantages of a religious nature you will enjoy, to counterbalance these insnaring circumstances. Yet I think I may venture to say, that whithersoever you go, were it in your own country, and much more in a foreign land, it is at least a thousand to one, that you exchange for the worse when you quit the ministry of Mr. Jennings, with whose excellent character I am well acquainted, and in whose pulpit you have probably seen me, if you have seen me at all.

When I consider these things, I am very solicitous with regard to the end of them; and will plainly confess, I cannot but think there is a great deal of reason to fear lest this lovely flower which is now opening with so much beauty and fragrancy, should be blasted by too warm a sun, and wither in that luxurious soil to which it will be transplanted. Or, in plainer terms, I fear, what God forbid, that the impression of a religious education will wear off from your mind, and the vain allurements of an insnaring world will possess themselves of your heart, till by insensible degrees your virtue may be endangered and your soul ruined. I say not these things, Madam, to dissuade you from the voyage; no, it is not in my power to do it, and if it were, I should not by any means attempt it. But I represent the case in all its dangerous circumstances, so far as I apprehend them, that you may be awakened to a proper care in providing against them. And here it is evident, that your only security is in the protection and friendship of that God, who has all the seasons and elements under his command, and who, by his secret, but powerful, influence on the mind, can preserve it in the midst of temptation, and brighten it by all its trials.

And therefore my first advice is, that before you begin this important and doubtful voyage, you set yourself repeatedly to examine into the state of your soul, with regard to God and eternity. It would be doing you a great deal of wrong, to suppose you are ignorant of the state in which the gospel found us, and of that into which it is intended to bring us. You know the original claim of God upon us, and how far the most innocent and virtuous of us hath been from answering it exactly in all its extent. You know something of the fatal consequences which would have attended that revolt, had God treated us with rigorous severity; though none knows them in their full terror. You are acquainted with the gracious method he has taken of recovering us by a Redeemer from the ruin of the apostasy, and the way in which the invaluable blessings of the everlasting covenant are now offered to our acceptance. Let it be your immediate and diligent inquiry, whether you have fallen in with this merciful proposal, and have resolutely and entirely devoted yourself to God, with an humble dependence on the merits of his Son for your acceptance, and the assistance of his Spirit to form you to a holy temper, and animate you to the zealous discharge of all the duties he requires of you. If you have not yet entered yourself into this covenant, or are dubious whether you have done it or no, let it be your immediate care now to do it with the most serious consideration and entire consent, as knowing it to be absolutely necessary for your security and happiness in the safest and most cheering circumstances of life, and much more in such as I have now described. If you have the testimony of your conscience on the favourable side, as I would hope you have, permit me humbly to advise you, if you have a convenient opportunity, to confirm it in the most solemn manner at the table of the Lord. There commit your life and your hopes to his providential care. Open your heart to the influences of his grace; and publicly avow a determinate resolution that you will be the Lord's; that you will be constantly and eternally his; and that, in the strength of his Spirit, neither life nor death shall separate you from him.

When once this is done, you are happily armed

* Probably, he went to India before the young Lady was born, or during her infancy.

against all the uncertainties of life, and the prospects of death in whatever form it may appear. Your soul may be calm in the midst of the tempest; when thunders roll, and lightnings dart from above, and the waves are foaming and the seas roaring around you, when the hearts of the most experienced mariner and the most courageous commander are dismayed, you, Madam, with all the tenderness of your age and sex, may sit down with a sweet tranquillity, as the charge and favourite of him, who has universal nature under his control; you may say, in the triumphant words of the Psalmist, "God is my refuge and my strength, a very present help in every time of trouble. Therefore will I not fear in the midst of confusion; though the sea roar and be troubled, so that the mountains shake with the swelling thereof: the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is my refuge." Or, should the dreadful moment of shipwreck come, while ungodly wretches are meeting the first death with unknown agony, as apprehending that it will transmit them to all the terrors of the second, you may smile with a holy transport, when you see the rays of heavenly glory shooting through the gloomy passage; and, as Mr. Howe beautifully expresses it, may "embrace that friendly wave which, while you intended ———, should land you in heaven." On the other hand, should Providence, according to my most affectionate wishes and repeated prayers, conduct you in safety to your intended harbour, on this supposition of your early and sincere devotedness to God, you will be secure in the midst of temptation; not indeed in the strength of your own virtue, but in the watchful care of that good Shepherd, who tenderly carries the lambs of the flock in his bosom: every thing splendid and pleasing which you will meet with at ———, instead of alienating your heart from God, may be a means of raising it to him. All the advantages of your circumstances may be improved to the noblest purposes, and you may appear in that conspicuous station, as raised by Providence to display the charms of your character, and to recommend religion to others; as it never appears in a more amiable light than when practised by those who are entering on life, and are surrounded with the allurements of plenty and greatness.

And this, Madam, is what I would have you propose to yourself. It will indeed be happy for you, and for your dearest friends, if you continue safe in the midst of so many dangers. But methinks you ought not to rest here. I hope God will inspire you with a glorious ambition of adorning your profession by the lustre of uncommon virtue, and being eminently honourable and useful in life. For your assistance in this noble attempt, I will presume so far on your patience as to offer you some more particular advices, submitting them to your deliberate reflection, that you may judge how far they are necessary or important.

As God is the support of the whole world of his creatures, so I believe all, who are experimentally acquainted with religion, will readily allow, that proper and constant regards to God are the support of all the other branches of it. I would therefore, Madam, exhort you to the most diligent care in maintaining those regards. Let no day pass without some humble and affectionate visits to the throne of grace. Rejoice to think, that whithersoever you go, you are still in a province of that universal empire over which he presides; and as he is capable of being your best friend, remember, I entreat you, that neither duty nor prudence will permit you to neglect him. Let secret prayer and reading the Scriptures always be attended to with great diligence; and fix it as a maxim in your mind, that however the outward form may be gone through, these duties are in effect neglected, if they are not seriously and heartily performed.

Thankfully improve all those public advantages, which, when you arrive at the Factory, you may enjoy for the good of your soul. I would be much concerned, that you may not go abroad with an entire contempt of all religious opportunities which are not just such as you could wish. Though a form be probably less suited to your taste as well as mine, than the prayers we have been accustomed to, yet divine influences may make it very refreshing. I doubt not, but many pious souls in the established church, have daily converses with God in the offices of it (and I heartily rejoice in the thought). And as for the doctrines of it, you will not find much to complain of. The main doubt is, how these things will be handled. I hope Providence will so order it, that you may have the assistance of a clergyman, who will not only be careful to speak the words of truth and soberness, but will throughout the whole of his ministration and conversation be animated by a deep and lively sense of religion, an ardent zeal for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the salvation of souls. But if it should happen otherwise, endeavour to make the best of what you hear, and carry a few good books with you, which by the blessing of God may in part make up for the want of more suitable public assistances. You may then have an opportunity of hearing, as it were, some of the best of our preachers almost every day, and may be secure of meeting with some of the most valuable of their discourses. I would on this occasion recommend to you the three volumes of Dr. Doddridge's Sermons, his *Discourses on the Love of God*, his *Hymns, Psalms, and Lyric Poems*, Dr. *Hervey's Christian Letters*, in two volumes, and his *Sermons to Young People*, *Sermatt's Reasonableness of early Piety*, and I had almost said, above all the rest, Dr. *Wright's Treatise*

on Regeneration, and of the Deceitfulness of Sin. I see not well how any of these can be spared, and I shall desire you to accept of the two last, bound together, as a small testimony of my sincere friendship. Above all, Madam, I would most earnestly entreat you to make the Scriptures very familiar to you. It is by these that the *young may cleanse their way*, and in the morning of life be formed upon maxims of the truest and the most important wisdom. *David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*, and the *whole New Testament*, are the parts of Scripture which I would especially recommend; and would entreat you to read them, not in a hasty and cursory manner, but with deep reflection, and earnest prayer to God for the assistance of his Spirit in the study of them; and on such a perusal, I am confident, you will find a spirit, a beauty, and a glory in them beyond what the generality of the world apprehend. This guide alone is incomparably preferable to all the books and the friends upon earth without it. Follow it steadily, and it will lead you to heaven.

As to your behaviour to your fellow-creatures, the directions of Scripture will be highly serviceable. In the most important article, your great care, Madam, must be to accommodate the general precepts of it to your own particular circumstances of life, and you must beg that God would give you wisdom to do it.

You cannot but know, that a young lady is exposed to a variety of temptations peculiar to her age and sex, especially in the company of gentlemen, whose professions and conditions of life may not incline them to the greatest decency and sobriety of behaviour; and it will require great prudence on your part to manage well here. I would not injure so fair a character by insinuating the most distant caution against any thing that is infamously bad. Your principal difficulty will be in keeping yourself free from those importunities which are on many accounts inconvenient, though rejected with the greatest resolution and resentment. And here, Madam, I would by no means advise you to put on an air of severity in the conversation of men, as if you were apprehensive of some criminal design in all they said or did. Such a behaviour is so far from being ornamental, that I will frankly confess, it appears to me not only groundless and ridiculous, but supercilious too. Yet there is, if one knew how to describe it, a kind of reserve mixed with the most cheerful freedom; that gaiety which strikes an awe on the licentious beholder, and inspires a reverence even for the most gentle charmer. It would make a man blush at the secret consciousness of the least irregular thought with regard to so excellent, I had almost said so sacred, a creature. I am afraid, Madam, the delicacy of my subject has made me a little obscure; but I fancy on reflection, you will find something of a meaning in it: and I imagine it to be much the same with that, which is much better expressed in the following epigram, which may probably be the more agreeable to you, as it is to me, for being the production of a lady about your own age. I had it from a person of quality, and am told that copies are but in few hands.

While thirst of praise, and fond desire of fame,
In every age is every woman's aim,
With courtship pleased, of coldly torture proud,
Fond of a train, and happy in a crowd,
While vain coquets affect to be pursued,
And think they're honest if not grossly lewd,
On every fool bestowing some kind glance,
Each conquest owing to some lewd advance
Let this sage maxim be my virtue's guide,
In part to blame she is who has been tried,
He comes too near, who comes to be denied.

It would be a very easy matter to insist copiously on these hints, and to add many others which would not be foreign to the case before us. But my letter is grown already to a very uncommon size; and I fear, that if I should go on to enlarge it, the review will be a burthensome task. What is still omitted, if I judge right of your character, your own good sense will in a great measure supply, under the directions of God's word, and the influences of his Spirit. And let me only entreat you, often to *reflect* on your conduct, and consider your ways; for I am confident, that the generality of mankind who are undone for time and eternity, perish, not so much for want of knowing what is right, as through a failure of resolution in the pursuit of it, which is very much owing to the neglect of thought and reflection.

I add nothing further but my hearty prayer, which I shall frequently repeat, that a watchful Providence may continually surround you, and give the winds and the seas a charge concerning you; that the influences of his grace may secure you from all the temptations with which God is calling you to encounter; and may make of you a lovely example of all the virtues and graces of Christianity; that after a safe, honourable, and prosperous visit to the Indies, you may be restored to your native land in peace, with a rich increase both of temporal and spiritual blessings; so that, upon the whole, your present and future happiness may exceed all that we can particularly wish or pray for upon your account.

I am, dear Madam,
Your affectionate friend,
and obedient humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

P. S. If Providence continue my life till your return, it will be a very great pleasure to me to see you either here or at London, and to join with you in returning thanks for those divine favours to

which I have been so frequently recommending you in the sincerity of my heart.

LETTER VIII.

To a Young Gentleman, on his recovery from a dangerous illness.

1730

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, I think it not improbable that you may have learned my name from your excellent parents, who honour me with their friendship in a degree far beyond what I could ever pretend to have deserved. They early informed me of your illness, and recommended you to my earnest and affectionate prayers: which I will assure you, dear Sir, you have had, and shall continue to have a share in them. God has been gracious to us, and heard our prayers. He has brought you back from the borders of the grave, when you had received the sentence of death in yourself. And now, my dear friend, for so methinks I have a kind of hereditary right to call you, give me leave seriously to remind you of the goodness of God in this respect, and to call upon you in his name to a proper improvement of it. I doubt not, but in the intervals of your disorder, you had some solemn thoughts of death and eternity. I doubt not but you cried to God, and formed some purposes for his service. But I know how ready our treacherous hearts are to forget such deliverances, and to forget those vows of God that are upon us; and therefore let me, with all simplicity and plainness, though at the same time with the sincerest respect, renew the admonition as in the name of my great Lord and Master, who, I would hope, means you graciously in inclining me to write to you upon this occasion. I would beseech you seriously to examine your heart and ways, and to ask yourself before God, "What if the fever had finished its work, and brought me down to the dust of death, and my spirit had returned to God who gave it, how would it have been received by him?" You are descended from the most gracious pair that I think I ever knew. But they cannot convey grace to you. Even from them, excellent as they are, you derive a corrupt nature. Ask your own heart then, "Have I ever been earnest with God for renewing grace? Have I ever pleaded with him in prayer, that I might experience that change which the gospel requires, without which no man can enter the kingdom of heaven?" These are matters of infinite importance, which must lie at the root of all our hopes of heaven, or those hopes will prove like a spider's web. I beseech you, therefore, dear Sir, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by all your prospects in the eternal world, that you take these things under an attentive consideration. I hope you have thought of them. I would fain persuade myself to believe you are experimentally acquainted with them. But I would court you to apply your heart to them more and more. I know, Sir, that in your circumstances of life innumerable temptations will surround you; and it is a good thing in order to be fortified against them all, that the heart be established with grace. You have all the encouragement you can desire to attempt the work of serious religion, and that betimes; for it must be done immediately, or perhaps it may not be done at all, probably it will not. You have a gracious God to go to, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. You have a most compassionate Redeemer, who shed his blood for the salvation of perishing sinners; and I humbly hope for your salvation. The Spirit of God has conquered hearts much harder than yours can be, even supposing you are now in an unrenewed state. You are the seed of God's servants: you were early devoted to God in baptism: you have a large stock of prayers laid up in the presence of God for you. I do really apprehend, even the covenant of God with believing parents bears a favourable aspect upon their children. And though I dare not say nor think, that it secures their salvation; for I fear fact lies strongly against such a presumption, as we are sure it did even in the children of Abraham, yet there is some peculiar encouragement for such to seek the God of their fathers. I believe the Spirit strives peculiarly with them; and that when they seek it, it is more immediately and more fully communicated to them than generally to others. And sure I am, that those early instructions they have received, have often a blessed resurrection in their hearts, even after they have been long forgotten, and the seed, which seemed to have perished, often brings forth fruit in abundance. And therefore, dear Sir, thank God and take courage. In his name and strength, set out in your heavenly pilgrimage, with the word of God in your hand and heart, and with your eyes to the Spirit of God, as your guide and strength: and be assured, there are many who will bid you good speed in the name of the Lord, and will rejoice to assist you in your course. I am not without hope, that our gracious God may at length favour me with more immediate and renewed opportunities of serving you.* In the mean time be assured, that I most cordially love you, though personally unknown. Be assured, my heart overflows with a true concern for your welfare, that I pour out my soul before God in prayer on your account; and that to hear of your health

* It appears from [illegible]

and happiness, and, above all, that your soul prospers, will yield me unutterable delight; for I am not merely in form, but with the utmost sincerity and tenderness of heart,

Dear Sir,
Your most faithful and affectionate friend,
and humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

LETTER IX.*

Northampton, Dec. 8, 1742.

Dear Sir J——

Permit me frankly to speak my mind to you on a head, on which I fear to be silent, lest I should fail in a branch of duty and gratitude to a gentleman to whom I think myself obliged, and whom I would gladly serve to the best of my little ability. Be not angry, when I tell you, I was heartily grieved at the liberties you took last night, in using the venerable name of the ever blessed God in so light a manner; and in the needless appeals which you made to him, as to things which would have been believed on much less evidence than the word of Sir J——. I have not heard so much of that kind of language, except when passing by people of low education in the streets, for some years; whether it be owing to the complaisance with which gentlemen commonly treat our profession, or, as I rather hope, to a sense of what is in itself reasonable and decent.

I am sure, Sir, that your knowledge of men and things is capable of making conversation pleasant and improving, and of filling up your full share in it without these dreadful expletives; for dreadful I must call them, when considered in a view to that strict account, which must so certainly and so quickly be rendered up to God for all our words as well as our actions. I was the more solicitous, Sir, to mention the affair to you in consideration of your office as a magistrate; the dignity of which must certainly be most effectually supported by avoiding whatever it might require you to punish in others. In this view, Sir, permit me to entreat you to join your efforts with those of all other wise and good men to discountenance, and, if possible, to drive out of the world, this unprofitable enormity of swearing in common conversation; concerning the evil of which, I am sure it is not necessary to enlarge, when addressing myself to a gentleman of your good understanding.

I conclude, Sir, with my most affectionate good wishes and prayers for you, that the whole of your conduct in every circumstance of life, may be such as will yield the most pleasing reflections in the awful hour of death, and the most comfortable account before the divine tribunal to which we are hastening; and in the serious views of which, I have presumed to give you this trouble, hoping you will esteem it, as it undoubtedly is, a proof, that I am with great sincerity,

Honoured Sir,
Your most faithful
and obedient humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.†

LETTER X.‡

Northampton, October 14, 1743.

My dear Friend,

Your letters, wise and good and kind as they were cordial indeed, and felt as much, had perhaps remained some weeks longer unanswered, if another had not reached me by the last post, on such an occasion as would admit of no delay; but which, tenderly as you have adjusted the matter, necessarily upbraids my former silence, and makes me quite ashamed of it. Yet sure I am, you would pity me, if you knew what I am necessitated to write. Indeed I spend so much time with my pen in my hand, that I am astonished at my own health, which was never better, excepting a pain in my right hand, which grasping the pen so much has occasioned, and by which I sometimes fear lest any tendon be strained, or perhaps contracted: yet, I thank God, it seldom affects any motion but that which seems to have produced it. Only, my good friend, remember this when I seem ungrateful to so much goodness as yours; which I really think, frequent and constant as my addresses to the throne of grace for you are, and tenderly as my heart interests itself in all the concerns of your health, usefulness, and comfort, I do not, and cannot, by any means, suitably repay.

Now I have begun I could write to you all day, and fill a great many sheets, were I to indulge my own inclinations: but as I know I have but a few minutes to write in, I must use them to the most material purpose that I can. But I cannot come to the important and affecting occasion and subject of

* He had resolution to reprove, in a gentle but effectual manner, persons of condition, words spoken by persons of rank and fashion, and had the happy art of compliplacing them upon some good reason they possessed, which he represented their irregularities cast by the means prevented their shewing any resentment. Ed. p. 150.

† After having written this letter, the Doctor made the following remark:—"I thought it more respectful to write to Sir J—— on this occasion than to speak to him before the company; but it caused his dismissal presently. I am the more in the dark, lest I should seem to be influenced by the interest of God, and the good of my friends, and the worst of men."

‡ To the Rev. Mr. Wood of Norwich.

your last, till I have congratulated you and your good lady on your recovery, and the re-establishment of your health to such a degree; in which I adore that God, who hears prayers, for his compassion to me and to his church. Tenderly did I wait every circumstance of information, during the time of your dangerous illness; and one way or another, so kindly did Providence order it, I had more frequent intelligence relating to you, than I ever had in double that time before or since. I doubt not but your resolutions for the service of God, your Deliverer and your Saviour, are renewed; and I rejoice in the support he gave you, and the mercy he has wrought out for you, methinks, as if my life and soul were in the place of yours.

But I will now, lest I leave not myself room to do it, condole with you and your friends at Woodbridge, on the death of that excellent and worthy servant of Christ, your uncle. Mr. Barker had informed me of the affecting providence by Mr. Ashworth, from whom I received the news of it near a week ago, and had desired me to advise the people to a suitable minister if I could. Truly, I think Mr. K—— a very suitable one, if they have no objection to a Baxterian Calvinist, (which, by the way, I think a very proper expression,) and I believe, they would find the good effects of his excellent gifts, for they are distinguished; and that the seriousness and sweetness of his temper, and prudence of his conduct, would make them very happy. I must profess to you, that I find it extremely difficult to direct vacant churches, in the moderately and Calvinistical way, (as most that apply to me are,) to suitable ministers. And I have hardly ever known the time when it was more difficult. I have no pupil to send out till Midsummer, and then hope, if God spare our lives, to furnish the churches with several excellent persons. The most probable means I can think of to direct you which way to look, in subordination to that upward prospect which I know you, dear Sir, have your eyes ever upon, is to mention two or three pious, sensible, and in the main, popular men, whom narrow circumstances force from their present situation, and to leave you to correspond with any of them as you may think fit for either of the places in question. The first of these I think you know, Mr. Wilkinson, now at Deal, if a wife and three children, with little but a place to depend upon, be no objection. He is an admirable preacher, and a most lovely man. My neighbour, Mr. Gainsborough, of Newport-Pagnel, will leave his people; he is a worthy man, but low-spirited, and seems to have some objections against Suffolk; but whether equally against all parts of it, I know not. Mr. Affleck, whom I formerly mentioned, is very much esteemed in Holland, where he is now supplying, during good Mr. Longueville's absence, and he is certainly, both in prayer and preaching, in my judgment, uncommonly excellent; and his temper and character remarkably good. But, as I formerly told you, he is a Scotchman; though really in his pronunciation much mended. He is a Calvinist, but of great moderation, exemplary humility, zeal, and activity for the glory of Christ and salvation of souls. This is all the information I can give you that I think material, and I leave you to advise our friends at Woodbridge and Wrentham as you judge most convenient.

Let me now conclude with our united and most affectionate services to yourself and lady, not forgetting my other friends at Norwich and in your former neighbourhood. I must not, by any means, omit to beg your prayers for Mrs. Doddridge, who expects to be confined in a short time. You know what a good wife is, and she is one of the best, and rises in value every year. I am,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

P. DODDRIDGE.

P. S. Fain would I, if possible, end my Family Expositor; with the third volume of which I rejoice, if you and my other friends are pleased. Truly I spared no pains to make it worthy their acceptance. I continue daily going on with the remaining books of the New Testament, and am now in Jude; so that I hope to end the first copy, from which, if I should be removed, the work might be printed, by the end of December: but I have carried the notes no further than Ephesians, being intent on the paraphrase, version, and improvements, as what to general edification seemed most material.

LETTER XI.

S—— May 4 1736.

I have sent my pen from a sermon which I am preparing for the press as fast as I can, lest it should be out of season to write to my dear friends. Mr. Wood, a letter, which must in every respect be unsatisfactory to him and myself, both with regard to its length and the particulars it will contain. I applied to Mr. C—— on behalf of Mr. F—— with all the earnestness any of his friends could wish; but had the mortification to hear by the last post from that gentleman, that the place which I was soliciting was disposed of before Mr. F—— died. I beg you would assure good Mr. F——, with my most cordial salutations, that I should have rejoiced in an opportunity of serving his grandson; and that I am extremely glad to hear he deserves so very good a character from such a

person as Mr. Wood, whose recommendation weighs with me as much as that of any person I could name.

Much am I troubled to tell you, that at last, after much deliberation with myself, I am obliged to determine not to attempt seeing my Norfolk friends this year, though they are justly so peculiarly dear to me. I intended to have come, I longed for the journey, and rejoiced in the prospect, but various important considerations forbid it, and oblige me to defer it one year; but I hope, if God spare our lives, nothing will then prevent it. I have lost my assistant. I expect company in the vacation. I have a manuscript of Dr. Watts's, which will require great care to prepare for the press. When I was absent last summer, a Moravian teacher crept in, and has made a sad breach among us, and erected a little congregation, consisting chiefly of those who were members with us, and once among those who seemed most cordially affected towards me, some of them aged and experienced Christians. It is now a crisis among us. God seems bringing in many to supply the place of the seceders. It appears to me that my ministry at home was never more necessary. I am very desirous of finishing my notes on the New Testament, that if I should die quickly, an event which, entire as my health now is, I accustom myself to expect, the world may lose as little as possible. But indeed by me it can (fondly as your friendship magnifies the little creature) lose no great matter at any event. O that I could unbosom a little of my heart to you! but already am I called to lecture: what shall I say in the broken moment that remains? That every line you write to me increases my love, and, when you show not how very much you overrate my importance, increases my esteem. I think with horror of the character and case of the poor wretch that is gone, and should rejoice to hear that he died awakened and trembling. Such notions of faith, and of an abrogated conversion, if I may so call it, lost in years of folly and wickedness, seem to me full as mischievous as that of popish indulgences; and both spring from the same fountain, and are abetted by the same supporters, I mean the great enemies of our salvation. My wife joins her services to all, for she knows them all by name, and several of them by valuable tokens of friendship, indeed I may say all of them. Excuse this sad scrawl, which the dampness of the paper, just sent me in, almost obliterates. Mr. Lincolne may expect to hear from me soon, in the mean time please to tell him, his son goes on and set out well. But oh, the labourers are very, very few. Farewell, my dear friend. I am,

Your ever affectionate friend and brother,
and greatly obliged humble servant,
P. DODDRIDGE

LETTER XII.

Northampton, Feb. 27, 1744-5.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR former letter had so much prepared me to hear of the death of that worthy and useful servant of Christ, Mr. Saunders, that your last, which brought me the melancholy news, did not at all surprise me; though it could not but tenderly affect me. I have lost a friend who was mindful of me in his prayers; but God will remember his prayers and yours: and perhaps, I owe the pleasant manner in which I am now going on, and the visible blessing which, unworthy as I am, does indeed attend me in my congregation and writings, my academy and family, in part to the prayers of those whom death has long since separated from me, as well as of those my dear friends whom a kind Providence continues, and particularly and singularly, I am persuaded, to yours. May those petitions which I am so frequently repeating for you be as graciously regarded, as I trust they will, by the God of all mercy; for though I am less worthy of being heard, you are much more worthy of being remembered.

I take my part with my dear friend in the pleasure his humane heart must find in being the messenger of agreeable tidings to the distressed, or in seeing the appearances or openings of Providence in their favour, and it will always be a delight to me to be in any degree the instrument of giving him such a satisfaction. I shall not fail to inform Miss Ekins,* when I write, of the manner in which her letter was received by her cousin, and to cultivate to the utmost of my power every friendly and every generous disposition in her mind. Pray that she may be guarded from the snares which her tender age, lively temper, and plentiful fortune may concur to expose her to.

I fear my zeal to serve your neighbourhood, at your request, has transported me too far. Immediately on receiving yours about a month ago, I wrote to engage Mr. Laugher, of Stamford, an in-

* This excellent lady, daughter of Thomas Ekins, Esq. of Chester on the Water, in Northamptonshire, was Dr Doddridge's ward: she afterwards married the Rev. Dr James Stonhouse, and died December 10th, 1788. The following inscription on her monument erected in the Hot-Wells Chapel, near Bristol, written by her friend MISS HANNAH MORE, does but speak her exemplary virtues.

Come, resignation! wipe the human tear
Domestic anguish drop o'er virtue's bier;
But selfish sorrow hush the fond complaint,
Nor mourn the God she loved detain the saint.

Truth, meekness, patience, honoured shade! were thine
And holy hope, and charity divine:
Though these thy fortlet being could not save,
Thy faith subdued the terrors of the grave.

O! if thy living excellence could teach,
Death has a better emphasis of speech
In death thy last, best lesson still impart,
And write, PREPARE TO DIE, on every heart!

HANNAH MORE.

genious, serious, acceptable and worthy youth, once my pupil, and I think movable, to make you a visit. He has accepted the proposal, and will wait on you for your directions about the middle of next week, if God prosper his journey; and he will be where you please to order him for three following Sundays. If Denton have not young Mr. Saunders in view, and dare venture on so young a man as Mr. Laugher, who will be preaching among them, I hope he might be of service there. You might depend on his regard for your counsels, but I fancy, one way or other, his journey may answer some good end; as, being acquainted with him, you may have your eye upon him in future vacancies, as one whom I would wish removed from the little handful of people, among whom his good abilities are almost lost, to a station of more extensive service. I commit him and you to divine guidance. If he be agreeable, he may perhaps return soon after the time you mention, or if he cannot, I may send you another supply, and will endeavour to do so when you desire it. O, how pleasant is it to assist such a cause and such a friend! I was never better, but never busier, yet see what a long letter I have scribbled, but it is to dear Mr. Wood, who has a right to a thousand times more acknowledgments than he can ever receive from his ever affectionate, faithful, and obliged

P. DODDRIDGE.

P. S. I shall order Ophiomaches on your recommendation. Have you seen Bower's excellent History of the Popes?

LETTER XIII

[illegible] 1732

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I quitted you with so much tender regret, after having received so many engaging favours, and spent so many delightful hours with you, I retained a secret hope, that I should long ere this have renewed the converse, in such an imperfect manner as pen and paper would have allowed me to do it, but the continued hurry of every day and hour that I spent in and about London, gave no opportunity of doing it, in a manner that would have been in any degree satisfactory to me. Of my safe arrival hither, I knew Miss Ekins would inform you, and what I wrote on the outside of her letter in short-hand, would just acquaint you with my getting well to London. That I esteem you as one of the worthiest men upon earth, and one of the most able and faithful of ministers in the present age; that I look on your excellent lady as one of the wisest and best of her sex, and number you both among the tenderest, most engaging, and delightful friends, I think you already are as sure of as any words of mine can make you; and you must be sure that we have a deep and lasting sense of the numberless obligations you heaped upon us at Norwich, and wherever else we had your company, unless we are, what I think we never shall or can be, lost to all sense of friendship and gratitude.

I was desirous, when I could write to you, to write at least a page or two and to give you some little intelligence as to the state in which I found things in London, and the probable success of the schemes which you know I was forming. Now here in the general, I am to tell you that, according to your repeated prayers when I was with you, and I doubt not since I was separated from you, the hand of my God hath been upon me for good, and whithersoever I have gone I have prospered. You may remember, that there were three affairs of a public nature which were the objects of my particular solicitude. The procuring a third tutor for my academy—the providing for lads not yet fit for academical education—and the doing something for the service to New Jersey, for the propagation of Christianity abroad. Providence has accomplished the first of these schemes, by the unexpected success of the second; and has opened some promising hopes concerning the third, beyond what had entered into my mind when I parted with you. The want of ministers and students is so easy and felt, and the necessity of the scheme for educating lads not yet ripe for academical studies, is grown so apparent, that between three and four score pounds per annum, have been, by well-disposed persons, without any pressing solicitation from me, subscribed for that purpose in and about London; and out of that it has been determined, that besides Mr. Clark, who with a salary of forty pounds per annum and his board, is to be tutor of [illegible] another tutor is to be maintained with a salary of thirty pounds, besides his board, who is to teach the languages, and as his salary chiefly arises from this scheme, he is also to superintend the education of those lads, who are [illegible] exercises, to attend with my pupils, and to make my inspections, though not under my personal instruction, in their grammatical studies; and I design those I find considerably in view before. I have heard of some others well disposed for this purpose, and whom I hope I shall, with this assistance, perhaps increased by applications yet in view, be able to obtain good and worthy ministers for. As for the scheme of the New Jersey, Mr. Allen, who came over on purpose to negotiate it, unhappily was taken ill [illegible] at the Old Bailey, and is dead, but I have had large conversation with Colonel Williams, who was the

second man in the expedition to Cape Breton, and by whom indeed it was chiefly projected, and he encourages me to hope that Mr. Pemberton, the minister at New York, on my favouring the scheme, as I certainly shall, will come to Britain, and make a tour over its northern and southern parts, carrying along with him two converted and civilized Indians, as a specimen of what has already been done. He proposes to attempt a collection for the present in the chief congregations which he may visit on this journey; after which, he may very properly write such a letter in his own name to the dissenting ministers in England, as I expressed my thoughts of writing, and may with yet more decency and strength recommend and enforce the advices laid down in my preface to my sermon at Kettering, as this might seem the happiest crisis we could expect for carrying that plan into execution.—As for the affair of Breslaw, the good Archbishop of Canterbury did all he could to procure a brief for them, or a contribution some other way.

You will perhaps be surprised to hear, that application has been made to me from a son of Lord William Manners, brother to the Duke of Rutland, to desire admission among my pupils, though intended for a clergyman in the established church: and if he be willing to acquiesce in the terms and orders of my family, I shall not refuse it. I wonder at this one way, and I wonder also at Mr. ——'s purpose of removing his son from me: I fear it is either on some misrepresentation or foolish behaviour of the young gentleman, for I have always treated him with the fidelity of a real friend, and with the tenderness of a parent; and I am well satisfied, that, especially on the improvements which by means of a third tutor will be made in our course, there is no place of education in England, where, if a youth will do himself justice, greater advantages are to be found. But you see how I have run on. Were I to begin a second sheet, I should fill it before I had emptied half my heart. Let me conclude with the most affectionate and grateful services to all my good friends at Norwich, and those at Yarmouth, when you see them. My wife joins with me in these salutations, of which you and your charming lady claim a very distinguished share. O that we could see you here, and give you both, as a poor grateful child expressed it, "all your care again." Mr. Neal and Mr. Barker are particular in their salutations to you. I am,

With much more affection than can be expressed,

My dear friend, yours,

Blessed be God, for ever,

P. DODDRIDGE.

LETTER XIV.

Northampton, Dec. 4, 1750.

It is such a pleasure to me to write to you, that I sometimes am ready to wonder, I can command myself so far as not to be quite troublesome by the number and length of my epistles: and yet such are my daily and hourly engagements, that I often defer answering your kind, endearing, charming letters till I have reason to be ashamed, and till one of them overtakes another. This I am sure you will excuse, and could wish you knew how frequently and affectionately I remember you, and what an inward, heartfelt sense I have of your great importance to the public, as well as the value of your personal friendship. Your last letter illustrates both, and your generous readiness even to part with a most beloved and important friend, if it may be for her good, is a noble instance of it. As for Miss S——'s affair I will say nothing of it here, as I intend her at least a few lines, which I shall enclose with this, and which I know she will communicate to you. Of other things to which your letters refer, I will speak in as few words as I can, that I may get the more minutes for that great affair which lies so much on the head and heart of us both. For the congregation at Harlestone I am very tenderly concerned, but I am not able to assist them. I beg you will present my most cordially affectionate respects to Mr. Matchet, and all the rest of the gentlemen that signed with him, and tell them, that I am sensible of the obligations they have laid upon me by their very respectful and affecting application, and that I think it the part of gratitude not to send any one to them, concerning whom I have any doubt whether he would be thoroughly suitable or not; and that, therefore, in this extreme penury of supplies, which is by far the greatest I have ever known, I find myself incapable of assisting them. Yet I have a young gentleman with me of such a stamp as they would I am sure choose, who will enter on public work about Midsummer next. I would by no means have them wait for him, as it is impossible for me to answer for the views which may open upon him, or the turn his inclinations may take from unknown contingencies which may arise; but when he comes out, if they happen to be vacant, and he chooses the journey, I will, God willing, endeavour to engage him to make them a visit. Be pleased also to make my due compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Baker, in which Mrs. Doddridge concurs, renewing our thanks for the very obliging and agreeable entertainment we received at Denton; and mine, for the most complaisant letter, with which that very worthy friend has been pleased since to honour me. How happy should I have been in an interview with such worthy

brethren and excellent friends as you tell me assembled at Rendham, at the opening of the new place of worship there. I assure you, dear Sir, and I beg the favour of you to assure the gentlemen who met there, when you see any of them, that there are no associations of ministers any where, which I attend with greater delight than those of Norfolk and Suffolk. Your remark on Colonel Williams's wonderful modesty is the very same which has been made by others. How amiable in such a hero! for such no doubt he is: and the acquisition of Cape Breton was, perhaps, more owing to him, taking in the whole process of his counsels as well as actions, than to any other person in the world. Yet how is he rewarded? Truly, nobly by Providence, if he carry off one whom I esteem among the greatest treasures of our island or our world. Mr. Finne is a most excellent person: he has been pretty successful in Holland, and such good consequences have already attended the applications made to several of our country congregations, that I believe a college of the reformed (that is, the Calvinists) will be formed at Breslaw; which will have a wonderful influence on the state of religion in Silesia, and probably be attended with the greatest effects of any thing that has happened in Germany, since that wonderful affair at Hall, if that which has been a mighty blessing is to be excepted. The intended college, after the German plan, is to comprehend all sorts of schools, but chiefly those for academical learning and the education of ministers; in which I apprehend that zealous, faithful, and able servant of Christ, Mr. Finne, (to whom I hope you will write a Latin letter,) will be greatly, if not principally, employed. I beg you will present my particular and most respectful services to that very venerable and amiable man, Mr. Crompton, and my hearty thanks for that parngraph in his very kind letter you were so good as to transcribe. Tell him, I read it with a mixture of pleasure and confusion; and that I honour and revere him more than I can express, and should think it a singular blessing of my life to have such an example and such a counsellor often near me. In the mean time I pray God long to spare his very useful life, and to relieve greatly in his wonderful restoration. As to the New Jerseys, I have written largely to Mr. Pemberton, whom I hope to see here in the summer; and leave all that relates to the scheme. I hinted to you *in integro*, till he or some other minister of credit and influence may visit us from those parts, and then I hope something will be done. In the mean time, I have sent your youth's scheme all round our country, and into some neighbouring parts, and find such encouragement from my own congregation and some others, that I hope we shall have a pretty tolerable fund. I cannot but observe at the same time, a wonderful concurrence of providence in raising up several hopeful and promising youths, who are desirous of education for the ministry, and I intend to take in all, in whom I am thoroughly satisfied; trusting in God to prepare oil, so long as there are empty vessels, and when we are broke I will beg for more. The addition of another tutor here is a circumstance of great importance; and as the scheme of an academy at Lisbon is entirely laid aside *sine die*, I am ready to believe, though I do not certainly know it, that we shall have some youths sent down to us from that quarter. But all this I leave with God, earnestly praying, that good may be done, and the interest of religion revived, and leaving it to him to determine how and by whom. If he determine to glorify his power and grace in the weakness and unworthiness of the instrument, I may have some hope that he will make use of me.

You see I am beginning on a new piece of paper but I must fill only a small part of it. I much deplored the death of Mr. Ford, of Sudbury. He was a man of great talents, and, which is incomparably better, great spirituality, integrity, and zeal for Christ; and we might, considering his age and constitution, have expected much service from him for many future years. But this providence adds to the joy my heart feels in hearing of the comfortable state of your health, for which I offer many prayers. I hope you will live to bless the world many, many years after I have left it. As for Sudbury, I have now in town with me Mr. Holman and Mr. Fen, who came to hear Mr. Hextal, of Creaton, once my pupil, a most pious, humble, zealous, and very able man, only of a weak constitution, who would, perhaps, be as fit to succeed Mr. Ford as any man that can be named. It would be a great grief to me to lose him from these parts, but I would not wrong the public so far, as to wish to retain him in so small a place all his life. I shall be glad that Mr. Taylor [illegible] may bestow his time and labours on unlocking Hebrew words, and hope the key he has left [illegible] Paul's Epistles, will not be able to keep the true sense quite shut up: indeed I think the door opens almost of its own accord. If I live to finish my Exposition on the New Testament, the proposals for which I am just publishing, and in which I am going on daily, and have now proceeded in translating to the Corinthians, (1 Epist. iii.) I shall make an attempt on the Minor Prophets, of which indeed I have already begun to make a new translation from the Hebrew, for my own entertainment and use, and I shall be glad of any light which Mr Taylor's Lexicon can give me.

Dear Lady ——— is in a very declining way. Pray devoutly for her important life; and pray for a blessing on the Family Expositor; and may God [illegible]

would open its way into families, where it may be useful. I would go through all the labour attending it with pleasure, though I were sure I should not get one shilling by it.

The distemper among the horned cattle has again visited these parts; though, blessed be God, not with violence. All our horses too have been ill, yet few are dead. The small-pox is broke out dreadfully in the neighbouring villages—a most malignant sort. One rash young fellow, coming to a wake at Harpole, in our neighbourhood, from the bed of one infected with it, conveyed it to above forty of that village; all blooming persons, of whom many are dead. In seventeen families, three in a family, on an average, are down; and fourteen villages are invaded by it, and all in consequence of some of the inhabitants being present at that fatal dancing bout, the 15th of last month. The terror this has occasioned is not to be imagined. Oh, when shall we see the importance of inoculating children!* in consequence of which, whole towns have passed safely through, and not one life been lost. But you say right, the cause of these desolations is to be sought higher. The indolence and sensuality of the professing world terrifies me much. Yet, blessed be God, some are brought to a sense of their duty and danger, nor does he leave me without encouragement on this head. Much pleasure and satisfaction have I, when I can run away from the world, and spend half a day in meditation and prayer: and did we more frequently attempt this, I believe we should find the work of the Lord more prosperous among us. Religious societies are forming, and many learn to pray, truly, I think better than their ministers often do. O, these are things which rejoice my heart. I am quite well, and in good spirits. I never had a more promising set of pupils about me. God hear your prayers on my account. Go on, and heap as many blessings upon me as you can; and help me forward to heaven apace. And now I will add a paragraph of good Lady ———'s last letter to me, which I can more truly apply to you, my very excellent friend:—— "Prayers from me you will have: and I believe one of the last I put up will be to beg an abundant reward for you." The voice involuntary of my heart is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." I expect soon to be unfettered from flesh and blood. I will, should the kind lot be appointed for me, rejoice over you as your ministering spirit; and I shall always have good news to bring you. I will watch carefully to protect your life long upon earth, for the sake of thousands; and then, by gentle operation, help to unfold your garments of mortality, and with my fellow-companions, waft your gracious spirit to the bridal feast of the Lamb, and with him, on Mount Sion, shout your glorious deliverance. Farewell, my kindest, best of friends, and live assured of the ever affectionate regard of ——." What have I to add—but instead of — —

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

* Dr Doddridge published a small piece at Mr Sans concerning Inoculation for the Small-pox, which was written and published purposely with a view to remove the common objections from religious scruples.

LETTER XV.

Northampton, Dec. 22, 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is indeed true, that my affection for you is very great; but it is as true, that it cannot be greater than your almost unexampled goodness demands. In every thing but love I shall die your debtor. I cannot in these straits of time answer your excellent letter as it deserves; but I have been immediately mindful of the contents. As soon as I read it, I sat down and wrote two letters into Scotland, the one to Mr. Webster, the other to Mr. Robertson; and have pressed an answer from both as soon as may be.

On Thursday morning, at the appointed time, though my usual business and duties would have engaged me another way, my poor imperfect requests, hardly worthy to be called prayers, were offered for our two excellent friends; I hope with something of that partiality and disinterestedness of which you give so noble an example. As to the result, I expect the leadings of Providence to determine it much more out of regard to the petitions of others than to my own.

Thus much for the principal subjects of your letters. For the rest—receive our united salutations in the warmest terms which friendship, and love, and gratitude, can dictate. Pity me, and pray for me, as you do, in the midst of so many hurries. Oh, my poor, poor attempts of service! They shame me continually. My prayers, my sermons, my lectures, my books, (in hand,) my letters, all daily shame me. A secret consciousness of meaning well, and the remembrance of the great compassion of our heavenly Father, and divine Master, are almost my only supports. Remember me daily. O that I had more time and heart for secret devotion. Dear Dr. Clark's death has been a deep wound. Sadly did I perform the last office of respect to him. But I must not enlarge. Pray for the success of the Family Expositor. I am also printing the funeral sermon for my excellent friend at St. Albans. Lady ——— continues very ill. I fear we shall soon lose her too. But the Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock &c.

I bless God, we are all pretty well, colds excepted. But the small-pox rages around the town, and we have a very bad fever in it: and a few days suffice for the journey of many into eternity, and may suffice for mine. May I but live for Christ while I continue here, and leave it to him to turn the key whenever he sees fit. God is adding serious lads to what we may call the humanity class, and so many others are offering themselves, that I begin to doubt how they will be provided for: but we must draw on the inexhaustible bank of the divine bounty and faithfulness, and think often of Jehovah-jireh. Respects to all friends at Norwich, shall in very deed conclude this hasty scrawl from,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend, brother, and servant,
in everlasting bonds,

P. DODDRIDGE.

I have, at least, fifty unanswered letters before me.

LETTER XVI.

Northampton, Jan. 15, 1750-1.

DEAR SIR,

As I am much indisposed with a cough, which has lately been attended with a pain in my breast, and which forces me, which is a sad calamity, to lose my mornings in bed; and as I must this morning, though it is now between nine and ten, before I go to my academical work, send up part of Dr. Clark's funeral sermon, which I am to transcribe, that the press may not stand still, yet must I write you a few lines. But alas, my head and heart are so full, that many pages would not contain their full meaning. Let me thank you and my two excellent friends, so soon to become one, for the very delightful letter with which you have all honoured and comforted me. I hope the resolution of this day fortnight was under the best direction, and will be attended with the happiest consequences. I rejoice greatly to hear of the favour which the Colonel and his lady intend me.—One Mr. Samuel Davies, of Hanover County in Virginia, has sent me a charming letter of good news from a far country, which I want to communicate to your society, that you may praise God with me. Transcribing long letters is a painful drudgery. I think you should make a little purse to pay postage of such letters, and I would transmit them, and you should return them; and in that case I may perhaps send you this for a beginning. But I run on too far. I must only add, that Providence seems to engage Mr. ——, whom I intended for Harlestone, another way, and there is such a dearth of ministers as distresses my heart. You have, I hope, heard the good news from Ireland of a remarkable revival of religion there.—But alas, a bell rings which forces me to conclude. Pray tell Mr. Frost he cannot long so much to hear from me as I do to write to him; and let him know, that yesterday to amuse myself, as I took physic and might not write much, I marshalled my unanswered letters, and found them one hundred and six, near one quarter of which reached me since Friday noon, and it was then Monday evening, and all this, though I have written between fifty and sixty letters the last fourteen days with my own hand, having no secretary. And yet I sometimes think it would be almost employment enough for all my time to acknowledge a friendship like yours, and my many obligations to your tender, constant, generous love. Farewell, dear excellent man; and may the God who has given me so incomparable a friend, spare him to bless the world long after it has lost, if that be any loss.

Dear Sir,

Your ever faithful, affectionate, and obliged,

P. DODDRIDGE.

LETTER XVII

[illegible] 1750-1.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE wrote such a multitude of letters of late, and have received so many, that not having always been so exact as I ought to have been in making memorandums, I hardly know what I have and what I have not answered, and with regard to you I am the more uncertain, as I may mistake some particular messages sent to you in Colonel [illegible]'s letter some time since, for an answer to that of yours, which informed me of his marriage; but of this I am sure, that every way I am in your debt, and always shall be so: and I can add, that as there are few on earth whom I equally honour and love, none whom I more constantly remember among my best friends, so there is none whose letters more constantly delight and refresh me. Yours of the 20th of March, however, I am sure is unanswered, and I must now entreat you to a few hasty lines to accept my thanks for it, and the former, with the assurances of the most tender sympathy with you in all you have suffered and do suffer by the death of some valuable friends, the removal of others, especially that incomparable one who has lately left us, and whom I fear I shall see no more in this world. Your own disposition, and that of your excellent lady; the wickedness of those of whom your great and generous candour has believed too well of; and the afflictions of those whose sorrows you so [illegible]

heart by so tender compassion makes your own : all these things I would feel for you, and particularly for poor Mr. ———— , to whom I entreat you to give my services, assuring him that both I and Miss ———— are much touched with his case.

My heart has been much set on promoting the youths' scheme. I dispersed your papers all over the country, but, to my great grief, have not found in many of our congregations that encouragement which I hoped. Something however is done, and much more in proportion from London than from the country. There are however nine lads, some of them very promising, who are here supported by it ; and I sometimes think two of them will offer themselves as missionaries to New York, to plant the gospel among the Indians there ; and glad at my heart should I be, if my only son were desirous of being the third.

I am at present under great concern for the illness, I fear the dangerous illness, of my generous, faithful, endeared friend, Mr. Lyttelton. It is the smallest part of this concern, that it prevents him from doing that service to my subscription to the remaining volumes of the Family Expositor, which he was resolved to have attempted, and which, with so great an interest, he might probably enough have effected. The greater part of that disappointment to me is, that it may prevent it coming into the hands of some in higher life to whom it may otherwise have no access : but God limits or extends all such prospects at pleasure, and I desire to refer it to him with what degrees of encouragement the work shall be published, and indeed, whether it shall be published or not. The three volumes will hardly be published at so small a price as a thousand pounds, and I shall judge it the part of prudence, and therefore of duty, not to send them to the press on any terms on which I shall not be secure ; and if there be such a number subscribed for or bespoke by booksellers as to effect that, I shall go on with the publication as fast as I can ; and bless God for such an opportunity of doing my public homage to his word, and endeavouring, with all integrity and simplicity, to make it understood, and to enforce it on men's consciences according to the little ability he has been pleased to give me ; which truly I think so little, that I am sometimes almost ashamed of having undertaken so great a work.

I have, of late, been much indisposed with a cold, which is returned again, but not with so much violence as before. I know I have your prayers, and I delight in the thought. We are tending to one blessed home. Our interview at Norwich was pleasant, how much more will that be which we expect in our Father's house. This poor letter has been written *raptim* at several times. I have filled my four pages, and yet seem but to have begun. But I must conclude with every good wish for you and yours that the tenderest friendship can form : nor can I hope ever to tell my dear Mr. Wood how faithfully and affectionately I am his,

P. DODDRIDGE.

LETTER XVIII.

Northampton, May 11, 1751.

My dear Friend,

Receive in a few words my thanks for your last very kind letter, and my condolences on the death of good Mr. Holman, which grieves me exceedingly. It would be some consolation to me, under this affliction, which at present comes not alone, could I meet you at Walpole on Wednesday sevennight. I have much to say, but have no time, only must assure of my sympathy with you in dear Mrs. Wood's frequent indispositions. That charming lady ! Why must she even feel any thing painful ? but all will sit light if you are well. I pray God she may enjoy that comfort and every other. I long to talk over many matters at large with you, and will come, if God permit, from London to Sudbury, at Mr. Hextal's settlement with that people, if you will give me the meeting, and I will spend two days there that we may enjoy one another. Pray answer me this speedily, that the scheme may be ripened, and I may judge what it will be necessary to write in my next. I bless God I am pure well. My eldest daughter is finely recovered of her extreme illness ; whereas one of the loveliest girls I ever knew, a wealthy attorney's daughter here, who was but beginning to be slightly indisposed on Thursday, died this evening. A most affecting lesson of earthly vanity. Such are our children ; such are we. But there is a world which is not subjected to vanity. Excuse the hurry in which duty obliges me to write. The letter I received to-day from Mr. ———, was the four hundredth on my list since Christmas. Support, dear Sir, by your prayers,

Your very affectionate brother and friend,
and much obliged humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

LETTER XIX.

Northampton, June 5, 1751.

My dear Sir,

We have been much obliged to Miss Reymes for her visit, which she has made very agreeable to us ; but the time of her stay has seemed very short, and it has been a great trouble to us to part with her so soon. Her piety, sweetness of temper, discretion,

and tender friendship, of which she has an exquisite sense, worthy one so conversant with you, have endeared her to us more than I can well express; and I beg you to make our acknowledgments to her worthy parents, who have so kindly indulged us in a pleasure we much regret that we must so soon lose.

I cannot express how much I long to see you, and firmly believe, that it was the secret hope of meeting you and Mr. Frost, to whom I have made shift to write a little, at Sudbury, that turned the scale for that otherwise very inconvenient appointment.

I thank you most cordially for the regard you express to the Family Expositor; to the second volume of which, that is, the fifth of the whole work, I have this morning been putting my finishing hand; except that the notes on the Hebrews are not yet transcribed.

I am much obliged to you for the noble things you have done for Breslaw. I am just writing thither, and shall not fail to inform my worthy friend Mr. Finne of your goodness. I really think it will be of great importance, for the support of the protestant cause in Germany, that their church be thus aided in this important crisis. I rejoice that Providence is still bearing you up under your various fatigues, and animating you to so many important services; in which you will be long continued and gloriously succeeded if my poor broken petitions can avail any thing.

I must not conclude without telling you that I am far from well, having a violent cough, which seems very stubborn, and sometimes almost silences me in public: I have scarce been one fortnight free from it since I left London in August last; but have kept it pretty well at bay: but this last relapse is a very bad one, and especially in conjunction with my intended London journey, gives good Mrs. Doddridge a great deal of uneasiness. I thank God, I have no aversion to the thoughts of a speedy removal; but I would husband life as well as I can, especially for his sake who gave it, and whose loving kindness is so much better than life; and truly, so far as some visible blessing on my labours can endear it to me, I never had more reason to wish it might be prolonged.

I beseech you to make my best compliments to your good lady, and all other friends your way, particularly my reverend brethren in the ministry, and Mr. Baker, of Denton, when you see him. Mrs. Doddridge joins in all these salutations. As for me, I find all language poor when I would tell you how highly I esteem you, how tenderly I love you, and how constantly and faithfully I am, to the best of my little abilities,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your most affectionate brother,

and much obliged humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

I greatly esteem Mr. [illegible] that he should [illegible] such a person; but cannot help but fear my friend Wood speaking of himself as to the [illegible] of his usefulness. I hardly think you yet entered at the scene of it; and often to myself that you are like to live to bless the world and the church, when I am got home.

LETTER XX

MY DEAR FRIEND,

HAVING any disappointment of the kind ever [illegible] heaviest upon me than that of not seeing you here; the expectation of which, with the hopes of an interview with good Mr. Frost, gave me resolution to break through the strong importunity of my friends in London, and through the discouragements arising from a very bad cold, which such a journey was likely to increase, that I might once more embrace him who has so much of my heart, as well as of my esteem, that if I think love could inscribe a name there, yours would be found on mine when it beats no more. But I expect to [illegible] at home, and therefore I ought to love you the better for it. I [illegible] seeing you, as I had several things to talk over with you at great length. [illegible] rather many restless hours in it, in connexion with the views of labour before me this day, for which I am but ill qualified, has detained me in bed so long, that I have now but a few minutes to write to you. As to Colonel Williams's scheme for the Indian school, I shall refer you partly to Mr. Frost, who will inform you of what passes in reference to it, and partly to some future letter, if time permit, to which I will refer you, with the [illegible] this important affair which the good Colonel sent me by the last post. And perhaps I may then send you a copy of the Bishop of London's letter to me in reference to Mr. Davies's affair in Virginia. I paid in your noble donation to Mr. Wilson for the church at [illegible], a number of [illegible] rejoicing at once [illegible] with the parish schools. It is an [illegible] and I [illegible] gathered [illegible] utterly perishing for want of supplies, that I am [illegible] but I must not enlarge. The frequent returns of my cough alarm my friends, and [illegible] I have grown many years since I was in the [illegible] I leave the event with God; but [illegible] preclude no [illegible] O how [illegible] being enabled to [illegible] rather with my [illegible]

business. My second daughter was ill when I heard last from home. Pray for her, and continue your prayers for him, who is much more than he can express,

Your affectionate friend,
and much obliged humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

LETTER XXI.*

To a Lady, under dejection of mind on a religious account.

June 25, 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I RETURN you my most affectionate thanks for the freedom with which you have opened your mind to me, both by repeated and unreserved conversations, and by a communication of papers intended entirely for your own use. The consequence, I most faithfully assure you, is, that the more I know you, the more firmly I am convinced, not only that you are a real, but that you are a very advanced, Christian. I have pointed to you already the principles on which I build the conclusion. But as I have not yet been happy enough to remove remaining difficulties, give me leave, in this letter, to lay before you some hints, as to what I apprehend may be the cause, and, by a divine blessing, in some measure at least, the cure, of this anxiety which so much harasses your mind. And pardon me, that in this strait of time, and in this hour which, with pleasure for your service, I take from my sleep before the journey and labours of to-morrow, I do but touch upon particulars, and give short hints, instead of illustrating or reasoning upon them at large.

Now, as to the causes of your present distress, I apprehend the following things, among others, are the chief and most peculiar; for I shall not mention those two grand cardinal causes of all our distress, —some remainder of sin in the best hearts, while they continue here,—and the artifice and malice of our common enemy. What is most peculiar seem to be, 1. The weakness of animal nature, which, after the attacks it has borne, must necessarily be very weak, unless it had been strengthened by a miracle, which even in such a case we have no warrant to expect. 2. The extraordinary elevation of devotion, which at some times you have known, and particularly when you were first setting out in religion. 3. In consequence of this, an ardent desire of equalling all the sallies of devotion, in this present infirm state of your health; by the very desire and endeavour of which, I heartily wish that you may not utterly ruin it. 4. A hasty and unjust conclusion which you have hence drawn against yourself, as if you were one of the most ungrateful and criminal of mankind, that excites an indignation against yourself, which you think you can never feel with a sufficient sensibility. 5. The sublime ideas which you have formed to yourself of the spiritual life, in which you seem not to make sufficient allowance, either for the natural infirmities of this animal frame, when in its best state; or, for the avocations inseparable from the life of one who is not absolutely a recluse from the world. I really apprehend these to be the causes of your disquiet.

With relation to the most proper method of cure, the following particulars present themselves to me; which I wish I had time to digest and express better. 1. To lay it down as a certain principle, that religion consists more in an intelligent, rational, and determinate choice of the will, than in any ardent transport of the affections. 2. To consider, that there is a certain degree of afflicting ourselves for past sins, and for present imperfections, which is so far from being our duty, that it is very likely to prove a snare, and to produce consequences displeasing to our gracious Father in heaven, and injurious both to ourselves and others. 3. Settle it deliberately in your understanding as a certain truth, that the grand security of the soul lies, in deliberately intrusting itself to Christ, chosen in all his offices, and devoting itself to God through him, according to the tenor of the Christian covenant; and steadily endeavour in consequence of it, to practise that which the word of God requires, and to forbear every thing which it forbids, and referring all its concerns, not excepting even the degrees of its spiritual comfort and enjoyment, to his wise and gracious determination. 4. In consequence of this, be often, and daily indeed, renewing your covenant with God, in the manner which that most worthy and excellent servant of Christ, your ever honoured and beloved father, has so intelligently, affectionately, and frequently recommended. 5. Let your devotions be reduced within narrow limits, and rather frequent and short, than protracted to a very great length; and in your addresses to the throne of grace be more intent upon the sincerity of the heart, and the calm fixedness of the thoughts, than about the flow of affection, which is not, and cannot be, immediately in our own power; but may, humanly speaking, depend upon a thousand mechanical causes, which we do not so much as know. 6. Consider how much of religion consists in trusting in God, in hoping in his mercy, and in rejoicing in him; and how suitable this is to the peculiar constitution of the gospel, and the character which Christ our mediator bears; by consequence, therefore, how essential

* From the author's short hand copy

a branch of gratitude it is, and how much a tender conscience should be upon its guard, that it does not fail here. 7. Remember continually, that, after all, it is by faith in the merits and intercession of Christ, and not by the perfection of our works, that we are to obtain justification and life; and that the best of Christians will have their imperfections while they are in this world; and may, and must, under a sense of them, daily apply to the great Advocate, and renew the actings of their faith upon his efficacious blood and intercession. 8. Make yourself familiarly acquainted with the promises of God; those relating to the pardon of sin, the imparting grace to the soul that seeks it, &c.: and choose, for some time, every morning, some comfortable promises to be the subject of your meditation; and now and then employ that fine talent which God has given you for poetical composition, in paraphrasing such scriptures in some short hymns. 9. Endeavour to exert yourself as much as possible in attempts of usefulness, by conversing with the children who are so happy as to be the objects of your pious care, and with those who are in circumstances that bear any resemblance to your own. 10. Disburthen yourself as much as possible of every anxious thought relating to futurity, whether regarding temporals or spirituals: confine your views to present duty, and leave future contingencies in the hands of God. 11. Be thankful for every, the least, glimmering of hope, and for any kind and degree of consolation which God is pleased to give you; and take great heed that you do not suspect those comforts which lead you to God and goodness to be delusions, merely because they are not so permanent and effectual as you could wish, lest you should injure that great Agent to whom you are so highly obliged, and whom you so tenderly fear to grieve. 12. In one word, study by all means to nourish the love of God in your heart; breathe forth with humble tenderness the genuine impressions of it; and as human nature must have its weary intervals and its barren frames, delight to look to God in them, as a Being who penetrates all the inmost recesses of the heart, and sees that secret tendency of soul to him, which neither tears nor words can express.—"Lord, thou knowest that I love thee: or that I would (thou knowest I would) prefer the sensible exercises of it to any other delight." By this method, the habits of divine love will strengthen by frequent acts; and I verily believe, that time will at length produce such a consciousness of it, that you will be no more able to doubt of it than of your own existence.

These, Madam, are advices, which though not expressed with the accuracy I could wish, I would recommend to you as the most important I can give. My earnest prayer for you, and which I desire daily to repeat, is, that God himself may be your comforter, and pour out upon your wounded and mournful heart the oil of gladness in a rich abundance. To know that I have been in any instance the instrument of reviving so excellent a spirit would give me unutterable joy, and I should esteem it among the greatest honours God has ever bestowed upon.

Dear Madam,
Your most affectionate friend,
and faithful humble servant,
P. DODDRIDGE

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF THE REV. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

WHO DIED OCTOBER 26, 1751, IN THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

BY JOB ORTON.

DEDICATION.

To the Church of Christ at Northampton, lately under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge: Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear Friends,

Though Providence has removed me a distance from you, I share largely in those sorrows, with which your minds are filled on account of the death of your learned, pious, and excellent pastor; an event which all our churches greatly and justly lament. When he assigned to me the work of preaching the Sermon on that occasion, he was sensible my respect for you, as well as for him, would not suffer me to decline it. In compliance with his desire the following Discourse was drawn up, in the best manner I could, amidst the languors of an infirm constitution, and the interruption of many necessary avocations. And it had been long ago preached among you, had not a wise Providence permitted an unhappy accident to befall me, which confines me at home. It is the most grievous circumstance in this affliction, that I am prevented from visiting you, performing the service assigned by my ever honoured friend and father, and personally suggesting to you such consolations and advices as may, in present circumstances, be peculiarly useful. To supply this lack of service, I am constrained to send you the Discourse from the press: and this, I hope, will be a sufficient apology with those, who may think it unworthy of public regard. It is some satisfaction to me to reflect, that discourses, on such solemn occasions, have been attended with great usefulness, especially to the acquaintance and friends of the deceased, which has often flowed, not so much from the thoughts and advices contained in them considered alone, as viewed in connexion with the awful events which occasioned them. I hope, therefore, that a recollection of the Doctor's eminent worth, and the loss his family, his flock, and the public sustain by his death, will cast a veil over the imperfections of this Discourse, and fill every reader's heart with so much seriousness and tenderness, as may make way for the plain remarks and admonitions contained therein, to impress it, and through the influences of the Spirit of Jesus, produce some valuable effect.

I cannot conclude this address without expressing my warmest gratitude to you, for all the respect and affection with which you honoured me, during the agreeable years I spent amongst you. And it is my earnest wish and prayer, that you may yet flourish, and be edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost: particularly that you may act upon those noble and truly Christian maxims of candour and unanimity, which your late pastor inculcated upon you, and the public, in all your future conduct, and especially in the choice of his successor: that the Head of the church would give you a pastor after his own heart, under whom you may daily grow in Christian knowledge and holiness, and be training up for the perfection and happiness of the heavenly state. These are the daily prayers of,

My dear friends,
Your affectionate friend,
and servant, for Jesus' sake,

JOB ORTON

THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

1 Cor. xv. 54. latter part.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

THE dying bed of an eminent Christian is a most melancholy, and at the same time a most delightful, scene: grief for the dominion of sin and death, and the loss we are sustaining by his removal, joy in the supports of religion he feels, and the promises of the gospel he rests upon, take place in our minds by turns, and sometimes mingle together. But in a soul formed to a relish for virtuous friendship, and deeply impressed with the great truths of Christianity, the joy will preponderate; and the pious heart will overflow with sacred delight to see the terrors of death removed, to observe how wonderfully God sustains his servants in their last conflict, and what an attestation they give to the fulness and sweetness of Christian consolations. In this instance in particular, God graciously makes his providence a commentary upon his word, and illustrates the promises of his gospel by the joy and peace he diffuses into the hearts of his dying saints. Our text has often been the means of producing this joy, and is indeed one of the most comfortable declarations that mortal creatures can hear; and the awful event, which directs my thoughts to it, confirms the excellency and suitableness of it. It should certainly be regarded by all with an attention becoming dying creatures. But there are two circumstances (my friends) to recommend it to your peculiar regard, viz. that it was exemplified in the closing scenes of the life of your late worthy pastor, so justly dear to you and to me, and that out of a particular concern for your support and encouragement living and dying, it was his express, his last, and almost dying, request, that I would discourse to you from it, on this very melancholy occasion.

The excellent and reviving chapter of which the text is a part, was intended to confute the opinion of those who said, there was no resurrection of the dead.* Their error seems to have been in asserting, that what Christ and his apostles had said of a resurrection, did not refer to a resurrection of the dead, but a resurrection or renovation to a life of holiness from a state of sin, which is justly and beautifully described as a state of death. This, probably, was the error of Hymeneus and Philetus, who said, that the resurrection is past already. The apostle Paul therefore sets himself to prove at large, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. He proves it possible, from the resurrection of Christ; a well known and undisputed fact: He proves it certain, from the connexion between this fact and the authority of the apostles to publish his religion; of which this doctrine was so distinguishing and glorious a part; and also from the relation in which Christ, the last Adam, stood to mankind. And as the objections against this doctrine chiefly arose from not understanding its nature, and the circumstances of the new body, he enlarges upon these topics in the latter part of the chapter; and concludes it with a divine and most eloquent rapture, describing the glorious resurrection of the saints, (of whom alone he there speaks,) and triumphing in the prospect of this blissful event; so (says he) when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." The text is a quotation from the prophecies of Isaiah, where it is said, He will swallow up death in victory; and probably refers to the deliverance of the Israelites from that utter destruction, which the king of Assyria threatened, and attempted to bring upon them; a deliverance that was indeed life from the dead. It is with great propriety and beauty, that these sublime and comfortable words are by St. Paul accommodated to the resurrection of the dead. The text suggests to us these two remarks, which I will endeavour to illustrate, and then direct you to the proper improvement of them.

I. Death may naturally be considered as an enemy.

II. True Christians shall obtain a complete victory over it.

I. Death may naturally be considered as an enemy.

This is implied in the text, when the apostle speaks of a victory; and it is expressly asserted in verse 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. It is an enemy we are every one to conflict with, for there is no discharge in that war. Death is, by an elegant figure, often described in the Scriptures, as a person, or intelligent agent. It is emphatically styled the king of terrors, and said to reign over mankind by one man's offence. Nature and experience teach us to consider death as an enemy; for

It dissolves the union between soul and body. It dislodges the soul, willing or unwilling; and separates it from its old and dear companion. Providence has wisely implanted in every human [illegible] and a tender concern for its health. [illegible] man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. Consequently a separation must be painful. [illegible] this must [illegible] burthened, yet there is a natural aversion to put it

off. Not (says the apostle) for that we would be unclothed. It would be more agreeable to take the body with us to another world, than go through the pain and terror of dying, and have these two bosom friends divorced. * This is a circumstance we would be glad to be excused from, especially as it is the consequence and punishment of sin; but death will pull down this structure, which, mean as it is, we are fond of, having dwelt in it so long, and having been at so much care and pains to keep it in tolerable repair, and will force the inhabitant to remove.

Again, death destroys the activity and beauty of the body, and turns it into loathsomeness and corruption. Diseases, its forerunners, generally consume away the flesh that it cannot be seen, and the bones that were not seen, stick out. At length the comeliness of the body is turned into deformity, and what was an object of delight becomes a spectacle of horror. The limbs that were sprightly and active grow stiff and useless; the eyes which sparkled with life and vigour are sunk and ghastly; the learned brain, in which so many curious traces were lodged, so many ideas ranged with the utmost care, and retained by close recollection, has lost its exquisite sensibility; and the entertaining and instructive tongue is sealed up in silence. The vitals of the body have lost their powers. The lungs cease to play, and the heart to beat. The silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken; the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern. Then we are willing to bury our dead out of our sight; to cast the desire of our eyes into the grave, to mingle with common dust, and lie in dishonour and darkness for ages to come.

Further, death removes us from our most near and intimate friends, and other earthly comforts.

It dissolves the ties of nature, and the alliances of friendship; and breaks down the pleasing fabric of happiness, which love had been for many years erecting. The benevolent heart is ready to take up Hezekiah's mournful complaint, I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

Further, it breaks off men's thoughts and purposes relating to this world, for the good of their families, neighbourhood, and the public. The great thoughts of wise and pious men for the glory of God and the advancement of religion perish; and the charitable schemes, which depended on the continuance of their lives, are defeated.

Finally, The little acquaintance we have with the other world, to which death transmits us, increases the fear of a removal hence.

We know so little of our souls, and their manner of existence and operation without a body, and there are so many doubts and fears about their eternal condition prevailing in us, that no wonder the thought of quitting the present scene is painful, and death, as it removes us from it, is considered as an enemy.

Whose heart is not ready to fail him in the prospect? Who does not find his reason, and sometimes his faith too, ready to sink, when he is going to encounter the king of terrors, and pass though his dark and gloomy regions to an unknown and unalterable state? And in vain we call to reason, and ask philosophy to furnish us with sufficient armour of defence, and to fortify our minds against the attacks of this stern invader. It is the peculiar glory of the gospel of Christ to assist our reason, and increase our faith in proportion to the strength of the enemy, and the different impressions which the apprehensions of it make upon our minds. And this it does by the discovery it makes of a future state, a glorious resurrection, and a final everlasting triumph over death.

Having thus briefly viewed the frightful features of the enemy, let us turn our eyes to a more bright and agreeable scene; and observe,

II. True Christians shall obtain a complete victory over death.

The text informs us that a victory shall be gained, and it shall be so complete, that death may be said to be even swallowed up in it, quite destroyed, and no traces or remainders of it be found. This is confirmed by the passage already mentioned; verse 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The word [καταργεται] rendered destroyed, signifies being divested of an authority it had before, and being reduced to an incapacity of exerting any further power.* Thus, after the same apostle had been speaking of persecution, peril, and sword, of being killed all the day long, as the lot of himself and his fellow-christians, he adds, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, complete, glorious, triumphant conquerors.—And this is agreeable to what God himself declares concerning this formidable enemy, with so much grandeur and majesty. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from my eyes."

For the further illustration of this comfortable truth, let us observe, that the victory is in some measure obtained in the present life,—but it shall be perfected in the future.

1. The victory is in some measure obtained even in the present life.

Christ gained a victory by his own resurrection, and the revelation and promise of a happiness beyond the grave; for he hath abolished death, (abolished its tyranny, destroyed its force, and rendered it, comparatively, of none effect,) and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He has assured us of the certainty and

* Compare verse 24, where the same word is rendered "put down."

eternity of the future state, and largely explained its nature.—He has not indeed removed the natural fears of death, which are wrought into our very constitution, and are the springs of many of our actions; nor is it his intention entirely to remove from the minds of good men that fear of death, which has an apparent tendency to promote seriousness and watchfulness, a heavenly disposition, which keeps them always prepared for the coming of the Lord. But he has taken away the slavish apprehensions of it, and delivered them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-long subject to bondage. Death has now, in effect, changed its nature. It only hurts the body, not the soul. It only puts an end to those pursuits, employments, and entertainments, which are suited to the body, and this present world; but not to those, about which holy souls are engaged, and with which they are delighted and improved. Nay, it is become, on many accounts, a benefit; as it puts an end to their temptations and conflicts, doubts and fears; as it hides their bodies in the grave, for ever shelters them from the pains and sorrows to which they are here exposed, and transports their separate spirits to everlasting purity and peace.

A present victory is obtained by the calmness with which the saints die; and that joy unspeakable and full of glory, with which the Spirit of Christ sometimes replenishes their hearts, when the flesh is sinking into the dust.—Are they not conquerors, when, with smiles in their pale countenances, and songs of praise upon their quivering lips, they calmly yield to the stroke of death, and, through Christ who strengthened them, triumph over all its frightful powers, saying, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Let me add, this is death's *last* attack. It strikes once, but can never strike more; and "all the hurt it can possibly do them, is to put it absolutely out of his own power ever to hurt them any more."* Which leads me to add further,

2. The victory shall be perfected in the future world.

And this will appear, when we consider, that all the faithful servants of Christ shall be raised again; their bodies shall be transformed into the likeness of Christ's body; and they shall be fixed in a state of complete and everlasting happiness.

1. All the faithful servants of Christ shall be raised again.

They are laid in the grave, but not one of them shall be lost there. Death feeds on them, but at the great day they shall have the dominion. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, that their bodies, which are turned to corruption, shall be redeemed, and so much of each as shall be sufficient to denominate it their *own* body, collected and united by the almighty power of God, is certainly declared in the holy Scriptures. We have some intimations of this in the Old Testament, upon which the Jews grounded their belief that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. But it is plainly revealed in the New. "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves, shall hear the voice of Christ, and come forth." This (says he) is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. This doctrine the apostles preached; they assured the Christians, that he who raised up Christ from the dead, should quicken their mortal bodies. That Christ was risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept, of that plentiful harvest which should spring out of the dust, when the Lord should descend again from heaven. The resurrection of Christ, illustrated by the resurrection of other dead bodies, proves what God *can* do, and testifies what he *will* do. And this chapter alone will keep up the belief of this great event, till the trumpet shall sound, and the resurrection prove itself. Captivity shall be led captive, and death, which has triumphed over the whole human race, shall himself be triumphed over, when the earth and the sea shall give up their dead. Though we now say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the devouring worm, Thou art my mother and my sister: the authority and power of Christ shall at length dissolve the disagreeable relation, and the grave claim no more acquaintance with us. But, as a bare resurrection is common to good and bad, and since, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; therefore we must add,

2. Their bodies shall be transformed into the image of Christ's body.

This is their peculiar honour; and the apostle Paul asserts it in very strong terms. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. The doctrine of the resurrection was ridiculed by the weaker heathens as impossible, and represented by the wiser as undesirable; turning the soul again into a prison, and laying upon it an insupportable burthen: but the account the apostle gives us in this chapter of the great alteration which shall be made in the bodies of the saints, answers their objections. He assures us, that weakness, corruption, and dishonour shall be left in the grave; and the body be raised in incorruption, glory, and power, a spiritual body, not an animal one. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The body shall be quite refined from gross matter, be more active and sprightly and

* Mr. Hen.

more easily moved from place to place, than it now is, in its utmost flow of health and spirits. It shall have no gross organs to obscure the faculties of the soul, or clog its operations. It shall need no such supports as it now does, nor feel any of those appetites, which are often temptations to sin, and which, without resolute government, injure the health, and prevent the serviceableness of the body, as well as interrupt the tranquillity and peace of the mind. It shall have no corrupt blood or sour juices, to occasion irregular ferments, to excite the angry passions, or produce a melancholy or a fretful disposition. There will be no law in the members warring against the law of the mind, and bringing it into captivity. It will exert itself with the utmost vigour in God's service, without being wearied with it, or worn out by it. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The place, the company, the work of heaven, will all tend to increase their lustre and activity. If Moses's converse with God for a few days left such a brightness on his countenance, that the Israelites could not bear to behold it, it is very natural to infer, that dwelling in the presence of God, the fountain of light, beholding the glory of Christ for years and ages, will improve the splendour of pure, spiritual, incorruptible bodies. And, it is probable, a covering of effulgent glory will be thrown over them, as there was over Christ's body when he was transfigured, and his face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; and make them shine as the brightness of the firmament. And the more they resemble Christ in moral excellency, the more will their spiritual bodies resemble his, and the more illustrious be this mark of distinction and dignity.—But what is the precise nature of these bodies; how they will move and act; whether new organs will be added, or the present altered; in what manner the soul will act, and be influenced by them; are questions which we cannot solve, while we dwell in houses of clay. It is sufficient for us to know, that every thing, which was an imperfection, or a mark of the divine displeasure against sin, shall be entirely removed; that the body shall be so changed and new moulded, as to be every way suited to assist the holy and happy spirit to which it is reunited, in the noblest services and enjoyments. Thus, when Christ appears, every saint shall awake in his likeness, and appear with him in glory. What a noble triumph over death will this be, when every captive shall be released, and every one clothed with the robes of glory! Especially when we consider,

3. They shall be fixed in a state of complete and everlasting happiness.

Of this also the Scriptures of truth assure us: they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, cannot die any more, for they are like the angels. Mortality (or that which is mortal) shall be swallowed up of life, and no traces of it left. It is a very considerable part of the glory of the heavenly world, that there shall be no more death. Some noted commentators * would interpret the words here rendered in victory, for ever, as denoting the utter destruction of death. The idea is plainly suggested in the phrase, swallowed up; and this truth is confirmed by the passages already mentioned, and many more in the Scriptures, that not one true Christian shall be liable to the attack of death any more.

There shall be no fear of death remaining. A conquered enemy may recover his strength, assault us again, and prevail, at least so far as to alarm and terrify us: but death is swallowed up, and has no more power to overcome or disturb the exalted, glorified servants of Christ for ever; not so much as one of the harbingers, or attendants of death, shall ever incommode them. There is no fear of the return of acute pains or pining sickness; which are often so grievous, as to dispose the heart to long for death, as a relief, and be glad to find the grave. Their bodies are not varnished over with an outward lustre, but perfectly free from all principles of decay. They are not only secure from external violence, but full of unfading, immortal vigour. Death has no power to take away, to molest, or even alarm, any one of their friends and associates in that better country; but because Christ lives, they shall also live, and their duration be equal to his.—Finally, There shall be no painful remembrance of death. A recollection of violent pains and cutting sorrows often gives uneasiness: when (as Jeremiah expresseth it, concerning his own misery) the soul hath the wormwood and gall still in remembrance, it imbitters present enjoyments. But the remembrance of death shall not be terrifying, but agreeable. A comparison of the present with the former state, will only tend to enhance their pleasure; to excite high admiration of that power, which produced the surprising change, and give peculiar ardour to their adorations of that grace which prepared them for it.—In short, the Lord of life shall so entirely change the scene, that all remainders of death shall be done away, and nothing shall appear by which it might be known, that it ever had the least dominion over any of his faithful servants. I shall sum up all in the striking words of the apostle. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. It doth not yet appear what we shall be! No, not yet, what we shall be then: for although our understanding is the distinction of our nature, and our tongue the glory of our frame, the one is over-

* Vat. Grot. and Whitby in loc.

whelmed when it labours to comprehend, and the other forced into silence when it attempts to describe, the objects and glories of immortality. And therefore, without presuming to take in the full meaning of the following words. But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. We may venture to conclude, that we shall hereafter be blessed with an immediate, permanent, and influential vision of the Lord of life and glory; and such a vision, attended with vital beams surrounding us on every side, transfusing themselves through our whole frame, invigorating the divine life in us, and maintaining and increasing our sensible and intellectual joys, must import complete and everlasting happiness.

Having thus illustrated the remarks founded on the text, I am now to direct you to the proper improvement of so noble and interesting a subject. Let me then entreat your attention to the following

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let us contemplate the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so illustriously displayed in this triumph over death.

It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to appoint his Son the captain of their salvation, and to consecrate him to that office through sufferings. He took part of flesh and blood, that he might be capable of dying, and, through death destroy him (or weaken, and render ineffectual his influence) that had the power of death, that is, the devil; who, by his temptations, brought sin and death into the world. He died to vanquish the terrors of death, and reconcile our minds to the thoughts and approaches of it. To this work he was set apart by his Father and God, and he alone was fit for the work, and worthy the honour of overcoming the king of terrors. And because, for this end, he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted him, constituted him Lord both of the dead and the living, lodged the keys of death and the invisible world in his hands, and given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all his sincere and genuine disciples. He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and death, the chief and last of them, be destroyed.—These (brethren and fellow-christians) are the reviving truths of our holy religion: let us then rejoice in Christ Jesus, and glory in our relation to him, who, by his atoning sacrifice, took away the sting of death, which is sin, bore in his own body the penalty denounced against transgressors, and by the influences of his Spirit, promotes a holy temper and conversation, which is the only proper qualification for a blessed and joyful resurrection. We are directed to consider him as the resurrection and the life, who is to come in power and glory to judge the world, the lustre of whose appearance shall penetrate the deepest grave, and whose voice shall awaken every sleeping saint. Then shall they come forth to join their glorified head and Saviour, to attend and grace the solemnity of that day, which shall complete his conquest over death, and terminate his mediatorial kingdom.—Since then we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, let this increase our veneration for his gospel, which contains the record of eternal life; and with an eye of gratitude, love, and humble dependence, let us look to Jesus the Lord of life, who, for the joy that was set before him, of being himself highly exalted, and leading on all his good soldiers to conquest and to crowns, overcame the sharpness of death, and is now set down at the right hand of God. Let him be precious to our souls, who is the purchaser and author of eternal salvation.

2. Let us reflect on the difference between good and bad men with regard to the consequences of death.

This conqueror hath dominion over all: nevertheless all shall rise again. But oh! with what different appearances, and to what different states! Some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. All shall come forth of their graves, but with this awful distinction, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. With what horror and surprise will the wicked lift up their heads in that tremendous day, and how glad will they be to sink back to rottenness, or even to nothing, from the wrath of the Lamb! But they must come forth, although their bodies should be so changed, as to be capable of more exquisite pain, and a more lasting duration, than their present frame will admit of. They shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, which shall be executed with circumstances of terror and anguish, proportioned to their crimes. On the other hand, with what a blooming air and inconceivable transport will the saints lift up their heads in that glorious day! With what unutterable delight will they leave their dusty beds, and survey their empty tombs; knowing that their warfare is accomplished, and that their Lord, whose approach they hail with the loudest Hosannas, cometh to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe! Having through the grace of Christ, which is sufficient even for the weakest of his servants, overcome, and been faithful to the end, they shall not be hurt by the second death, they shall not die for ever, but enter into eternal rest. And do you believe, brethren, that

there will be such a vast difference between the future states of the righteous and the wicked? I know you believe it. Inquire then, what influence and effect this faith hath upon your hearts and lives; and which of these two states will be yours. Let me address you in the words of the great Mr. Howe: "* You can never justify it to God, or your own understandings, to remain in a dubious uncertainty about a matter of so vast consequence as this. Unconcernedness here is the most unaccountable thing in the whole world. This will come to this issue very shortly with us, that either death must, as to us, be swallowed up in victory, or we be swallowed up of victorious death. With what solicitude should we all concern ourselves to be at a certainty!" If you would desire that strong consolation which the text exhibits, let me urge you to fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you, to be daily exercising repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem your time, and make a wise improvement of the present life. Thus you will finish your course with joy, and when this earthly house of your tabernacle is dissolved, you will have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Lastly, Let the servants of Christ be calm and resigned, in the view of their own death, and when their pious friends are removed.

One would think there should be no occasion for such an exhortation as this, to any who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have peace with God through him. One would naturally suppose, that in the fulness of their hopes and joys they would desire to depart, and it would be necessary frequently and strenuously to urge them to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord. One would think, that instead of sorrowing as those who have no hope, for them that sleep in Jesus, they should rather rejoice for the victory they have gained, and the honour to which they are advanced. But alas! such is the unreasonable and unhappy influence which present things have upon our minds, such is the weakness of our faith and hope, so languid is our love to Christ, and so injudicious our affection to our friends, that we are loth to remove ourselves, and unwilling to part with them. God knew it would be so. He knows our frame, and remembers we are dust, and therefore pities us, and has laid in such a stock of encouragements in his word, to counteract the bias of nature, and to correct the errors of sense. Let us then (brethren) enter into the spirit, and admit the force, of them. Remember, that although the combat may be sharp, and the apprehension grievous, yet the victory is sure. The enemy has been often vanquished, and 'tis only a single feeble effort he can possibly make. Fear not, (says the Redeemer,) I am he that liveth and was dead, and am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and the unseen world. Fear not this formidable enemy. He has slain his thousands; slain, did I say? rather, he has obtained some little advantage to his own irreparable loss and their everlasting gain. Though he strips you of the body, yet (to allude to St. Paul's words) you only part with it for a season, that you may receive it for ever, improved and beautified, and no more to see corruption. Let every sincere Christian endeavour, from such considerations, to reconcile his mind to the approaches of death, and wish to encounter this last enemy, as a brave soldier does to enter upon an action, which he has the greatest reason to believe will finish the war, put an end to all his fatigues, perils, and terrors, and bring repose, honour, and reward. Frequently meditate, O Christian, on that glorious morning, when thou shalt awake, burst the bands of death with sweet and inexpressible surprise, arise with ten thousands of thy fellow-saints, and meet thy Lord with songs of triumph, and everlasting joy upon your heads. Then shall he applaud thy resolution and labour, fidelity and patience, before his Father, the angels, and the assembled world, and give thee a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Let these considerations also support our minds when our pious and valuable friends are removed.

In this view the apostle urges them, If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; the dead in Christ shall rise first, and the saints then alive (being changed) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. And surely no words can be more full of consolation. Our pious friends departed have gained the victory, and are present with the Lord. And though we are left behind in a world, which is at best a tiresome place, and less desirable since they were removed from it; yet we hope ere long to be restored to them, to converse with them upon more agreeable and advantageous terms, and spend an eternity together. If we are followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, God will quickly call us to come up to them, and send a convoy of angels to fetch us to the world of spirits; and perhaps the first objects we may meet with there, may be some of our most intimate friends, sent to congratulate our safe arrival, and conduct us to the appointed mansions. And oh! with what joy and transport shall we meet them, and be welcomed by them! The small space of time the separation has continued, and in which we have known the sorrow of living without them, will endear them to us, and increase our bliss. Especially when we consider that there is no fear

* Howe's Works, vol. ii. page 429.

of another separation, that the destructions of the enemy are come to a perpetual end, and that death has yielded up all his power ever to divide us more.

Let me particularly apply these consolations to you, my friends, on occasion of the sore breach God has made upon you. What joy has it already been to your late worthy and pious pastor, to meet so many of his flock in the regions of the blessed, to whom he administered these precious consolations in their last moments, and smoothed their passage to heaven! What joy will it be to him to receive one and another of you, who have obeyed the gospel, to be partakers of his felicity! What a delight will it be to him to receive your thanks for all his labours of love for the good of your souls, and join with you in adoring that grace, which wrought effectually for your salvation; to which grace, you well know, he constantly ascribed his abilities and success! What joy will it afford you to meet him there; to inform him more fully than you can now do, what pleasure and improvement you have received from his labours while he lived, and his writings, by which, being dead, he is still speaking to you, with the most serious and affectionate address, and the most insinuating eloquence! And with regard to him, and all your brethren, who shall at length meet in our Father's house; how will mutual joy flow from heart to heart, when every enemy is conquered, and the tyranny of death at an end; to be for ever instructing, improving, and entertaining one another; to recount your many struggles, temptations, and victories; and trace out the wondrous steps by which you were conducted to this happiness! These friendly dispositions will be carried to the height, conversation will never grow dull, and social entertainments never cloy. Fresh delight will be springing up in his soul and yours through eternity; in observing each other's improving knowledge and holiness, and sharing together in the smiles of the Redeemer, and the work and happiness of heaven.

After such comfortable thoughts as these, I have very little heart to renew and increase your sorrows and my own, by entering into any particulars of the character of that great and good man, whom God has removed from us. Nor is it necessary I should; as he has been so long among you, and so faithfully and constantly watched over you. I may appeal to you all, that you have fully known his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, and afflictions, and his care of the churches. He has been labouring among you with unexampled diligence, and unwearied zeal, above twenty years, with increasing honour, comfort, and success. Notwithstanding his other most important relation, as a tutor, and the weight of business he continually had on his hands, he was in labours for your souls abundant; warning, encouraging, and comforting, with all the marks of a deep sense of religion upon his own soul, the most tender affection to you and your families, and the utmost solicitude for your everlasting welfare. The same disposition he carried with him in all his visits, and mingled the seriousness and piety of the Christian minister with the politeness of the gentleman, and the freedom and cheerfulness of the friend. His great concern for the rising generation, was manifested in his discourses on education from the pulpit, and the press, and his most affectionate addresses to your children in his catechetical lectures, and occasional visits. Ye know how heartily and compassionately he entered into your personal and relative afflictions; how many disconsolate hearts he has made to rejoice by his liberality, his counsels, and his prayers. Ye know his faithfulness and gentleness in brotherly reproof, and the exercise of godly discipline. In a word, ye know that, to his power, and (unhappily for his family, for you, and other churches) beyond his power, he went about doing good, piously devising, and with the most resolute application executing, so many generous designs for the public good.—Ye are witnesses, and God also, how much his public addresses were illustrated and enforced by his own temper and conduct, and how holily, and justly, and unblamably, he behaved himself among you.—By his writings (the value of which will, I am persuaded, be continually increasing) the world will judge, what a pastor God had favoured you with, and how very well you have been fed and taught for so many years. And they will naturally and justly expect, that you should be wise and judicious Christians, and eminent for every branch of the Christian temper. And great will be your guilt and your shame if you are not.

But, beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, and my persuasion is founded partly on my own knowledge of your temper and character, and partly on the solemn testimony your late pastor has borne to the goodness of them, in a passage in his last will, which he desired might be communicated to you on this occasion, and which I mention with pleasure, as it is at once for your honour and your admonition. Speaking of his intention of being interred in the place of your meeting, he says, "where I have spent the most delightful hours of my life, in assisting the devotions of as serious, as grateful, and as deserving a people, as perhaps any minister had ever the honour and happiness to serve; cheerfully persuading myself, that, when I am dead, they will hear me speaking in my writings with all due regard; and making it my last request to them, that those of them who have, or can borrow, my Family Expositor, will read it over in their families once at least, beginning the Lord's day after my funeral; and that they would also read over in their families, on Lord's day evenings, all my sermons which they

have or can borrow, especially those on Regeneration, those on the Glory and Grace of Christ, the Sermons to Young Persons, and that on the One Thing Needful; and I desire that every parent that can procure them, would read in their retirements, my Sermons on the Education of Children, within one quarter of a year at least after my death. And I make this request from an affectionate desire of the edification and salvation of souls; and an humble hope that, in consequence of it, I may glorify God, even when I am laid in the dust."

I hope, my friends, you will pay a serious and constant regard to this his last request, out of gratitude for his services, and veneration for his memory; from a concern for your own further credit and comfort, and a desire to increase his joy, and your own, at the day of the Lord.

As to you (my brethren and friends) who were more immediately under his eye and care; God has taken your master from your head. And you will naturally adopt the mournful words of Elisha, when he had lost his tutor Elijah. My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! He was indeed a father to you: and I believe there are few of us, who have had the advantage of being his pupils, have found more real affection and tenderness, and a warmer concern for our welfare, in our natural parents, than we have found in him. You remember his quickness of apprehension, and remarkable felicity in the despatch of business, and yet his most exemplary improvement and redemption of time. You know how faithfully he devoted his time and abilities to your service; how freely he communicated to you out of those large stores of knowledge with which God had furnished him; how fairly and candidly he proposed arguments and objections on every topic on which he lectured; what pains he took to make you eminent Christians, able ministers of the New Testament, and scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. You will, I am persuaded, join with me in acknowledging (to the praise of God) that our acquaintance with him, and relation to him, has been our honour and our happiness. May you and I remember his paternal counsels, prayers, and example, that (through a supply of the Spirit of Jesus) we may be fitted for eminent usefulness in the church, and may do honour to his memory and instructions!

It is but a just tribute to the worth of eminently wise and useful men, and of great advantage to survivors, to display at large the virtues of their character, and point out the means by which they became so eminent; and I am not without hope, that justice may hereafter be done, in some distinct account, to the distinguished abilities, eminent character, and extensive usefulness of the late reverend and learned Dr. Doddridge, who shone so conspicuously in the relations of a minister and tutor, and whose writings are in such general esteem. In the mean time, what has been said concerning him, may serve to excite you all to aspire after a temper and behaviour becoming your relation to him, whose removal, in the vigour of his faculties, we so justly, and shall so long, lament; and, to add greater weight to the solemn exhortation of St. Paul to the Philippians, which upon this occasion, I would address to you all: Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

To conclude. God has seen fit to call home his good and faithful servant; and given him not only a calm, but a joyful, dismission from the labours and sufferings of life, and enabled him thereby to triumph over death. And when we recollect the words we have been meditating upon, and this fresh seal to the truth and the comfort of them; and when by faith we look forward to that weight of glory reserved in heaven for us, and our pious friends; let us even now join in the apostle's triumphant song, and say, Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURES ON PREACHING,

SEVERAL BRANCHES OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE,

THE CHARACTERS OF THE MOST CELEBRATED MINISTERS AMONG DISSENTERS AND IN THE ESTABLISHMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE EDITION OF MDCCCIX

The following Lectures are the substance of those delivered by Dr. Doddridge to his theological students, in reference to preaching and the several branches of the ministerial office. They have been very frequently the subject of conversation, as containing many excellent remarks and advices, and several striking characters of authors. For the purpose of collation the editors are in possession of four copies, one written during date 1729, by a learned pupil of the author, another revised and corrected from a copy declared to be the most accurate extant, a third beautifully and accurately written, and the fourth is a transcript which differs considerably from each of the others. The editors are of opinion, however, that could they have procured ten times the number of copies and been at the first convenient it would be unsafe to trust any one of them as unexceptionable; for it is clear and apparent that the author gave the finishing hand to his own copy as fit for the public eye.

The reader, therefore, is requested to observe, that what is here presented to the world is a very full *Syllabus* of what the author more or less enlarged upon. A few expressions and sentences are occasionally left out, which, however proper in the lecture room, the editors are convinced the author himself would not have made public. The Lectures are presented also as they were, by means of the *dash*, some idea of the place and nature of the [illegible] which might be made, and may serve as proper pauses for the reader's profitable reflection. Many different copies have different *ways* of method, it is presumed that the plan which is here adopted is as perspicuous and useful as any, and is the same with that of the author in his Rise and Progress, and that in which the preceding Lectures now appear.

As these Lectures were never before printed, it may be expected that we should here offer reasons for giving them a place in Dr. Doddridge's Whole Works. Of these the first and principal is that we view them as possessing very considerable excellence. An excellence not inferior to any thing he ever penned, if estimated according to their tendency to do real service both to ministers, and through them to the rising generation. Here we have a collection of rules, maxims, and cautions, relative to preaching and the pastoral care, as ample and well chosen as we can any where find, delivered with the greatest perspicuity, and minutely detailed according to various circumstances. To these are discovered a great insight into human nature, a uniform regard to religious, moral, and well governed conduct, and ardent wishes to benefit mankind by promoting vital and practical religion. And much of [illegible] diligence in the author himself, which may operate as a powerful [illegible] on the reader's mind to imitate so fair an example.

From a report of their general worth many have wished, but in vain, to procure a copy; to gratify, and at the same time to benefit, such persons, is another evident reason why these Lectures should be now published. In fact, it may be well thought by many that a complete edition of the author's works could not consistently appear without them. To this we may add, supposing them in no danger of being lost, as many valuable manuscripts have been, the probability of their degenerating by repeated transcripts is a consideration of some weight. And, indeed, it is well known that there are many mutilated and very imperfect copies abroad; and it is not improbable that, from some motive or other, a copy might find its way to the press in a form calculated to reflect but little credit on either the publisher or the author. This danger is now precluded: and so precluded, it is hoped, as effectually to secure the deserved reputation of Dr. Doddridge, an object to obtain which no small degree of labour and expense has been bestowed. We are therefore persuaded that, since the author has intimated no prohibition, these considerations, among the reasonable and the good, ought to be decisive.

LECTURES

ON PREACHING AND THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.—GENERAL REMARKS AND DIRECTIONS RELATIVE TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

§ 1. GENTLEMEN, you have devoted yourselves to the work of the MINISTRY, and it is the main thing you have in view in the course of your present studies; other things are taken in only as subservient to this.—You well know it consists of several branches. The first on which you enter is PREACHING, which, though not the only, is one of the most important parts of a minister's duty.—Preaching requires genius, application, and the divine blessing.—Of the former, few who are capable of academical studies are *entirely* destitute.—Nor is any great *height* of genius necessary.—The latter with a good intention and pious conduct may be expected.—Diligence, therefore, is generally the main thing wanting; yet this under a wrong conduct may turn to little account.—To prevent which the following advices are designed, recommending the success to the Spirit of God.

§ 2. In these Lectures I shall give some general directions as to the method to be used in order to furnish yourselves for, and make you ready in, the work, (*Lect.* 1.) Consider the character of the best practical writers in our language, (*Lect.* 2—4.) Give some advice as to the composition of sermons, (*Lect.* 5—10.) Offer some thoughts on the most proper method of delivery. (*Lect.* 11.) Add several miscellaneous remarks which will not properly fall under any of these heads, (*Lect.* 12.) Propose a few general directions for prayer. (*Lect.* 13.) Call your attention to the important duty of public expostion. (*Lect.* 14—16.) Then offer some directions on catechising. (*Lect.* 17, 18.) On administering the ordinance of baptism. (*Lect.* 19.) and the Lord's supper. (*Lect.* 20.) On visiting in general, and the sick in particular, (*Lect.* 21, 22.) I shall then give you some general maxims for conversation. (*Lect.* 23.) Rules for conduct towards particular persons. (*Lect.* 24.) And conclude my course of lectures with a few miscellaneous concluding remarks. (*Lect.* 25.)

§ 3. I shall begin with some *general directions* to furnish you for the work of the ministry, and prepare you for the exercise of its functions.

§ 4. 1. See to it that there be a foundation of sincere piety laid in yourselves, or else there is but little prospect of your being useful or acceptable to others.—Be therefore firmly resolved to devote yourselves to God, and do it solemnly.

§ 5. 2. Keep up a strict course of walking with God. Be watchful, diligent, and daily in secret prayer.—Maintain an habitual sense of the divine presence.—Be much in the exercise of ejaculatory devotion.—So you will learn to speak out of the fullness of the heart.—Seize every opportunity of increasing in piety.

§ 6. 3. Cultivate a tender love to souls. This will make you diligent.—Then [illegible] against every thing that tends to alienate your affections.—By [illegible] prudent conversation, [illegible] obliging behaviour and edifying images. An [illegible] amiable attitude in little matters will be required [illegible] almost impossible to act [illegible] designed for the ministry.—I foresee in it the confusion of congregations, and the ruin of your own character and usefulness.

§ 7. 4. Cultivate an extensive and candid acquaintance with the world. Things are never as we make them.—In almost all imaginable circumstances some things may be found to be despised; some things to be admired and delighted in.—Take heed of peevishness, moroseness, and disgust in your studies.—Think not the time lost which is spent out of them.—Despise not common [illegible] Converse with them [illegible] with some good consequence, some [illegible]

§ 8. (1.) It will increase your stock of knowledge. Acquaintance with the hearts of men is very desirable—and it will be better learnt by converse, as anatomy is better learnt by dissection than by books alone. You will find many good thoughts started by them—they will be like rough diamonds, which, if well polished, you may with advantage set in your sermons.

§ 9. (2.) It will awaken your own spirits. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Experience often proves this.—Lord's-day evening's conversation is sometimes particularly sweet and refreshing.—We shall find that time thus spent will not be lost, but will abundantly repay itself.

§ 10. (3.) It will conciliate respect among them. An accessible temper is, in most cases, respected and loved—especially in persons of high reputation and great employ.

§ 11. (4.) It will form you to an experimental strain of preaching, which will be very suitable to spiritual persons; and will give an air of wisdom natural and unaffected. "A wise man," says Confucius, "must learn to know the hearts of men; that taking every man according to his own inclination, he may not labour in vain when he shall discourse to him of virtue."

§ 12. 5. Form an acquaintance with the best authors, but especially the Scriptures; they are the grand magazine.—Study them continually.—Get an interleaved Greek Testament, if possible Wetstein's.—Read other books also with care.—Collect some of the most valuable; for instance, Evans's Christian Temper, Berry-street Lectures, &c. &c.

§ 13. 6. Take brief notes of the sermons you hear.—Review them in your retirement. Transcribe them, and add memorandums of your own thoughts and reflections upon them as you go along.—Painting and carving are learnt by imitation, and by observing the defects as well as the beauties of great masters.

§ 14. 7. Keep, and endeavour daily to improve, your common-place book.—Have note-books added to it.—Write schemes of sermons in different degrees of perfection.—Keep a little book for hints on various subjects as they come into your mind. Keep another book for schemes that are perfect, and here insert scriptures under the proper heads in the order you intend to use them in composing.—And when you read a book, consider how far it may help you as to scriptures, sermons, common-place book, conversation, prayer, and the like.

§ 15. 8. Be daily endeavouring to form a good style and address, which is done by insensible degrees.—Never think it too soon or too late to attain it.—Use yourselves, therefore, to various kinds of composition; at first, review them with great diligence and exactness.—Submit them to the review of a friend. Look them over afterwards at some distance of time.—Often read aloud, but in as unaffected a manner as possible.—"Elegance in a sermon," says Boyle, "is like a golden frame about a looking-glass; it would be foolish to set up the frame alone, or look only upon *that*; but yet it may serve to attract the eye, and prove the occasion of discovering some defect which would have been otherwise unobserved." See his Meditations, iii. 6.

§ 16. 9. Look up daily to God, that he may give you more wisdom, and advance you in every necessary gift and grace; which he will do, if his glory be simply and sincerely intended in your work, and if you accustom yourselves to rise gradually more and more above the views of interest and human applause. Mankind are taken with little things.—Have a firm persuasion in your own minds of the importance of the work, and what depends on your right management of it. The honour of God, the glory of the gospel, and good of souls, are no small trust.—Consider yourselves, then, charged with God's business, and you will have reason to believe God will be with you.

LECTURE II.

Of the Use and Character of Practical Writers.

§ 1. I SHALL first give you some general advices on the subject now before us.—And, first, let some practical writer be daily read.—Practical religion is important to ourselves; and a practical strain of preaching is important to our people.—We shall thus form ourselves to words and a proper way of expression.

§ 2. Read them at once with a view to your improvement as Christians and preachers.—Make observations on their matter and style.

§ 3. Mingle authors of various strains. Otherwise you will learn a disagreeable imitation of one.—Seem not to have any writer in view in the manner of your compositions.—Water running through a bed of steel is apt to take a chalybeate taste and tincture.

§ 4. Make references to remarkable passages, that you may review them a second time. Nor will it be amiss to mark them in the margin, if the book is your own.—Keep a catalogue of such things as you would read before you preach upon any subject.

§ 5. Having made these general remarks, I proceed to give you the characters of several practical writers of our own nation,—which may be divided into four classes; the puritans—the nonconformists of the last age—those of the present—and the authors of the established church.

§ 6. I recommend to you, FIRST, to form some

acquaintance with the scriptures, though they are too often despised.—There was good sense and learning in those days, as well as now.—Our grandmothers had real beauty, though the change of fashions has made their dress ridiculous to us.—I shall name but few.

§ 7. Bolton.—He had been a great and notorious sinner, and was reclaimed by great terrors.—He is therefore excellent both for conviction and consolation.—His style is rather inclined to heaviness, yet there are many expressions truly great and magnificent. The beauties of imagination are most visible in his four last things.—But his most useful treatises are Directions for comfortable walking with God—and for comforting distressed Consciences.—There we see the traces of a soul most intimately acquainted with God.

§ 8. Bp. Hall.—The most elegant and polite writer of his age.—He abounds rather too much with antitheses and witty turns.—In some of his writings he seems to have imitated Seneca and Austin.—His sermons are much the worse for a compliance with the taste of the age in which he lived. His Contemplations are incomparably valuable for language, criticism, and devotion. Next to them his Meditations, his Letters, and Balm of Gilead are worthy of your attention.

§ 9. Reynolds.—A most elaborate writer.—He has many surprising strokes.—His style is remarkably laconic.—A world of things are gently touched upon, which show his extensive acquaintance with human nature, as well as great labour.—His works contain a judicious collection of scripture, both in the text and margin.

§ 10. Sibbs.—His language is pervous and decent.—His dedications are very humble.—His style pathetic and tender, especially so in his Bruised Reed, and Soul's Conflict.

§ 11. Ward.—Worthy to be read through.—His language is generally proper, elegant, and nervous.—His thoughts are well digested, and happily illustrated.—He has many remarkable veins of wit.—Many of the boldest figures of speech are to be found in him beyond any English writer; especially apostrophes, prosopopœias, dialogisms, and allegories. There is indeed a mixture of fancy in his writings; but pardonable, considering his youth, and that many of his sermons were not prepared by himself for the press, but copied from his mouth while preaching.—He died before he was twenty-eight years old.—Had he lived he would probably have been the phœnix of English preachers.

§ 12. Hales of Eton—generally called the ever-memorable.—He is remarkably witty.—He uses very uncommon thoughts, and vast learning.—There are many curious passages in his works of like a common-place book; but little judgment.—He has no good order and connexion.—very little of [illegible]

[illegible] appears of him.—His [illegible] very applicable.—He writes like one that knows and speaks of things by experience.—He [illegible] the things to the utmost, which he considers, whether the virtue or danger be greater.—His Golden Remains, and additional Treasure, should be read.—Nor does the man exist that has exhausted Omnipotence.

§ 13. I need add some account of the Scottish divines in the Westminster assembly of the years 1643, that is, those who wrote before 1700.

§ 14. Gillespie and Rutherford—these have been evangelical, but both very obscure, especially the latter.—Gillespie's style inconstant.—Mr. Ford.—There is great zeal and much knowledge of human life.—He appeared to all his works—especially to his book on Apostasy.—Dr. Wright seems to have taken many things from hence in his "Deceitfulness of Sin."—That on the Hebrews is no great work.—The Means of understanding the Mind of God in the Scriptures is one of the best.—Those on Communion with God, and on the Power of Christ's most celebrated.—His Exposition of the 130th Psalm is most excellent.—His discourses of Indwelling Sin, Spiritual Mindedness, and Mortification of Sin in Believers, were good [illegible] practical religion.—Hutcheson's pieces published in his Works are the most valuable.—In these Commentaries and valuable remarks on Scripture.—His [illegible] of Light shining in Darkness, is very useful and edifying.—Many are common thoughts.

§ 15. Baxter.—He is [illegible] because he has [illegible] and always wrote to [illegible] as the readers of persons for generally [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

judicious remarks on Scripture.—His chief work is on the 119th Psalm.—Many of his posthumous sermons are of little value.

§ 17. Bates—charming and elegant;—yet his style not formed. His sentences are too short,—his words, however, are very polite;—admirable studies,—only too many of them,—proper to be quoted by those whose genius does not lead in this way.—Read his Harmony of the Divine Attributes, Spiritual Perfections, and Four Last Things.—He was well acquainted with poetry and the belles lettres,—an admirer as well as imitator of Cowley.

§ 18. Howe.—He seems to have understood the gospel as well as any uninspired writer;—and to have imbibed as much of its spirit. The truest sublime is to be found in his writings, and some of the strongest pathos,—yet he is often obscure, and generally harsh.—He has unhappily imitated the worst part of Boyle's style.—He has a vast variety of uncommon thoughts;—and, on the whole, is one of the most valuable writers in our language, and I believe, in the world.—His best pieces are, The Blessedness of the Righteous, Enmity and Reconciliation, Redeemer's Tears, and the Redeemer's Dominion;—with some Funeral Sermons.

§ 19. Flavel.—Not deep, nor remarkably judicious,—but plain, popular, tender.—Proper to address afflicted cases, and melt the soul into love.—His Token for Mourners is inimitable.—His Fountain of Life very useful,—and most of the subjects proper to be preached over on sacrament-days.—Allusions to pagan stories, both in him and Bates, are entertaining and useful.

§ 20. Charnock.—Celebrated by some as a *polite* writer, but chiefly by those who are not true judges of politeness.—He has some fine words, but no cadence,—which is also the fault of Bates.—His divisions are too numerous,—his thoughts are often obscure and in disorder;—no clear and distinct ideas in many of the differences he makes.—Yet he has some very valuable things.—On the Attributes he is deep and sublime.—His book on Regeneration is much applauded, though much inferior to Baxter, Alleine, and Wright.

§ 21. Taylor (Nathaniel).—The dissenting South.—There is vast wit, and great strength of expression, in all he wrote;—yet apt to aggravate matters a little too much.—His language is remarkably proper and beautiful.—His best pieces are his discourses on Faith, Deism, and the Covenant.—He wrote but little more than these.—All deserve reading.

LECTURE III.

The Character of DISSENTING *Writers of the* PRESENT *Age, or those who have written since* 1700.

§ 1. Evans.—His style is grave, plain, manly, nervous.—His heads are always distinct and well arranged.—The scriptures he quotes are very properly chosen.—His thoughts, especially in the application, are thrown close together.—His Sermons to Young People are scarce and valuable.—His Christian Temper is one of the best practical pieces in our language.

§ 2. Wright.—has great simplicity and awful solemnity. His writings compose the thoughts, and gradually elevate them.—The heads are distinct,—and sentences very comprehensive.—He discovers a deep sense of God, and a good acquaintance with the world.—His words are elegant and well chosen;—cadence, however, is but little regarded.—He always appears master of himself.—There are often plain intimations of many thoughts being suppressed.—His sentiments are candid and rational.—His book on Regeneration has been remarkably acceptable,—and is one of the most useful pieces published in this age.—His work on the Deceitfulness of Sin is written with great knowledge of mankind;—with the ruin of many young people before his eyes,—and it is admirably adapted to prevent it.—His Great Concern is very comprehensive,—and even in that respect much preferable to the Whole Duty of Man.—His subsequent treatises are not equally valuable, nor is the collection of scriptures so judicious as was expected.

§ 3. Watts.—Very different from Wright.—His style is harmonious, florid, poetical, and pathetic;—but too diffuse, too many words—especially in his later works,—and his former are too much loaded with epithets.—Yet on the whole he is an excellent writer.—All that he has written is well worth reading.—I most admire the first volume of his Sermons,—Death and Heaven, the Love of God,—and Humble Attempt.—Not to mention his incomparable Lyric Poems.—Psalms and Hymns.

§ 4. Grove.—He resembles Watts, but is not equally poetical, yet rather more nervous.—He has many judicious and new thoughts,—which are disposed in a method quite peculiar, and expressed with force and elegance,—and in his former pieces there is a remarkable sweetness.—He discovers great seriousness,—but his great aversion to Calvinism, and the ill usage he had met with from bigots, have soured him of late.—The Friendly Monitor,—his book on Secret Prayer,—and some Funeral Sermons, published in his life-time, are very valuable.—His book on the Sacrament is excellent, proper for scholars,—though much exceeded

by HENRY and LAVEL for common use.—Some of his meditations at the end of his Treatise on Faith are excellent.*

§ 5. HENRY.—Very popular—his style is short and pointed,—has many antitheses, and is too often a little fanciful, elegant antithesis, some peculiarities,—such as making his heads begin with the same letter, or some rhyming word—yet this is generally natural—Great seriousness—sprightly thoughts, digested in very good order.—His Commentary excellent, though rather too large—and too full of typical and allegorical interpretations—yet there are some judicious notes both critical and historical.—Many of his notes on the historical parts, on the import of some original words, and some of the most entertaining things are taken from GROTIUS, PATRICK, POOLE, JOSEPHUS, CAESAR, and many others.—However, the work is despised only by those who do not know it.—His Discourses on Meekness, the Sacrament, and Early Piety, are all very good.—His style is formed on Scripture, to which he has numberless allusions.

§ 6. FLAVEL.—Judicious, pathetic, and very fanciful.—He has written but little besides his Treatise on the Sacrament, which is excellent.—In his other pieces there are several pretty classical quotations in the margin.

§ 7. BRADBURY.—His method is by no means accurate.—Many weak arguments,—but enlivened by sprightly turns of wit, and some nice distinctions to Scripture.—Christ's Joy in finishing his Course,—and his Sermons on the fifth of November, are his best.

§ 8. BOYSE.—He has been called the discerning SCOTT,—but much more polite.—His language is plain, animated, and nervous;—pretty much resembling EVANS.—His matter is excellently digested.—He abounds with ideas;—each sermon appears to be a contraction of some judicious treatise,—and often is so.—The two volumes of his Sermons, and his discourses on the Four Last Things are his principal practical works,—and deserve attentive, repeated reading.

§ 9. BENNET.—Plain, serious, and practical—but flat.—Has many good quotations from modern authors.—His Christian Oratory is his best and almost only practical piece;—which had been better, had it been less.

§ 10. HARRIS.—He was reckoned the greatest master of the English tongue among the dissenters.—His style plain and easy—has thought to solidity, but seldom striking or uncommon.—Nothing to blame, but very much to admire.—See his discourses on the Messiah, and Funeral Sermons.

§ 11. JENNINGS.—Methodical, plain, and serious.—Some pretty turns of thought.—His sermons very evangelical.—He has given the public the Remains of the present age, only much more polite, and free from FLAVEL's fustian.—All his performances should be carefully read,—especially his Sermons to Young People, and those in the Book Seller Lectures,—which are the glory of the book, and very much to the credit of the author.

§ 12. GUYSE.—A most popular preacher with the vulgar—and justly so.—In his sermons there is a strange mixture of the familiar and pathetic.—Many strong figures of speech,—expressive phraseology—and distinctions—beyond any writer of the age.—His practical Sermons on the Name and Temper of Jesus,—the Mourner,—and his Essay on Health.

LECTURE IV

The Character of the Writers of the Last Century—Conclusion

§ 1. TILLOTSON.—There is such an easiness of style and beautiful simplicity of expression, as seems easy to be imitated yet nothing more difficult.—He had some puritanical expressions.—Sometimes prolixity.—His method admirable clear—beyond almost any other.—Many of his common-place sermons nothing remarkable,—especially his posthumous ones.—yet there are many of them equal to any he published in his life-time.—His last sermon on the Reasonableness of the Old and second Covenant is fine.—His discourse on evil speaking is excellent.

He made great use of BARROW and WILKINS,—with whom compare most of his sermons.—There is sometimes good reasoning,—but in controversy no man found such lucky expressions—no argument for the truthfulness of the subject so full, artful, and affectingly set for conviction.

§ 2. SHERLOCK.—The most learned writer among our divines.—He has an amazing number of thoughts, things not always well connected or plain.—He expounds—but in some cases excellent in many respects.—He attempted to introduce some new words, but without success.—Many useful observations and fine quotations from the ancients and the fathers in the margin.—Nothing to raise admiration.—His Art of Sacrifice—most of those Letters have outgrowed their future use,—and some of their difficulties.—Many of TILLOTSON's finest sentiments [illegible] translation from him,—particularly that on evil speaking.—The first volume of his sermons is the best, but they all deserve reading.

§ 3. WILKINS.—His method in very many of his sermons admirable.—His style is clear and pure as TILLOTSON's.—Many excellent thoughts [illegible]

* In [illegible] Dr. Isaac Watts [illegible] excellent [illegible] notes, which [illegible] and [illegible]

—His Sermons, Natural Religion, the Beauty of Providence, on Prayer, and on Preaching, are his only practical works, and well deserve a reading. —Tillotson's Wisdom of being Religious is taken in a great measure from him.

§ 4. Beveridge.—Much like Henry, but not his equal.—He discovers great devotion,—has many high flights, but is sometimes weak.—His Private Thoughts the most valuable of his works;—many of his sermons are very low.

§ 5. Scott.—His style is long and verbose;—many inelegant words,—and some phrases shocking;—yet, on the whole, he is excellent.—His reasoning is strong and conclusive, though drawn out to an excessive length. He drives on with great warmth and pathos,—yet almost all appears too much forced.—His Christian Life is the best of his works,—especially the first part.—The prayers at the end are absolutely the best I have ever read.—Many of his sermons are valuable, especially those in the first volume; the subjects being good, pretty full, and methodically handled.

§ 6. South.—Smart wit, keen satire, sometimes fine language;—but his arguments are often weak. —All his works have the appearance of an ill spirit in controversy.—He has many levities entirely unbecoming the pulpit;—and when most practical seems to write with spleen, and to aim very little at usefulness.—The best sermons are in his first volume;—though even in them there is too great an affectation of wit;—and but little appearance of being in earnest for God amidst all his zeal against heretics and schismatics.

§ 7. Norris.—Excessively affected, pert, and verbose, yet some good thoughts. His sermons on the Beatitudes are most celebrated.—He carries matters in general too high.—His discourses on the Love of God are in the mystic strain.—His sermon on Religious Discourse deserves to be read.—He is in general too abstruse and metaphysical.

§ 8. Lucas.—His style is very peculiar, sometimes exceeding free, approaching to conversation; —sometimes grand and solemn; and generally very expressive.—His method is not clear;—but his thoughts are excellent.—Many of them are taken from an attentive observation of human life. —He wrote as being entirely devoted to God, and superior to the world.—His most valuable works are his Practical Christianity, and his Enquiry after Happiness, especially the second volume.

§ 9. Sherlock.—Strong arguments, and awful representations; exceeding proper for conviction. —His style is plain and manly.—His best works are those on Death and Judgment.

§ 10. Scratt.—He is the least considerable as a practical writer.—His language is always beautiful, but many of his sentiments are very weak.—His Christian's style is too much [illegible].—Pelly is translated for many sentences together in some of his sermons, though not mentioned.—All his sermons are in one octavo volume, and deserve a reading.

§ 11. Clarke.—He slipped into very high reputation, chiefly by his peculiarities. His style is quite plain and void of pathos.—His thoughts are well ranged, but many of them very obvious and frequently repeated.—Scriptures often well explained, though sometimes he takes more pains to collect parallel scriptures than is necessary;—and with solemn parade explains others that have no difficulty.—He takes more notice of grace and the atonement than most of his followers and admirers. —Several of his sermons are on subjects too near akin. He and Tillotson have made great use of the *Fratres Poloni*, though they do not make any mention of them.

§ 12. Horneck.—Exceedingly pathetic, but not elegant.—He is chiefly fit for devotional subjects;—but his words are too often greater than his thoughts. —His best pieces are those on Consideration, and The Crucified Jesus.—See his pieces also on the Commandments, on Prayer, Presumptuous Sins, and several Sermons.

§ 13. Hopkins.—His motto, *Aut suscitate aut ri*, well answers to his works;—yet he trusts most to the latter.—He awakens awfully; sometimes there is a little of the bombast; he bends the bow till it breaks; an error carefully to be guarded against.

§ 14. Boyle.—His style is very rough and obscure. Yet some words are highly illustrative by antitheses, he being very careful in the choice of them. He has many lively similes very proper to be quoted, especially in his Seraphic Love, and Theodora and Didymus,—sentences unreasonably long, abounding with parentheses and hard words of his own coining.—He has, in short, many faults in his style, but some inimitable beauties.

§ 15. Scougal.—One of the first rank, though he wrote but little.—Every page abounds with noble and proper thoughts;—clothed with a decent eloquence, suited to the subject. He appears to be the best model of all his class.—His Life of God in the Soul of Man, and Sermons, should be often read.—His early death, at the age of twenty-eight, was an unspeakable loss to the world.

§ 16. Law.—Very recluse.—His productions have a severity seldom to be found in this age.—His language is generally just and beautiful; very nervous, but sometimes unnatural. He is ready to affect points of wit, and strokes of satire,—in which however he does not equal South. Many characters are admirably drawn.—In this he comes nearer the Jesuits than any English writer.—His Treatise on Christian Perfection is very famous.—His Serious Call still better.

§ 17. FLEETWOOD.—Surnamed Silver-tongued—remarkable for easy and proper expressions. He considers several cases, which though often occurring in human life, are seldom taken notice of in sermons. On this account he may be consulted with advantage.—In respect of true politeness he has been equalled by few.—His sermons on Relative Duties are good.—but his Four Funeral Sermons show the *orator* much more.

§ 18. ATTERBURY. The glory of our English orators. In his writings we see language in its strictest purity and beauty.—There is nothing dark, nothing redundant, nothing deficient, nothing misplaced. Trivial thoughts are avoided, uncommon ones introduced and set in a clear, strong light, and in a few words;—some admirable similes, and more graceful allusions to scriptures than any of this class. On the whole, he is a model for *courtly* preachers. His Four Volumes should be carefully read.—His two last are the best. The chief sermons are Acquaintance with God, Religious Retirement, Lady COTES's Character, Propagation of the Gospel, Sufficiency of Revelation, Terrors of Conscience, Curse on the Jews, and Felix Trembling.

§ 19. BLAIR. A man of plain good sense.—A beautiful simplicity and great seriousness run through all his writings.—A desire to spare all unnecessary words is very apparent.—His Commentary on *Matt.* v—viii. is the best extant.—He has some excellent and striking similes, which are chiefly taken from the affairs of slaves, planters, or foreign colonies. He lived in *Jamaica*.—He suggests a multitude of excellent things which he does not prosecute at large.—He appears to have been a person of the utmost candour, and has solicitously avoided all unkind and contemptuous reflections on his brethren.—He guards his hearers against all undue confidence in their immediate relation to, and strict attendance on, the established worship, beyond almost any other divine in the Church of England.—He has an excellent way of bringing down criticisms to common capacities;—and has discovered a vast knowledge of Scripture in the suitable application of them.

§ 20. SECKER. Is so remarkable an instance of the laconic style, that the few Sermons he has published deserve an attentive reading;—especially that on the Oxford act, which is the wisest I ever read, considered in the view of a Philosophical Essay.

§ 21. ABP. LEIGHTON. One of the most eminently devout and pious writers his age has produced.—His Sermons indeed are not accurately digested, and sometimes contain only hints not fully opened;—which is the more excusable, as none of them were intended for the press by the author.—His works ought to be reckoned among the greatest treasures of the English tongue.—They continually overflow with love to God, and breathe a spirit entirely transformed by the gospel above the views of every thing but pleasing God.—There is a vast deal of spirit, and charming imagination; multitudes of the most beautiful figures and metaphors applied with happiest allusions.—Metaphors, especially those in the text, are sometimes pursued into allegory; yet very natural.—Upon the whole, they are such as none but a very ingenious, learned, religious man could write;—and yet, even by such an one, must have been written with great care;—not the effect of any laborious efforts for particular discourses, through a habit of speaking and writing, but the guarded overflowings of a copious fountain.—This attainment, however, must have been the consequence of a most resolute application both of the head and heart.—Few uninspired writers have a greater tendency to mend the world.—The disappointment which the learned and polite complained of, when these posthumous works were published, is chiefly to be charged upon their ignorance of the true beauties and use of Theological Writings.

LECTURE V

Rules for composing Sermons.

§ 1. WHEN we are about composing a sermon, we are to consider, 1st. What [illegible] to be chosen? 2nd, In what manner it is to be handled? 3rd. The *style* of the composition. 4th. What thoughts we are to introduce with. 5th. In what order we are to throw them. I shall, therefore, give rules for each of these; and close with Additional rules not comprehended under either of these heads.

§ 2. I shall take some remarks, First, On the choice of subjects.—But before I point out what subjects are to be *preferred*, I shall show you what you are to decline.* Among these are,

1. The doctrines of natural religion, such as the being and perfections of God.—The nature of future rewards and punishments.—Grounds of morality.—The distinction between moral good and evil.—These subjects are not improper, because they are peculiarly heterodox and dark, but because they are plausible proposed upon by those who have little relish for the doctrines of the gospel. And preaching upon them would bring a man's reputation into question with many.—Besides, the subtilty of the arguments cannot be understood by vulgar auditors, nor is it possible [illegible]

* [illegible]

much impressed by them; yet, as they are fundamentals, they ought not to be entirely omitted.—Let them, therefore, be touched upon in *parts* of sermons, tending to some evangelical purpose.—This may be done from, "This is life eternal, to know thee, &c." "He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, &c." Of this method of treating these subjects, the Berry-Street Lectures are excellent examples.

§ 3. 2. The evidences of Christianity.—These are too large to be conveniently brought into a single or even a double sermon; besides, it is seldom an acceptable subject to the generality of hearers.—Yet exceptions must be allowed for some places where deism prevails.—Let a settled minister, in two or three elaborate sermons, give a general view of the arguments; and refer to plain treatises on the subject.—It is highly proper by catechising to inform the judgments of the rising generation;—as they are in the greatest danger of being seduced.—When preaching on subjects that admit it, take an opportunity to make a few striking observations in confirmation of Christianity;—especially be careful to display its excellency above natural religion;—this will generally be sufficient.—For when our people are brought to experience the power of the gospel, they will not forsake it.—It is hard for a young preacher to support his reputation by such a topic; and if he has any thing to say that is extraordinary, it will be better to say it from the press than from the pulpit.

§ 4. 3. The inexplicable mysteries of the gospel; such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, the manner of the Spirit's operation, &c. for they cannot be made plain.—Besides, there is danger of puzzling, or inflaming, our hearers;—the wiser part will be offended to see you so forward and bold;—and the hungry soul will go away from these, as from the preceding subjects, but little refreshed.—It is feeding the people with roots instead of fruit.

§ 5. 4. The highest points of Calvinism, supposing them to be believed.—Such as the imputation of Adam's sin,—reprobation,—irresistible grace,—and others of the same cast. These doctrines may be abused, and prejudice some against the more necessary doctrines of Calvinism;—as those of the mediation and atonement of Christ;—the aids and influences of the Spirit, &c.—Hints on high doctrines, except on particular occasions, are better, if they are believed, than whole discourses upon them.

§ 6. 5. Types.—In these there is so much room for fancy, that it is difficult to speak judiciously upon them;—and more difficult to please if they be not drawn to excess.—But for a pastor, especially on a sacrament-day, those that are allegorized in Scripture may be very profitably enlarged upon, provided the similitude and difference be shown.

§ 7. 6. Particular sins and duties.—Atterbury, indeed, says, that "General discourses are for the most part, like large prospects, where the eye is lost in the wide compass it takes, and sees so many things at once, that it sees nothing clearly."* To young preachers, however, they are not advisable.—They are, indeed, much preferable to any of the former, but if frequently enlarged upon, may procure you the character of a legal preacher;—and the same end may as well be answered another way, as I shall soon show. Especially avoid preaching against a particular vice, as drunkenness, luxury, covetousness, pride, &c.—Rather recommend the contrary virtues of sobriety, mortification, liberality, humility;—and let these be urged chiefly by evangelical motives.—A settled minister may, however, sometimes insist on such subjects, and ought to do it;—particularly to caution youth,—and to deter them from keeping bad company,—and induce them to observe strictly the sabbath-day.—Great care should be taken, however, not to draw such descriptions of ill characters as would give just occasion to suspect that you had particular characters in view.—It may be added, these subjects often lead into a chain of reasoning too close to be popular.—and people generally know right and wrong.

§ 8. 7. A continued series of discourses from the same verse, or even chapter, ought to be avoided by young preachers.—This method tends to weary an auditory.—Few chapters afford proper subjects in *every* verse.—The peculiar advantages of this method may be better answered by expounding.—The explication and improvement of a variety of subjects, connected in some way together, making a course of sermons more entertaining.

§ 9. This hint is chiefly intended for a settled minister.—It will be wisdom in him to make a proper connexion between subjects,—and to leave with due allowance for other occasional discourses, a series which shall contain a system of practical divinity.

§ 10. 8. Not subjects of great terror;—as very strong representations of the wrath of God, or of the nature, degree, and duration of the torments of hell.—To make these the subject of your sermons will be likely to bring upon you the reputation of legalists, and would perhaps rather amaze and confound the hearers for the present, than make lasting good impressions on their minds.—Warn faithfully, but let it be rather in particular parts of sermons, than in distinct discourses.—Always take care to avoid representing God as a tyrant.

§ 11. Having shown what subjects you ought generally to decline, I will now point out what sub-

* [illegible]

jects are to be *preferred*, and most frequently insisted on.*

§ 12. I. Those which relate immediately to Christ.—The glories of his person, and riches of his grace. *Psalm* xlv. 2. *Cant.* v. 16. *Isa.* ix. 6.—His incarnation, *John* i. 14.—His understanding. *Isa.* xlix. 5, 6. *John* xvii. 2.—His birth. *Luke* ii. 11.—His example. *Acts* x. 38. *1 Peter* ii. 21.—His preaching. *John* vii. 46.—His ministerial conduct. *Heb.* iii. 1.—His passion. *Lam.* i. 12. *Isa.* liii. 12.—His death, resurrection, and ascension. *John* xix. 30. *Luke* xxiv. 51. *Acts* iii. 15, 19.—His intercession. *Heb.* vii. 25. *Rom.* viii. 34.—His relations offices, and characters; as Husband, Brother, Prophet, Priest, King; Physician, Shepherd, Captain, Strength, Head, Forerunner, Advocate, Friend, Saviour, Judge, &c.

§ 13. II. The constitution of the covenant of grace made with believers in Christ.—Here consider, and state the nature of, justification by his righteousness,—the nature of faith, and its place in the gospel scheme,—also the nature, necessity, reasonableness, and effects of repentance,—the freedom of the grace of God, as it is manifested in the covenant.—The excellency of the gospel,—the superiority of the covenant of grace, compared with former covenants,—how ratified by the blood of Christ the Mediator,—the seals of the covenant,—the manner in which it is to be entered into, renewed, and reflected upon, &c.

§ 14. III. The Spirit and his operations.—Represent our absolute need of him;—describe his work on the soul in conviction, conversion, and consolation;—illustrate the nature of his influences;—in the assistance he affords in prayer,—and the witness he bears to his own work on the heart.

§ 15. This is an exceedingly popular subject, and, what is of still higher importance, it is a useful and scriptural one.—When you enlarge upon it, however, it will be necessary to add cautions against grieving the Spirit,—and directions for walking in the Spirit, and being filled with the Spirit.

§ 16. IV. The privileges of the children of God;—the pardon of sin,—the renovation of their nature,—adoption,—perseverance through divine grace,—God's providential care over them,—all things working together for their good,—access to God through Christ,—communion with him,—believing views of glory, &c.—These subjects will repress the hearts of sinners, as a lancet concealed in a sponge; as well as raise the devout affections of true Christians.

§ 17. V. General views of religion.—*Micah* vi. 8. *Titus* ii. 11. *Matt.* xxii. 37.—Represent the various branches of duty in a [illegible] manner.—Urge them [illegible] consciences.—For people generally know what is right, but need to be persuaded to practise it.—But you [illegible] cases of conscience, that cannot be well stated in sermons, encourage your people to bring to you in private.

§ 18. VI. The love of Christ and a devotional temper.—Here represent his attributes and the genuine workings of a pious soul towards him.—Urge the keeping up a continued communion with him.—Describe the pleasing intercourse of a devout soul with him in various ordinances.—This will be particularly useful to young converts, and very acceptable to serious Christians.

§ 19. VII. The evil of sin and misery of sinners in consequence of it.—Spread the alarm, but with mingled encouragement.—Display the terrors of the law, but seldom let them be the subject of whole sermons;—and generally handle them directly, rather than menace and threaten them.

§ 20. VIII. The temptations and exercises of a pious soul.—These cases often occur among the people of God, and courses of sermons must often be interrupted to endeavor their cases. Many pleasing discouragements arise;—describe the cause,—and lay down rules for judging of sincere grace,—that Christians may be comforted, and hypocrites convicted.—Such sermons are peculiarly very profitable.—Fence them with several scripture quotations, that they may not be thought enthusiastic.

§ 21. IX. Death, judgment, and eternity.—Pathetical sermons will often demand these.—Nothing tends more to quicken us in the duties of life and preparation for death.—Here consider heaven, in various views, particularly as to God,—describing the glory of Christ,—concluding with pithy and powerful [illegible] and the influence these prospects should have upon us.

§ 22. X. Exercises of [illegible] and praise.—These are very interesting and entertaining subjects, and will often afford a pleasing opportunity of saying good things in a very inoffensive way.—Sometimes a whole sermon of hymns [illegible] be made to exemplify them, but it appears more common.—These sermons to the eye of God will be [illegible] by the examples of Asaph, Ezekiah, Samuel, &c. Hints for general observations on the nature, advantages, and reasonableness of such a [illegible]

[illegible]

* Let the most needful and profitable subjects be those most frequently insisted on. Those are the most needful truths that are the most [illegible] and those most frequently insisted on those in which the [illegible] and instruction of the audience, [illegible] Baxter's *Ref.* [illegible] § 92.

LECTURE VI.

On different Strains of Preaching.

§ 1. I shall not here describe all the various strains of preaching for which different men are remarkable; but only recommend some, which perfectly agree with each other, and should be found in every sermon.

§ 2. Let it be observed, that by "strain" I mean the general manner in which the whole discourse is composed. It differs much from style—this regards the structure of sentences in particular, but strain respects the aspect of the entire discourse.

§ 3. 1. Let the strain of your sermons be *argumentative*.—Be often proving something, even when it is not the business of the whole discourse to demonstrate one proposition.—As for instance, prove the justness of your explication; the truth of subordinate assertions;—the propriety of the directions you give;—and the necessity of your cautions.—And never expect that any of those things which you advance will by an intelligent auditory be received merely on your word.—Nevertheless, do not let your arguments be too numerous, abstracted, or disposed in too artificial an order.—Remember, the explication of your subject must be as argumentative as almost any part of your sermon.

§ 4. 2. *Pathetic*.—It is a wild scheme to pretend

WHAT SUBJECTS ARE MOST PROPER TO BE PREACHED AND MORE FREQUENTLY INSISTED UPON BY A YOUNG PREACHER.

1. Those that refer more immediately to Christ. The Redeemer's person, the nature of his grace, his atonement and fulness for the following on the particular offices, and the exercise of them in the conversion, sanctification, and comfort of his people, are to be insisted on and the manner in which he should be preached. The sacrifice and ransom of himself for sinners. The sufferings and death to which he submitted, and the glory consequent thereon. The resurrection from the dead, the ascension into heaven, the intercession at the right hand of God, and the glorious reward which he has purchased for his people. The fulness of grace which he has treasured up in him. The fitness and all-sufficiency of his mediation to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. The particular relations in which he stands to his people, as their Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Head, Foundation, Corner Stone, Advocate, Friend, Saviour, and Judge.

2. The manifestations of the Spirit of grace as promised with his blessed Son. The necessity of purifying influences from on high, in order to the true knowledge and believing apprehension of the revealed Christ, and the grace in the exercises of our ministry. The nature, and the manner of the operations of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners, the communications of instruction with the progress of light, the supplies of strength, the consolations of hope, and the various fruits of holiness. The peculiar relations in which he stands to the saints, as their Comforter, Intercessor, Guide, Sanctifier, and Seal. The peculiar relations in which he stands to the ministers of the gospel, as their Instructor, Assistant, Friend, Saviour, and Judge.

3. The constitution of the covenant of grace as established with believers in him. The blessings of pardon, peace, and reconciliation with God, of adoption and heirship, and of holiness, particularly. The nature of faith, and the grace in the exercises of our ministry. The nature, and the manner of the operations of repentance, with its genuine fruits. The commands, promises, and threatenings of the gospel, with the manner in which they are to be addressed to the various characters of men. The nature of the ordinances of God, and the manner in which they are to be administered. The peculiar relations in which the covenant stands to particular states.

4. The institution and observation of a Christian Sabbath, and our duty in it. The nature and ends of baptism, and the manner in which the parties concerned in it are to be addressed. The nature and ends of the Lord's supper, and the manner in which communicants are to be addressed. The nature of the communion of saints, and the manner in which the duties of it are to be urged. The nature of the discipline of the church, and the manner in which it is to be exercised. The necessity of maintaining, and encouraging the institutions of learning, and the proper manner of addressing those in the power of the United States. These are the most particular subjects that occur to me.

5. The principles of Christian virtue in its various branches, and the motives and manner of inforcing them. Christian virtue is the image of God in the soul, the nature of which is to be explained, and the manner in which it is to be urged. It is the fruit of faith, and is to be urged as such. It is the effect of the Spirit of God, and is to be urged as such. It is the evidence of our interest in Christ, and is to be urged as such. It is the way to the kingdom of heaven, and is to be urged as such. It is the beginning of heaven, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of God, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the gospel, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the Redeemer, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the Spirit, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the saints, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the angels, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the church, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the world, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of the universe, and is to be urged as such. It is the glory of God himself, and is to be urged as such. The peculiar relations in which the various branches of Christian virtue stand to particular states of men, and the manner in which they are to be addressed, are to be carefully observed. Such are the relations of Christian virtue to the rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the young, the old, the married, the single, the parent, the child, the master, the servant, the magistrate, the subject, the friend, the enemy, the sick, the dying, the mourner, the backslider, the penitent, the believer, the saint, the minister, the people, the church, the world, the universe, the Redeemer, God.

6. The nature of vice, and a considered, extensive, thorough conviction of it. Here the various particulars may be enumerated, and especially the following great classes of vice, as set out Christian Doctrine, Introduction, Part I. Head, Guilt, Sovereignty, Duty. Here attempts the various reasonings, which are to be used and inforce arguments to the whole, such as universal, without any exception, large, and strong, together with an application of the arguments to the various particulars of vice and corruption in the will. Here all the particular workings of a corrupt and wicked heart may be enumerated, and the reasonings of a hearing with a holy, communicative spirit from his manifestations and promises, and others, may be very convenient and lively. In this manner, with holy and devout prayers, as from an attending to the voice of the Son of God from the holy Trinity and answering the heart in every particular, the work may be done. And the more particular and circumstantial we are, the more we shall find ourselves benefited ourselves in preaching and profited to others. Christian.

7. Let your views and aim in your ministry be to promote a conformity to it. That soul is most happy and prosperous which lives the nearest to the Lord; and that people are most the people of God's inheritance, and the most prosperous and happy, among whom the Lord is most honoured, and most loves to be honoured.

8. The temptations and corruptions of the parish will, I think, often occur to you and should often be mentioned from the pulpit. Some of these should sometimes be the subjects of daily, weekly, or other expositions of certain texts of scripture, as they occur. Some you must and must not meddle with at all times. Some should be mentioned with caution, and others with freedom. Some should be mentioned with a view to the conviction of the guilty, others with a view to awaken the consciences of the careless, and others with a view to the comfort of the humble. The proper seasons, and manner of mentioning these things, you will learn by observation and experience.

9. Parish improvements, and removing. Parish improvements will probably often occasion them, if not, they should not be introduced. Sabbath breaks by parishioners among the inhabitants of the town in general are the chief.

10. The corruptions of youth more, and particular of youthful lusts. These subjects are very entertaining; and will often give occasion for expositions of very useful parts of the scriptures and sentiments. Some lessons will be useful to the whole congregation. Others to several particular classes of persons. Others to individuals. Here is ample room for the exercise of wisdom, love, and faithfulness. Let us [illegible] with God. A minister's heart is [illegible]. Attention, diligence, and fervent prayer.

to rout out the passions;—and a foolish thing to pretend to lay them asleep. They are the sails of the soul. The preacher must endeavour to fill them with a prosperous wind. Have some pathetic strokes even while explaining, as well as in your reflections or improvement;—or else your reasoning will not be attended to, nor of course understood;—and then, however strong in itself, it will prove of no avail,—and an address to the passions will appear as irrational as if no such reasoning had been formed. Therefore make your sermons addresses to your hearers, rather than general essays or speculative harangues;—a very necessary way of preaching the gospel.—However, on this head be cautious;—do not attempt to raise the passions of the people to immoderate transports, nor suffer your own to master you;—lest to those who are not so much affected as yourselves you appear ridiculous.—In the greatest emotions "Ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm."—Remember that different degrees of fire become different subjects, and different parts of the same subject.

§ 5. 3. *Insinuating*.—That the passions may be moved by soft touches, and sudden turns, lead them into their own hearts;—show them the workings of their own minds and passions.—This cannot be effected, however, without deep reflection and great self-acquaintance.—A variety of this kind, suited to this strain, may be found in different authors, almost on every subject.—This insinuating manner makes little noise, but does great execution

This is the character of the Blessed Redeemer—and sometimes of St. Paul.

§ 6. 4. *Evangelical.*—Choose such subjects as those mentioned above—and let your sermons be such, whatever it may, during a course, what proportion of the gospel may be taught in—and what Christian experience. Let it be a maxim with you never to preach without introducing Christ and the Holy Spirit. Rather digress, as St. Paul does, and exalt them.

§ 7. 5. *Spiritual and experimental.*—Consider the various cases of souls in respect to the great concern of religion—how convictions are introduced—how they work—and by what means they can be best preserved, cherished and improved—and to how many ways there is great danger—either of their gradually wearing off and leaving the heart less susceptive of them, or else of their degenerating into superstition or enthusiasm—Your endeavours to stifle them—Describe the temptations with which good men are exercised—arising from the effervescence of youth, the strength of predominant passions, the hard treatment and frowns of the world, the influence of evil examples and bad customs, the torpor of gracious frame and lukewarm principles, discourage the hearer under which they sometimes groan—the regret they feel when communion with God is interrupted—the believer's combat with something on—and with doubts relative to his future state—Only touch on these things, when they are not the principal subject of your discourse. For these purposes study the Psalms—Read much in the description of Christian tempers—Cultivate a lively in your own souls—Represent the Christian speaking to and speak what you find in your own heart—**what you have felt in some of your best seasons.**

§ 8. 6. *Scriptural.*—Borrow Scripture phrases, illustrations, and proofs—Deal in frequent allusions to Scripture—Study to open the beauty and energy, as well as the sense of the particular scripture which you choose as the ground of your discourse—In your application, especially when **you wish to bring home conviction to the hearts of sinners, endeavour to find one or two powerful** scriptures and shoot them home—a few words may **likely to pierce the heart. The principles of analogy will often make these addresses very rational,** —and it is doing an honour to the Spirit of God which if we consciously regard he may graciously honour us—Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the other prophets, and St. Paul will be of vast service for pathos—And there is nothing that gives a still more melodious and impressive cadence than scriptures properly interwoven with it. **Throw into these quotations a few explanatory words, with which a** congregation will be delighted and edified.

LECTURE VII.

On the Style of Sermons.

§ 1. 1. *It be pure.*—Avoid common words and those composed of various languages—Have done with [illegible]—Attend to propriety of phrase in reading—Avoid low words when even less usually expressive and interesting.

§ 2. *Intelligible and clear.*—Avoid the pursuit of words [illegible] Have a sentiment quoted too long already.—What but to encourage the frequent recurrence of different periods and paragraphs by the perpetual use of connecting particles—Let either put you [illegible] with the parables—by him shall Ay much, for as much as, furthermore, howbeit," &c.—Do not deal in parentheses unless they are very short.—"An affected obscurity of style," says Quintilian, "makes a bad solution the gratification's learning, but it still makes it appear either as an hypocrisy or folly."

§ 3. *Strong and nervous.*—Do not [illegible] Weighty sentiments lose, by too many epithets—and by circumlocution before them which nothing [illegible] a more quiet.

§ 4. *Chaste and temperate.*—Do not affect [illegible] to exhibit them to the gratification of your [illegible] too high seeking [illegible] [illegible] and to all [illegible] bombast expressions.

§ 5. *Elegant.*—Avoid [illegible] one [illegible] must be [illegible] and endeavour to touch nothing that does.

§ 6. *Grave and solemn.*—Avoid [illegible] sions. That rule of Isocrates's—"*Qui populum, populariter loquendum, et simpliciter orandum ad vulgus est Concionator*," will not hold good to the present day—Learning is not now [illegible] gate. Keep on the surface of the gospel—the not affect those [illegible] have many a [illegible] too humble—be particularly careful to possess [illegible] of the divine Being, [illegible] other attributes [illegible] to him, as he appeared—Hearing the Almighty Power of the Gospel, and honouring the word—of knowledge. Deal with the serious truths of [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] and of shewing the [illegible] "*Ingenii*" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

is "like a mean dress bespangled with jewels. Take heed of poetical lines; and if, without design, you have fallen upon them, let them be altered in the review of your sermon. Avoid many points of wit; when much of this appears it renders a man suspected whether he is in earnest for God.—There are too many instances of this in SPRATT, of whom it might be said, (as well as of his friend COWLEY,) "He more had pleased us, had he pleased us less."—These are "spiders' webs to catch flies."—"This is like Nero's lading his galleys from Egypt with sand for the wrestlers, when Rome was starving for want of corn," BATES, p. 772. "Or, like offering a basket of flowers to a hungry man," RAPIN, vol. ii. p. 55.*

§ 8. Let not your discourses, however, be too bare, but prudently interspersed with *figures*.—When too many, they are like flowery weeds growing among corn, which render the prospect more pleasing to the eye, but hinder the growth;—or like painted glass; yet moderately used, they exhilarate the mind, and fasten on the memory.—Therefore generally have some similes, and many allusions.—If you borrow them, quote the authors;—or it will be dressing yourselves with fine feathers which will probably soon be pulled off to your shame; by which you will be exposed to shame.—for there is nothing so quickly discovered as those passages which strike the memory so forcibly.—Remember, "Non quærit æger medicum eloquentem sed sanantem."

§ 9. Let your style be *free* and *easy* to yourselves.—Be careful not to labour it too much;—nor affect to imitate any one.—But form your own style and manner gradually, by conversing with the best authors.—When you have well digested your thoughts, write pretty fast, and afterwards review and correct;—this will have a peculiar effect, and give a popular grace, which stiff labour cannot attain.

§ 10. *Lively*.—This rule may take place when there is not much room or need for pathos. Something of the laconic will conduce much to this.—Great verbosity enervates and makes a discourse flat.—Yet by all means avoid an affected smartness,—similar to that which runs through ECHARD and COLLIER.

§ 11. *Various*.—Your style must vary with the variety of your subjects, and sometimes according to the different parts of the same subject;—in some measure too according to your auditory, and the general manner of preaching in the place where you live;—which you ought to endeavour gradually to improve.—The same style running through all your discourses will insensibly grow disagreeable, be it ever so good—and that which is richest, as writing as in food, will nauseate the soonest.

§ 12. Let it be *harmonious*.—Remember that harmony is a real thing, not only in speaking but in writing.—It may seem but a little thing, and it is not indeed the greatest, yet it is worth attending to, and may be attained by proper care.—Without it people will be uneasy in hearing, when perhaps they know not why. In order to attain it, let the ear be tuned by reading aloud, especially such authors as are remarkable for this excellence. Try your own compositions this way, even while composing as well as afterwards. Remember that perspicuity is a great friend to harmony. Avoid open vowels and clashing consonants, too many monosyllables, and too great a cluster of short syllables in succession. But take heed not to admit verses in your prose for the sake of being harmonious.†

* [illegible]

† In reading over a discourse to ourselves we must observe what words sound harsh, and agree together. The former we must alter in speaking as well as in writing, which is most obvious and observed in verse, in which we cannot pronounce [illegible] Pref. Lect. p. 22. See Mason's Treatise on Prosaic Numbers passim. Also as to the rule for open vowels, Smetius's Longinus.

Our author has manifested a singular partiality for Addison. I allow him a writer of sentiments and it is well known that he studied with especially in his younger years with great attention. But I must therefore suppose that the affected and [illegible] of [illegible] of energetic expression had an unwarranted influence on some parts of his own style and manner of writing, especially as he was [illegible] extended those observations, so far as I perceive, to some [illegible] taste. It is presumed, therefore, that the following observations on harmony of style in general, and the character of Addison as to this [illegible] more particularly, will form a very suitable appendix to this Lecture.

ON HARMONY OF STYLE.

Among the great and [illegible] of our English writers, none deserves to be placed at the head of the [illegible] than Addison. [illegible] to be an excellent model for those who have some [illegible] of the Good Sense and Taste; it is more [illegible] to those who have not. [illegible] add, without hesitation, the [illegible] as an excellent model; [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

LECTURE VIII.

On the Choice of Thought.

§ 1. Let them be *solid*—Such as will stand the test of a severe judgement; for such they must expect; and unless they will bear this however you may adorn them, they will be despised. "It is "a fair woman without discretion," no less than colouring of a picture where proportion is not observed.

§ 2. *Useful.* Remember it is your great business to edify, not to amuse. Often ask yourselves, Will this thought be likely to do good? If not, lay it aside. An ingenious man by attentive thought may find out a set of just and rational, yet trifling and useless, speculations. But Christ's sermons furnish us with some examples of this kind.

§ 3. *Proper* to the subject. Never indulge yourselves in loose digressions,—but keep up a certain and easy connexion. The misery of sinners, the nature of faith, justification by the righteousness of Christ, &c. are brought in by many on every subject, avoid this. Nothing is more disagreeable in preaching than *tempestiva ostentatio*.

§ 4. Let them be such as naturally flow from the subject. For this purpose dwell much on your subject in previous meditation.—Talk it over,—view it in its various relations, and in composition keep it still in mind.—This will secure a happy diversity,—and the same leading thought will have distinguishing and agreeable peculiarities,—and the whole subject will appear one.

§ 5. Let some, if possible, in every discourse be *new*.—These are generally to be gained by remarks on Scripture,—observing the exercises of pious souls,—and the general movements of human and divine nature in mankind. Neither of extreme difficult and remarkable thoughts (on passages which are not intended as the main object to be improved) by any new thought which may arise in your own minds.—"Lab[illegible] [illegible] reliqui."

§ 6. Let them be popular.—That is suited to the people in general,—and for this purpose attend to the following hints. Study to accommodate yourselves to your own hearers, or those of your time. Consider how the circumstances of your auditories require variety, and act accordingly. Study to find pertinent, fit thoughts which will occur to the mind, when that intently is kept upon the Lord's Word. When your sermons are composed, as you first are, for various auditories, consider what to omit or add.

§ 7. Let them be natural.—Do not attempt to be learned connected on every head. Take the most natural things.—Often, in speaking even from notes, or a single sentence, contract yourselves with boldness of genius, lighted your soul to those sentiments and expressions most happy on what is peculiarly your own,—or on some other accidental circumstance, unlike the present.

LECTURE IX.

On the Manner of Expressing the Thoughts.

§ 1. Let the [illegible] not only be [illegible] but in [illegible]. Study to express those [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

that the distinction may evidently appear;—when it is otherwise, the sermon cannot be understood, well received, or tolerably remembered,—and the preacher himself, it will be supposed, has not fully understood his subject.

§ 2. Let them not be too numerous.—If they are, it will be difficult to keep them distinct.—It will also load the memory,—and impoverish the sermon, since, in that case, but very little can be said on every head;—though the beauty, or the finest parts of a sermon, lie chiefly in the enlargement.—Sermons with a vast many heads are like the skeleton of a body,—or like the branches of a tree in winter, when neither fruit nor leaves are left.

§ 3. Have not too many subdivisions.—They soon confound the most attentive and intelligent hearers, that have not either a vast memory or a pen. Have commonly but one series of particulars under one general head mentioned by numbers;—and let those subordinate to them come on as the enlargement;—where it is of great importance to be very exact in arranging them:—and where, in a well-composed discourse, one head will often contain the stamina of a sermon.

§ 4. Let the heads be expressed in as few words as possible.—Especially have some one leading word, if you can, which may contain the principal sense.—If they must be connected with some longer sentence to make the sense complete, first mention them alone, then in their connexion;—or if together, let the common part of the sentence be placed last, rather than first. Be contented to sacrifice something of the cadence and copiousness of your language to this greater concern. Other parts of a sermon may sufficiently show you do not this from a want of ability to do otherwise.

§ 5. Place them in a natural order,—that they may illustrate and introduce each other,—and that there may be a fair transition.—Avoid inverted climaxes.—*Cæt. par.* let those heads on which you propose to bestow the greatest labour or ornament, or lay the greatest stress, be placed last.

§ 6. Avoid trite divisions,—especially of very common subjects,—as justification, sanctification, adoption;—the humiliation and exaltation of Christ;—his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King;—proofs from reason, and proofs from Scripture.—This looks like common place, and may expose you to censure as a plagiary.—Yet I do not say it must or can always be avoided,—only be cautious that these divisions do not grow too common,—they give a discourse a very dull air.

§ 7. Have a variety of methods in different sermons;—particularly when the subjects are, as they often must be, nearly the same.—Sometimes, let the text be the guide and groundwork throughout.—Sometimes, having opened it, draw practical remarks from it.—Sometimes, take a topic of diversity, for which the text shall be the motto.—And in your application, sometimes address your hearers under their different characters;—and in this address, bring in your motives and directions.—Sometimes, draw inferences,—or make reflections;—and at other times, let your whole discourse be applicatory;—persuasive,—or dissuasive,—and have no reflections or applications at all at the close;—or but a hint of what might have been introduced.

§ 8. Give the plan twice, as briefly as possible, and the review.—This makes TILLOTSON so clear.—A few moments thus employed are well spent.—Let your hearers always perceive where you are;—and be upon your guard against long digressions.

§ 9. To secure all this, draw a very distinct skeleton.—Or you may draw two, with different degrees of exactness and fulness.—Submit a fair draft to the examination of a friend.—Review it attentively before you begin to compose;—remember that when this is well done, the sermon is almost done;—and a due care about it may be much better than transcribing the whole sermon twice;—though that also may be done where time will allow.

LECTURE X.

More particular Rules on the Composition of a Sermon

§ 1. Take some previous time for devout meditation on your subject,—especially if it be devotional, as it generally will be.—Preach it over to your own souls.—Observe thoughts rising warm from the heart;—set them down with peculiar care,—as some of your greatest treasure.—If one view appear more affecting than another, make a proper memorandum of it.

§ 2. Choose to compose when you are in your best frame,—*cæt. par.*—Therefore take such time, that if you should be under any particular indisposition for study, or meet with any interruption in it, you may not be forced upon it, at so unfavourable a season.—But take care you do not too soon conclude yourselves incurably unfit;—the frame often mends.—Take notice what parts of the day you are most inclined, and in the best frame to compose,—and secure those hours to yourselves.—Generally early in the morning,—or late in the evening,—are the best time:—unless you have an extraordinary command of retirement.—But let not the intermediate hours be lost.

§ 3. Begin the work with a solemn address to God.—This will lay you in the way of his blessing and assistance;—and will naturally have some good

influence to awaken, compose, and encourage your soul;—it will direct your minds to right ends and views,—which is a matter of vast importance.—Perhaps a form of prayer might not be improper for that purpose;—yet varied with some particular regard to your subject.*

§ 4. When just setting to the work, ask yourselves such questions as these, on a view of the scheme you have drawn up.

§ 5. 1. How shall the sermon begin?—Let it not be always with mentioning the context,—though it may sometimes be allowed, or indeed necessary.—Use a variety of *Exordia*,—sometimes, by scripture stories,—sometimes, by quotations and allusions,—sometimes, by similes,—at others, by a weighty, laconic sentence,—and, sometimes, fall directly upon your subject,—especially when it is so copious that you will be in danger of exceeding the time.—Endeavour in this part of your sermon, to awaken the attention of your auditory,—and raise their expectations,—but not too high.—Let it be always modest,—without any extraordinary flights,—and leave no room for suspicion, that it was composed merely to display the orator;—This will lead your hearers to dispute your sincerity.—Better walk than attempt to fly where your wings will not bear you.—If you have any invocation, let it be after your general division,—peculiarly appropriate,—and more frequently expressed as a wish, than as a direct prayer;—and so contrived, that it may intimate to the hearers what they ought to be concerned about in attending to the discourse.

§ 6. 2. Does the text need explication?—If it does, what explication?—Do not make difficulties for the sake of removing them;—nor in a dull manner set yourselves, as Dr. Clarke often does, to show the various senses in which any word found in the text is used in Scripture;—unless it may as it sometimes will, furnish useful thoughts.—When the difficulty is real, and expressly where it is not touched upon by commentators, critics, and exegetes, it is a fine thing, indeed.—Do not collect the sentiments of various commentators, since they only confound;—nor a variety of readings and versions,—nor deviate from our own without real necessity,—and when you do, fix upon the translation you think the best, and drop the rest;—or at least but briefly touch upon them;—and on no account be divided in your own mind, and at a loss which to choose, lest it should produce some ill effect upon the audience, by leading them to suppose that the Scripture is an uncertain thing.—When your text expresses some noble, important sentiment, in a very forcible manner, you may make it the subject of the greater part of your discourse.—Attend an interesting and just Hume.—Nothing appears a more common mean than this plan,—and does a greater honour to Scripture.—Search the context for proper thoughts,—and if there be any difficulties in the neighbourhood of it, endeavour to illustrate it by a few expressive and important words;—which, to the more judicious of your hearers, must appear to be an abstract of a much larger criticism in your own mind.

§ 7. 3. What passions are to be raised,—and what figures of speech are to be used.—Here exercise a disciplined prudence.—Indeed, you are not to meddle with the passions of a learning, [illegible].—Much more, then, soften, and still softer, machines must be used for this purpose.—If God be [illegible] speaks, it must be in a few awful, and generally scripture, words.

§ 8. 4. What strain of preaching is most suited to the subject in general, and to select parts in particular.—When these are fixed, endeavour to recollect what are the greatest maxims in these sciences, and how they would have expressed themselves had they been in your place.†

§ 9. 5. What respect to Christ and the Holy Spirit may properly be introduced into this discourse?—Does it naturally lead to them?—If not, how may they least unnaturally be introduced or concealed?—Sometimes by one of these questions they have been too much neglected.

§ 10. 6. What quotations can properly be introduced from Scripture?—Generally, have one in two under each head which may illustrate as much as possible the main matter.—In the application, some that are very pathetic should always be introduced.—The pathos of which ought to be constituted from other writings,—particularly by remarkable passages, figures, or famous sentiments, which in your reading you have met with.—For this purpose, [illegible] your common place book,—and sometimes note down thoughts you design for this purpose in your book of sermons.

§ 11. 7. What use can be made of any suggested

* The following form was drawn up for his private use by Dr. Doddridge, in the younger years, and published in the book of forms of devotion it contains:—

"Blessed God! Do thou first prepare me, by secret and unobserved influences of thy holy Spirit, for the work I am about to undertake; and then assist me, that I may not be misled by any prejudices of mind, or corruptions of heart, so as to draw any thing from Thy sacred word, my appointed rule and law.

I am now entering on a work of infinite importance, on which I would desire to be employed at the most solemn period of my precarious life. I beg that thou will command all creatures in the universe to thy service, and make every circumstance of my present situation subservient to thy glory. May no vain or unbecoming thought [illegible] my mind, or divert it from the great business I have in hand. Engage my heart, and fix it in the most agreeable manner to myself, to the most solemn and important of employments, [illegible] preaching Christ. And O may I have the influence and power of that divine truth [illegible] upon my own heart, and may my own soul [illegible] the sweetness and [illegible] of the blessed gospel, which I am proposing to others! Let me [illegible] to compose my sermons in a manner the most convenient [illegible] to expound, and to [illegible] God and Thy sacred word. Let me [illegible] the words, and accommodate [illegible] to the capacities of the people I am addressing, and attend to the [illegible]. May I [illegible] my own [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] the most [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ance with the world in this sermon?' Have I made any observations on it,—or seen any thing lately that may furnish me with an useful thought?'

§ 12. 8. When shall I address the conscience?—Remember that the final application, reflections, or inferences, are not the *only* places in which to introduce your addresses to the converted and unconverted,—the ignorant, the careless, the luxurious, and profane,—the moralist and the hypocrite,—the wavering and irresolute,—the doubting, tempted, and dejected in spirit,—the backsliding,—the confirmed, zealous, and joyful; nor to the aged and the young,—the prosperous and afflicted, the rich and poor,—the healthy and infirm,—those who have lost friends, &c. &c. Represent to yourselves these and various cases, and let each be seasonably noticed.

§ 13. 9. What shall the conclusion be?—Do not leave off merely because you have nothing more to say;—be sure to close handsomely.—Frequently close, though not always, with a thought of consolation:—at other times full of terror; and often with graceful scripture.—Have some sprightly thoughts, if possible, at the conclusion of each head.

§ 14. Often recollect your character and station in life. I am a man, and not a boy.—To crowd my discourses with *puerile* ornaments is like an academic, just come from school.—All I write must be judicious, or it will be contemptible.—I am a servant of God, and not of the world, or of men.—I must approve myself to the great God;—in all things I must promote his interest, and write and speak as in his presence;—and, to feel these sentiments more sensibly, intermingle devout and deeply humble, though silent, ejaculations while composing.—I am a minister of Christ, and not a deist, or heathen philosopher.—I am to preach the gospel, that gospel which Christ brought down from heaven, and died to confirm.—I am, in one sense, a successor of the apostles,—and am engaged in carrying on the scheme in which they and their Lord were engaged.—Am I a preacher among plain Christians, not scholars, or courtiers? Let my sermons be adapted to their capacities.—Imagine yourselves in the pulpit, and your congregation around you, and sometimes preach over some heads before you write them.—Lastly, I and my hearers are dying creatures.—I am, perhaps, composing my last sermon, a sermon which I may not live to deliver.—This method of recollecting yourselves produces a genuine air of seriousness, profitable to yourselves and your hearers.

§ 15. Compose as much of your sermon as you can at a sitting.—Choose to do this when you are in a good frame. It will give a graceful freedom to your style,—and, when you have prepared your materials, it will not be difficult to despatch your sermon in five or six hours.

§ 16. If in the course of your composition you find your thoughts wander and droop, endeavour to revive them by holy ejaculations.—Beg of God to bring by his Spirit suitable scriptures to your remembrance,—in order to help you to open doctrines clearly, to state them truly, and to apply them seriously. He knows what is in man, and can lead you to come at what you ought always most to seek.—the hearts of your hearers.

§ 17. Give your sermons a very attentive and critical review.—Here lop off excrescences,—divide sentences which are too long,—and if you can find time, transcribe the whole again. For this purpose begin soon enough;—let your general schemes be drawn up a week beforehand.—Read and enrich your schemes by additional thoughts and conversation on Monday and Tuesday;—on Wednesday and Thursday compose your sermon;—and on Saturday review and transcribe it.—Practise this method *seven years*, and it will become natural and easy.

LECTURE XI.

On the Delivery of Sermons.

§ 1. This is evidently a matter of great importance, and almost every body pretends to be a judge of it.—A good delivery is very much in a man's favour, and the contrary is much to his disadvantage.—In some instances hearers judge of a man's character by the *manner* of his speaking, as much as or more than they do by his *matter*.

§ 2. Several things are essential to a good delivery.—Particularly, It must be *grave* and *serious*;—agreeable to the dignity of the character in which you appear.—This is opposed to a careless air in your delivery,—and to every thing that approaches that ludicrous manner which an unhappy few have affected;—and also to improper actions, such as playing with the cushion, band, gloves, &c.

§ 3. It should be *distinct*.*—Take care of running your words into one another,—and of sucking in

* Every preacher wishes to be understood; so far as hearty but many are ignorant in the manner the word of a rational and serious minister ought always to be uttered. If they would attend to a few rules, without the observation of which no man can deliver himself with propriety, they would find a power of speaking, that will be irresistible, if all the qualities are combined. And if Dr. Gerard says of a wig, and the ornamental clothes, nothing can be made of it. Make the ornamental appendages, for example, [illegible] and that ye be not [illegible]. Then shall the words and [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

your breath,—or dropping your voice at the end of a sentence.—Make pauses in proper, and avoid them in improper, places.—Let the accent be laid right,—but avoid too much, lest it seem affectation.—Pause at the end of your heads,—repeat them (when repetition is thought advisable) with a stronger voice than the rest.

§ 4. Let it be *affectionate*.—Feel all you say.—If a tear will fall, do not restrain it,—but it should never be forced. "Nothing is more indecent than a dead preacher, speaking to dead hearers the living truths of the living God." BAXTER. "A due fervour makes a plain discourse more touching than one more exquisitely composed and coldly delivered, as a blunt iron when red-hot will pierce deeper into a piece of wood, than a much sharper one that is cold." BATES.

§ 5. *Composed and sedate*.—In the warmest parts do not be transported beyond your voice so as to scream.—Moderate the excess of action—such as throwing your arms over the sides of the pulpit, &c.

§ 6. Let your delivery be *easy*.—Your delivery must vary according to the different parts of your sermon, and the different sentiments expressed.—Explication and application must be delivered in a very different manner.

§ 7. *Natural and unaffected*.—Theatrical airs are by all means to be avoided.*—Do not *act* all you say,—it is ridiculous.—Be careful not to make pauses that look like self-admiration, between the several words of the same clause, nor affect to vary your voice *too much* to express very different ideas of sorrow, indignation, fear, &c.—When the delivery appears too artificial, the auditory is ready to suspect a man's sincerity, and that he is only playing his part.—Speak as a good man bringing out of the full treasure of his heart good things.

§ 8. *Free*, that is, above the *servile* use of notes.—Do not read every word, nor be afraid to change a clause, or to add a sentence which may occur readily and be useful and frequently as much so as any. To be able to preach without notes raises a man's character. Accustom yourselves to look about much upon your auditory.

§ 9. I shall finish this Lecture with some remarks on the best means of attaining an agreeable delivery.

§ 10. 1. Guard against faults, rather than strive to cure. A delivery that has no considerable faults will probably have some beauties.

§ 11. 2. Accustom yourselves to read aloud the same thing again and again;—perhaps your best sermons will be preferable to any thing else.—This will fix them fast upon your memory, and you will acquire by use the proper emphatic cadence and action.

§ 12. 3. Be sure to be master of your notes in proportion to the degree in which you intend to use them, that you may not be entangled.—It is a sad reproach to a man when he cannot read his own writing before a congregation; yet this I have often seen.

§ 13. 4. Let your mind be as composed as possible.—Endeavour to get above the fear of the people by rational and pious considerations.—Remember your own superiority to most of them in point of understanding;—also the candour of others of good sense, and how little a thing the applause of any is.—Fix your dependence upon God—be willing to be disposed of by him, in these instances, as he sees fit;—and yet cheerfully hope as you go forth in his work, that he will give you his strength.

§ 14. 5. Let your mind be recollected.—Let this progress rather seriously upon what you are to deliver. After you have composed your discourse, pray it over to yourself. Study divine assistance. Keep your mind well employed as you go to the house of God.—In the pulpit make a little pause, till you feel you become grave and recollected. Study that your hearers may be serious, and your own minds affected. Be most especially careful the first beginning of your sermon.

§ 15. 6. Avoid unnecessary exposure of yourself just before you come in.—When the service is over, the performance cannot be continued to advantage, and to entertain company in your house. Very good sometimes indeed, from prudential motives, even when we have had the least leisure.—Do not sit up late on Saturday night, nor study too intensely on Lord's-day morning.—Nor be too busy in company and trifling conversation.—Use some exercise as much as possible,—and let diversion not keep your mind in a perturbed, tense and tender frame.

§ 16. 7. Encourage the gracious Head of your Church in the ministry of your ordinances.—We have not

* It has been remarked that [illegible] Mr. Whitefield's manner [illegible] and a real confidence of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

our own voices as others do,—nor see that air and manner with which we speak in the light in which they view it.—Our friends, therefore, are the best judges.—And if they find fault, you are not, while young, to be displeased.—If, however, what is in itself right, generally, or at least frequently, displease the auditory, it should be waved.—It is much pleasanter to commend than to blame; if our friends therefore deny themselves so much as to take this trouble, we ought to be very thankful,—and, instead of being angry at their censures, should rather desire them to do it frequently.—This is a precaution of importance to all beginners, because proper admonitions may prevent ill habits from being contracted, which, when once formed, are almost incurable.

LECTURE XII.

General Directions not comprehended in the preceding Lectures.

§ 1. Do not preach the same sermon over too often, either in the same or different places;—it hurts a man's reputation if the places are contiguous, and it is apt at best to deaden his own spirits;—but least of all in the same place.—A little alteration of text and preface will not be looked upon as a sufficient excuse.

§ 2. Never borrow the words of others.—Use their works in your compositions for hints and thoughts freely,—but never transcribe, unless it be as a quotation.

§ 3. Do not preach too many sermons on a text.—This rule is not to be invariably observed, as there are some copious passages that will afford distinct matter for various sermons,—and may occasionally be made the subject of two, but very seldom more than three, discourses. Rather sometimes pursue the same subject from different texts, that you may have more of the explication and application.

§ 4. When settled, have some scheme of subjects connected with each other to be preached over;—especially a course of sermons on the characters and offices of Christ,—the operations and fruits of the Spirit,—on the privileges and duties of Christians, &c. But let these be intermingled with others,—and when any remarkable providences occur, take notice of them in your sermons.

§ 5. Preach sometimes in little country places, with greater freedom than you can allow yourselves to a larger and more refined assembly.—Go into the pulpit with the heads of a sermon only, and talk freely upon them,—and when you return, write the discourse more at large. Thus you will improve many of your compositions, and gradually get above your notes.

§ 6. Let your first sermons especially be formed into an exact analysis, or regular scheme of method.—Commit this to memory, and it will improve your judgment, make your delivery easier to yourself, and continual attention to your notes less necessary.

§ 7. Write your notes neatly and distinctly.—Rule your paper, with a large margin.—Let the heads be written apart, and the enlargement divided into various paragraphs, and each distinct sentence properly pointed, if in long hand.—Let the Scriptures be referred to in the margin, which will give an opportunity of recollecting much of the discourse, by a very transient view,—especially if you write (as it will be proper to do) not only those you professedly design to quote, but others whose phrases you borrow, or to which you only allude. Read over your notes attentively once or more, to fix your sermon in your memory, and to prevent the shame of frequently hesitating.

§ 8. Know when to have done,—and if good and pertinent thoughts arise in your minds, take care not to pursue them too far, so as to draw out your discourse to an immoderate length.—Sometimes young men, having said nothing, are full of matter when they ought to close; and, with a view to mend what they have been saying, are apt to be tedious.—Thus it costs them labour and study to be less agreeable than they would otherwise be.—Remember, your business on subjects is not to say all that can be said; but what is most just, proper, important, and useful.—And do not forget that before the organs of speech are strengthened by practice, it is a very dangerous thing to keep them upon the stretch for a long time together;—the last quarter of an hour does them more injury than all.

§ 9. Be accurate, but candid, critics of the sermons you hear.—Draw up a scheme or perhaps hints of a sermon on the text on which you have heard a discourse,—and remember to be just to the beauties as well as defects of your brothers.—Always speak with candour on the labours of other ministers, lest your reflections on them be reckoned envy, or ill-nature; which will greatly sink your own character; and lest a consciousness of that severity discompose you, as in that case you must hardly expect more candour than you have shown.—Some persons of uncharitable tempers, though of excellent sense, have been wretchedly distressed for want of this precaution.

§ 10. Retire for prayer both before and after sermon.—This will encourage the mind, and bring it into a good frame, and it is doing honour to the divine Spirit, which he will probably succeed with blessings on your labours.—Besides, it is a proper

indication of a serious temper, and a mind more concerned for God's glory than its own.

§ 11. Observe what acceptance your labours meet with amongst your people.—But make your observations with great caution, lest you should appear to them to be fishing for applause, which is a meanness very unworthy a gospel minister, and the surest way to lose it. Be willing to hear of any faults in your compositions or delivery; and sometimes when you preach before your brethren, desire them to tell you plainly what they discovered amiss.

§ 12. Sometimes keep a day of solemn devotion to recommend your labours to the divine blessing.—On those days, besides the usual devotion, review the memorandums of the sermons you have lately preached, and reflect on what you have found of the acceptance and success of them, and let God have the glory.—Humble yourselves before him, that they have been no more regarded or improved.—Review Christ's promises of assistance to his ministers,—and other promises which may be applied to this purpose,—for the further encouragement of your faith.—Plead earnestly with God for a blessing on yourselves, and those committed to your care,—and forget not on these devotional occasions to seek the blessing of God on your brethren and the public,—our plantations abroad, the church of Christ in general, and the protestant interest in the whole world. Consider then what you shall preach from before the next of these days, and draw out a more particular list of the subjects; still leaving room for alterations on unforeseen emergencies.

§ 13. Maintain a character and conduct in life agreeable to your preaching.—Labour to do good wherever you come.—Avoid every thing that would bring a reproach or a reflection on your own character, or on religion.—Remember statues at the top of a house must be larger than life;—i. e. your elevated situation will render your piety diminutive, if not above the common standard.—Pray to God for daily wisdom,—and every day in secret prayer have some petitions relative to the last sermon you preached;—and make it your care for the ensuing week to practise to the utmost what you have said.—This will command the regard of others, as far as it is apparent, and through divine grace insure the blessing of God; and make your ministry most comfortable to yourselves.

LECTURE XIII

Directions for Prayer.

§ 1. Prayer is a matter of great difficulty and great importance to our usefulness, and has a greater influence even on preaching than many are aware.—I shall first suggest some general directions relating to your improvement in the gift and grace of prayer.

§ 2. Furnish yourselves with a variety of matter proper for prayer.—for this purpose, converse much with your own hearts,—get well acquainted with the state of your souls,—attend to your spiritual wants and weaknesses,—frequently recollect the mercies you receive from God, and inquire what returns you have made.—Study the nature, works, and ways of God, make yourselves familiarly conversant with his word,—and let what you read there, or in other good books, be considered in particular as affording matter for prayer.—Pray over what you have been reading, and seldom close your Bible, or lay a book of practical divinity out of your hands, without a short collect at least formed upon it.

§ 3. Make a serious business of secret and family prayer.—Have your stated times for more private exercises of devotion and be careful in them.—Do not hurry them over in a few careless words, nor be satisfied unless you have daily some communion with God in them.—Labour hard to bring your hearts to a serious frame, when approaching to God in them.

§ 4. In all your prayers avoid the extremes of too mean and too pompous a style.—A pompous style shows a mind too full of self, and too little affected with a sense of divine things.—Who would regard a beggar telling a fine story of his calamities?—But, on the other hand, take heed of too mean and paltry phrases, low images, and pert familiarities with the blessed God.—A grand solemnity should be always maintained; but especially in public.—Let all be grave and simple; and appear to aim at nothing but pouring out the soul before God in the most genuine language of a humble and devout temper.—Avoid splendid flowers and expressions, which are sure to be remembered by those who have read them.

§ 5. Guard against sentences too extremely long when you pray with others, lest they should not understand you.—Better have them too short, though the sound of the period be different as this is but a small matter compared with the former.

§ 6. Be generally careful to observe a method in your prayers.—The principal parts of prayer are invocation with adoration,—confession,—petition

—intercession with thanksgiving,—which may be connected by proper transitions; but it is not necessary they should always succeed each other in this order. Thanksgiving may full as well come before confession, and the several parts may sometimes be variously intermingled and combined. Thus invocation needs not always be confined to the beginning of prayer; but may properly be repeated by way of preface to some of the principal petitions, remembering to make mention of the most suitable divine attributes; and the like mixture there may be of confession or thanksgiving with petition.

§ 7. Be not too solicitous to introduce novelties into your prayers. Desire not to pray as nobody ever prayed before, or will probably ever pray again.—Novelties may sometimes amuse, but in prayer they more frequently disgust; besides, they have the appearance of too much art; and as new things are generally the produce of the imagination, they are not so proper for prayer as preaching, and even in that they must be moderate.

§ 8. Remember it is the peculiar office of the Spirit of God to help us in prayer. Engage in it, therefore, in dependence upon him; and maintain a continual dependence on the intercession and influence of Christ.

§ 9. I shall now give you some directions which relate more immediately to *public* prayer.

§ 10. 1. Begin with a solemn recollection of spirit. Think seriously of the majesty of that Being to whom you are addressing yourselves, and of the importance of the business in which you are engaging. Think how near you, and those who join with you, are to the tribunal of God; and lift up your hearts in devout ejaculations to him for such degrees of present assistance, as he shall think proper to bestow.

§ 11. 2. Begin rather lower than you intend to proceed, and somewhat slower,—and as you get warm, take heed of being transported into raptures, even though you should be melted into tears. Always keep up a solemnity of spirit and behaviour; avoid and abhor a *periodical* tone.—Use but little action, and that chiefly the holding up, and sometimes a little stretching out, of the hand. Whether you should keep your eyes shut, is to be referred to your own judgment. If you can be composed it is better to keep them open, but generally fixed, especially, do not look about upon the people, nor seem to take notice who comes in.

§ 12. 3. Remember to introduce the most applicable of the subjects you have lately heard or read, and any peculiar scriptures that have been the subject of your late meditations or discourse.—And for this purpose keep notes of them in your pocket-book that they may be often reviewed at little intervals. But whatever scheme you may form, do not adhere to it so exactly as to neglect proper thoughts and expressions that rise; or be very uneasy if you lose sight of it.

§ 13. 4. Make frequent pauses in prayer, that you may think a little before you speak; and that your hearers may recollect their thoughts, and review yours. Observe this rule, then expletives will be less necessary.

§ 14. 5. Endeavour to have an unity of design running through your scheme of prayer,—and let one petition be connected with another by natural, but never laboured, transition.—It is better there should be no connexion at all, than any that seems forced and affected.

§ 15. 6. Insist chiefly on those parts of prayer that suit best with your own frame and state,—not entirely, however, to the neglect of others;—and endeavour to keep up a constant sense of your own concern in what you ask.

§ 16. 7. Forget not the public,—but pray for them with seriousness.—Plead for heathens, Jews, Mahometants, papists, and persecuted protestants.—Pray for your own country with cordial love and esteem.—Remember that praying for the king is part of the condition on which our toleration is granted.—Forget not magistrates,—and ministers.—Recollect of what great importance their character and conduct is,—and observe scripture expressions that may be properly applied to any of these uses.

§ 17. 8. Remember the particular cases of your hearers, and the immediate concerns of the congregation.—Here pray for the aged and the young, and particularly for the children of the flock.—Pray for the heads of families, and thus remind them of their duty; the conscientious discharge of which is of such vast importance to religion. Pray for unconverted sinners, as seeing them upon the brink of hell.—Plead earnestly for them; this is often the means of awakening them; and in this respect, while we are yet speaking, God appears to hear. Remember the afflicted and tempted tenderly, and let particular cases have a moderate share in your addresses; this engages the affections of the people greatly, and is often the means of administering support.

§ 18. 9. Let the blessed work of praise have a large share in your prayers. This made up much of the ancient liturgies, and is so suited to the Lord's day, that it is a pity it is not more regarded.—Labour to affect your hearts with a sense of God's mercies to you at all times, and then you will always be in a frame for this.

§ 19. 10. Use many scripture expressions in prayer. They are peculiarly affecting, and very proper; and the hearers also from the beginning of them will know what they are to expect; and thus

one great objection against extempore prayer will be removed.

§ 20. 11. Take care you are not too long in prayer before sermon. For this purpose it is best to throw what relates to the public into the last prayer,—especially when preaching in or about London; twenty minutes is generally enough,—nor is fifteen too little.—Let the last prayer be agreeable to the sermon; introduce the principal thoughts and heads, but do not turn it into a preaching prayer, nor repeat any peculiarly fine passages of the sermon, lest you should seem too fond of them. Rather introduce some additional thoughts, which you had not time to introduce in your sermon. And if you pray at any time after any of your brethren have been preaching, suit your prayer as much as possible to what you have heard,—and, on the whole, make it a kind of specimen to the people of the manner in which sermons ought to be prayed over by them.

LECTURE XIV.

On Public Exposition and the Character of Commentators.

§ 1. It is proper to make exposition a part of worship on the Lord's day, for the following reasons:—

It tends to keep a due regard for the Scriptures by introducing them into worship; as, when you expound, you may read the whole or part of a chapter, even in congregations that have not been used to it, and where otherwise it might not be agreeable.

§ 2. It assists to draw men off from erroneous human schemes, by leading them to a scriptural religion; to which nothing is more conducive than explaining the most interesting facts of the several books of Scripture.

§ 3. It contributes much to lead them into a general acquaintance with the Scripture, and a cheerful and attentive study of it.

§ 4. It is calculated to guard an audience from being seduced into erroneous opinions by wrong interpretations of Scripture, quoted merely according to the sound of words.

§ 5. It diversifies public service, and affords opportunities of giving a great many advices, charges, admonitions, &c. without offence; it being evident to every hearer that the series of scriptures we are upon lead us to them; whereas if we choose such subjects unconnected with others, some may think there has been a personal regard to them.

§ 6. I shall now propose a few general directions for the right performance of this part of ministerial duty. But as a previous and very important direction, I recommend that you make yourself acquainted with the most considerable commentators, reading them over and making extracts from them;—and since there is no set of writers in which a man is more in danger of being lost, if he does not make a careful choice, I shall here mention some of those which I think the most valuable.

§ 7. Commentators on the Old Testament:

Patrick is the most considerable [illegible] to Solomon's Song;—he has made use of many former writers, some Jewish and others Christian.

§ 8. Poole's Paraphrase upon the Old Testament, in four volumes, octavo, is an elegant and judicious contraction of the above, and vastly to be preferred to his Paraphrase on the Epistles.

§ 9. Lowth* has compiled a judicious commentary on the Prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi; in which there are some good critical notes, and a fine collection of parallels.

§ 10. Ainsworth on the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Solomon's Song, is a good book,—full of very valuable Jewish learning,—and his translation is in many places to be preferred to our own,—especially on the Psalms.

§ 11. On the whole New Testament. Whitby is preferable to any other, on account of his learning and judicious notes on those texts which are not concerned in controversy with the Arminians;—for to them he is evidently partial, and sometimes carries matters almost to ridiculous extremes.

§ 12. Hammond is in great but [illegible] tion;†—there are indeed many good criticisms, but many that are much mistaken.—He [illegible] the Greek fathers every where, which is his principal fault.—Many of Le Clerc's Annotations upon these places are very good,—and his edition of his book in Latin I think much preferable to the original.

§ 13. Beza is undoubtedly the best critic on the Greek language of any commentator we have.—There is no translation, that I know of, equal to his;—and his remarks on Ephesians and the other Letters are wrought up in the genius and manner of the ancients.—On the whole, it is an invaluable treasure, and deserves to be read with the utmost attention.

§ 14. Erasmus is not equally accurate with Beza,—but his Latin is fine, and he has written in a pleasant style.—He is in high reputation in the learned world.—There are many good remarks on the vulgar translation,—some early various readings,—and some pretty large critical dissertations.

* [illegible]

† [illegible]

—but it is by no means of a piece, and has many marks of haste and inaccuracy.

§ 15. Castalio is only a version; it is often very elegant Latin; in several places full of affectation, and often false.—On the whole, justly exposed by Beza.

§ 16. Burkitt has but few valuable criticisms;—but he has many schemes of old sermons. His sentiments vary in different parts of his work, as the authors from whence he took his materials were orthodox or not.

§ 17. Heinsius has some good critical illustrations,—but many whimsical remarks and fancied allusions;—an air of pedantry and self-sufficiency runs through all his writings, which make them disagreeable.

§ 18. The most considerable writers upon the Harmony of the Evangelists, whose works are not extremely voluminous, are Cradock, whom I shall mention afterwards,—and Le Clerc, whose harmony is valuable on account of the view which he at once gives of what each evangelist says.

§ 19. Whiston and Wells are both much mistaken in ranging many of their facts;—and, upon the whole, I prefer Garthwaite as the most valuable I have ever seen for stating the order of the story.—This was published by Locke, with his name prefixed.

§ 20. Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase on the Evangelists deserves an attentive reading.—He narrates a story in handsome language, and connects the parts well together;—but fails much in emphasis, and seems to mistake the order of the histories.

§ 21. On the Epistles.—Locke, Pearce, and Benson make up a complete commentary on the Epistles; and are indeed all in the number of the most ingenious commentators I have ever read.—They plainly thought very closely, and attended much to connexion, which they have often set in a most clear view.—But they all err in too great a fondness for new interpretations;—and in supposing the design of the apostles less general than it seems to have been. It must be allowed that Benson illustrates the spirit of Paul sometimes in an admirable manner, even beyond any former writer.—See especially his Epistle to Philemon.—His vast fondness for Lord Barrington's* notions has often proved a snare to him, both here and in his work on the Acts, which however is a very useful piece.

§ 22. Fell on the Epistles is very short,—but most of his notes are worthy of remark. The collection of parallel scriptures is judicious, and the translation in some places altered much for the better.

§ 23. Upon the *whole* Scripture the most valuable are Grotius, who has done more to illustrate Scriptures by what is generally called profane learning, than perhaps almost all the other commentators put together.—Nevertheless, he too often gives up prophecies which in their original sense relate to the Messiah.—His notes on some texts are large and learned dissertations, which might have profitably been published by themselves.

§ 24. Brennius.—His notes are exceeding short, but very important. And there was reason to say of him, *Ubi bene, nemo melius*, &c.

§ 25. Wells's book is more despised than it ought to be.—The character of the author was deservedly low, and his style sometimes is intolerably bad;—but his method of division is very clear.—He has plundered a great many excellent writers,—brought together their spoils in a little room,—added here and there some very good notes of his own,—and he has well corrected the common version.

§ 26. Cradock's three volumes are very valuable;—though I think, contrary to most others, that the two last on the New Testament are much better than the first on the Old.—His extracts in the margin from Hammond, Lightfoot, and Grotius are very judicious:—and I think on the whole I never read any one author that assisted me more in what relates to the New Testament.—His schemes of the Epistles are generally more just than those of the ingenious writers mentioned above; because he takes the design of the apostles to be, as it certainly was, more general than they suppose.—The cheapness of the book is to me a great wonder, but to students a great advantage.

§ 27. Robertson is in rather too pedantic a form.—but, upon the whole, the analysis is very good;—and perhaps those who have studied their Bibles closest, and know where difficulties of the connexion lie, will approve it most; especially on the Old Testament, which far exceeds the New.

§ 28. Henry is perhaps the only commentator so large that deserves to be entirely and attentively read through.—The remarkable passages, I think, should be marked.—There is much to be learned in this work in a speculative, and still more in a practical, way.—The last volume is not on the whole equal to the rest; though the exposition on the Romans, begun by Henry and finished by Dr. Evans, is the best I ever saw.

§ 29. Hall, besides his contemplations, which are excellent, has written *notes* on select passages of the Old and New Testament,—which are extremely scarce, and so far as I can judge from a little specimen, very valuable;—especially for showing the spirit and force of many expressions that occur.—I do not, however, apprehend that there is much learned criticism in them.

§ 30. Poole's Synopsis is very useful, especially on account of the short view it gives of various

* See Lowth's Exposition of Acts xxvi. 17 note. See also Lect. xv. § 12.

translations, some of which are very scarce.—It in part supersedes the necessity of having, what yet is desirable, a *Polyglot Bible*.—The first volume of his English Annotations, which were written by himself after his Synopsis, is incomparably good.

§ 31. CALVIN has a multitude of judicious thoughts; but they are generally intermingled with a great many that are little to the purpose.—His worst volume, which is that on Job, is most scarce.—His two best are, I think, that on the Pentateuch, and on the Harmony of the Evangelists.—On the former of these Le Clerc is famous, but I have not yet had an opportunity of perusing him.

§ 32. LEE on the New Testament, is a collection of notes chiefly from others, which the author gathered in the course of his reading: they are not very judiciously chosen, but there are some particulars in them which are to be met with no where else;—or at least in authors we shall never consult;—and therefore are worthy the little money they cost.

LECTURE XV.

General Directions on Exposition continued.

§ 1. MAKE yourselves acquainted with the most considerable authors that illustrate Scripture well, though they are not direct commentators. Such as,

§ 2. WITSIUS, of whom I may justly say, no man is more distinct in his method, elegant in his language, and candid in his sentiments.—His *Miscellanea*, and *Misc. Sacra* and *Exercitat.* are in this view, and indeed in every view, the most valuable works I know;—especially the last and last.

§ 3. SAURIN, in whom there is an amazing mixture of learning and politeness, takes in the most useful hints of criticism in his dissertations on the several subjects he treats of.—An index is added to this work of the particular passages in authors of rank which he has consulted.—In this, as well as in all the elegance of expression and beauty of imagination which he has found the happy art of mingling with criticisms, he incomparably exceeds most others.

§ 4. GATAKER'S barbarous Latin renders the reading of him very tedious; but he was a nice critic, and his notes, which afford the most useful matter for popular exposition, are deservedly in high esteem.

§ 5. FRANKIUS'S *Marmaduceus* deserves to be often read. It contains the best rules for studying the Scriptures that I ever remember to have seen;—it has not however many illustrations of particular places.

§ 6. BUDDEUS'S Sacred Classics give many well chosen instances of passages in the Classics which may justly many of them in Scripture that have been accounted obscure.—They illustrate the beauty and energy of many words and contain good observations on the divisions of chapters and verses, by which the sense of Scripture is often obscured.

§ 7. LIGHTFOOT has collected a multitude of useful and excellent illustrations of scriptures from the *Talmud* and other Jewish writers.—He has also shown the force of many others, especially in his harmony.—But he rather illustrates particular texts well, than gives a good account of the scope of a discourse.—And he seems to me very often mistaken in his dates, and in what he says on the occasion, particularly in many of the Psalms.

§ 8. CRUDEN has all that is valuable in him in his Dictionary and Dissertations.—The former is extravagantly dear, the latter is a pretty abridgment from the former, and is of a moderate price.—They should be bought by all means.

§ 9. MEDE has a good many original thoughts not to be found any where else.—His writings on the Revelations are peculiarly famous,—but his *Daniel*, will best reward a diligent perusal;—yet here many mistakes will be found.

§ 10. HALLET has many uncommon thoughts, but several of them he confesses he owes to MR. PEIRCE.—His notions and interpretations of Scripture are so exceedingly singular, that it is worth while to read them, though perhaps not one in ten will appear satisfactory.—It is observable, that some of those dissertations which he illustrates well are those in which many other commentators have failed;—and his remarks on the scheme of the present Hebrew copy are generally solid.

§ 11. EDWARDS (DR. JOHN) does not possess that excellent SPIRIT OF GRACE, with which he has in some respects fallen as a judicious writer.—His Discourses on the Scriptures in their Order, and those also entitled *Examen of Dissertations and Expositions*, are reckoned the best of his works, and deserve to be carefully read.

§ 12. LORD BARRINGTON'S Essay on the various dispensations of God to mankind has many original thoughts that are justly entitled to great esteem.—His *Miscell. Sacra* are indeed most valuable.—Some of his remarks on Texts and Discourses of Christ, especially in the first volume, which is incomparably the best.—It is proper to read his performance in all the mutual connexion he ever gave it, in order to judge what regard is to be paid to his conjectures and what Benson makes of it, in his commentary and discourse on the Acts.

§ 13. LARDNER. The first volume of his Gospel

History is one of the most valuable pieces the age has produced; and a multitude of places both in the Gospels and in the Acts are illustrated by it.

§ 11. It will be worth while to read over most of these books, and to note all the most remarkable passages; to make extracts of them in the margin of your Bible, or interleaved Testament.—And let it be a rule, when a good note occurs, to set it down *immediately*.

LECTURE XVI.

Further Advices relating to Exposition.

§ 1. NOTHING will be of more importance to fit you for this work, than copying into your interleaved Bible and Testament useful remarks, interpretations and criticisms that you meet with in the course of your reading, conversations or own reflections. —CLARK'S Bible with notes, and WETSTEIN'S New Testament, are preferable to all others for this purpose.

§ 2. Let free family exposition be part of your daily work. In this, labour at practical improvement chiefly, not neglecting, however, proper hints of criticism. This will give you an opportunity of saying many suitable things, that will come with more power to the mind, than things much more accurate read from HENRY and others;—it will also diversify family worship agreeably;—and, if you sing, take care to choose something suitable to what you have read.

§ 3. Have a private meeting once a week for exposition;—at these meetings, enlarge chiefly on the most devotional parts of Scriptures, in an experimental way. Indulge your private meditations on these occasions freely,—and perhaps very useful hints may arise while you are speaking.—When you have finished an exposition in the family or vestry, if convenient you may, at least sometimes, retire for a few minutes, review your memorandums, and add any thing remarkable that has occurred to your thoughts.

§ 4. When you intend to expound any scripture the next sabbath, review it the preceding Monday morning, and endeavour to keep it often in your mind in the week, and at a proper time peruse it attentively with these views; viz.

§ 5. 1. To observe the original force of every word, and to make as perfect a translation as you can, for which the original and versions must be consulted.

§ 6. 2. To observe the particular improvement of which it is capable.—And here let your inferences be often drawn from the *connexion* of Scripture. This will furnish rich materials, commonly omitted by those who attend merely to the *words* themselves.—Let these suffice for general directions.

§ 7. I shall now give some more particular directions:

1. Select the most useful passages of Scripture. —Begin with the Epistles, as they will give you an opportunity of saying many evangelical and useful things.—Go over the harmony of the Evangelists and the Acts.—Omit the Revelation, except some few chapters and sections.—Select passages from the history of the Old Testament. Mosaic laws and the prophets;—but take the whole book of Psalms, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

§ 8. 2. Give a clear view of the connexion in a few words, but do not attempt to lead your hearers into all the niceties of it, which very few with the greatest pains will be able clearly to understand, and still fewer to remember.

§ 9. 3. When great difficulties occur, do not state them too largely, but rather suggest what may furnish judicious hearers with the best answers to them; and often inculcate those *principles* which will furnish general replies; as, God's judgments are unsearchable;—some parts and doctrines of Scripture are inexplicable and mysterious;—many quotations from the Old Testament are only allusions;—and that the actions of persons under an immediate divine commission, are not to be estimated by the common rules of human actions, &c.

§ 10. 4. When the sense of a text is dubious, do not distract the people with many interpretations, but rather propose one or two of the most probable, waving the rest.

§ 11. 5. Aim in all at practical improvement. —Labour to show the *spirit* of the writer, and for that purpose keep in your own mind, and that of your people, the character of the author, and the particular *circumstances* in which he wrote.

§ 12. 6. When you correct our version, do it modestly; and never attempt any unnecessary corrections, nor many various readings, if they do not appear indeed important.

§ 13. 7. Endeavour to make your exposition pleasant; to do this avoid dry criticism, and mention such circumstances of history as tend to illustrate it. HENRY and HALL will furnish you with a rich variety of matter; and the comparison of other scriptures will suggest much more.

§ 14. 8. Do not *read* your expositions, but freely talk them over, after having well studied them.

§ 15. 9. Conclude them with a prayer, in which the most considerable scriptures and thoughts of your exposition should be introduced in a devotional way.

LECTURE XVII

On Catechising.

§ 1. This is a very important branch of a minister's office; and, if properly managed, will be the means of stocking children's minds with divine knowledge, of teaching them to improve their time, and by exercising their memories, of considerably strengthening that faculty. It also conciliates their affections, and cannot fail to increase the esteem of the parents, and it serves to keep our minds impressed with a due concern for the rising generation.

§ 2. I shall here offer some hints on the choice of catechisms. In general, I advise that they be *varied* according to the age and improvement of the children. The Assembly's Catechism is very excellent, but improper for very young children. Dr. Watts is far preferable for the first, and ought to be taught children under six or seven years of age. After this is learned through, his second should be committed to memory; and then the Assembly's, first without, then with, Mr. Some's Exposition. Recommend Watts's Precautions against Sin and Folly to be read by them, rather than got by heart; and some easy familiar book of Scripture history, illustrated by cuts, which may be taught children before they are capable of reading; and which afterwards, for the first seven or eight years of their lives, ought to be made as much as possible their diversion.—To all this should be added a confirming catechism for those who are grown up to sixteen or twenty years of age. A brief view ought in this catechism to be given of natural and revealed religion and a foundation insensibly laid for answering objections. Proofs both of the protestant religion, and the propriety of our dissent, should also be introduced; but this ought to be managed with great tenderness towards the establishment. The nature of schism should likewise be explained.

§ 3. The manner of managing this work comes next to be considered. It must be varied according to the different ages and circumstances of the persons with whom you have to do.

§ 4. For general directions take the following.

Let most of the children be catechised in private in the vestry, on some week day.

§ 5. Take a list of their names, and call it over, that you may know who are absent.

§ 6. Have a little class of the oldest of them, to whom you may expound some catechism at large.—Begin with the Assembly's by Mr. Some, then explain Dr. Watts's second catechism, which is the most excellent of the sort in our language. Let this class also learn select portions of Scripture.

§ 7. In conducting this business observe the following rules:—

1. Instruct them in as plain a manner as possible, waving all niceties of thought or expression, and studying to make yourselves well understood.

§ 8. To keep up their attention, and for their understandings, ask them some easy questions of your own.

§ 9. Take care to lay the greatest stress upon what is most practical and affecting.

§ 10. 1. When they answer wrong, or appear ignorant, do not upbraid or ridicule them; but O the talent has been gone gently to inform them, at the same time endeavouring to keep up their spirits.

§ 11. 2. If they do well, encourage them; but have little rewards for them. Let Watts's second catechism be a reward for learning the first, and Mr. Some's for learning the second. Besides these, present to them who do extraordinarily well Watts's Hymns for Children, Watts on Reformation, and on the Heathenishness of Sin, Janeway's Sermons to Young People, or other proper tracts that you may meet with.

§ 12. 3. Close these exercises with a serious and lively prayer. Commit the instructions you have given them. Here a powerful prayer may sometimes be very proper. Pray affectionately for the children. Let your soul not rest here. Be and appear to be very serious.

§ 13. 4. Endeavour to have some grave friend, if possible, with you to see that they behave well, and if any little rude thing be done, rebuke them, or make them stay longer and talk with them when the others are gone. Take care of the corruptions of your department throughout the whole, and may success crown your labours.

LECTURE XVIII

Further Directions about Catechising.

§ 1. Let it be remembered, when you are about to expound the Assembly's Catechism, that your business is to explain it to the children.

§ 2. Select a set of children that will answer the questions tolerably well, examine them now and then constantly afresh, and take great care to reward their diligence well, that they shall have no luck given them as a bonus at the end of every month of catechising.

§ 3. Take care to have in common some good remarks, that you may have something to say

worth hearing. Get an interleaved catechism, and when any good thought or expression occurs to your mind in private, make a memorandum of it there.

§ 4. Have something here for the benefit of those who are advanced in years, and make some application to them. These exercises will instruct the ignorant, and teach parents how to catechise their children.—Never forget to desire parents to enlarge upon some particular points of importance, when they go home.

§ 5. Be very careful that you do not confound the children.—Seldom reprove them publicly if they do not answer right, but remember to talk with them in private. Let them know it is an honour you have done them, to choose them out of their companions, and exhort them to be careful to preserve it.

§ 6. Engage the assistance of others,—especially the assistance of friends in buying books. There will be some considerable expense, as I advise that books be given to all,—the children of the rich as well as the poor,—lest the distinction should appear invidious.

§ 7. For this purpose endeavour to be acquainted with gentlemen who are trustees for the useful charities of giving books; or who themselves contribute towards them.—Get some exhibition from the church-stock, or prevail on some of your friends to contribute towards buying books.—Grudge not something handsome yourselves if you can afford it, to promote so good a cause;—it may in many respects prove advantageous.

§ 8. Urge parents to assist in carrying on this work.—Often mention this in the pulpit as part of their charge. Advise them to make this their business, especially on the Lord's-day evening.—Recommend it also to parents in private, and see that they are furnished with proper books, and when you visit families where there are children, catechise them before their parents.—This will fill up the time well; will teach such parents how they are to conduct the exercise, and will engage the affections of both parents and children.

LECTURE XIX.

On Administering the Sacrament of Baptism.

§ 1. Do not baptize the children of the openly profane, as it may harden them in their wickedness,—but refuse the children of none who make any thing of a hopeful profession of religion, whether they be church members or not, attend the meeting or go elsewhere.—Never, however, go into the congregations of your brethren to baptize the children of their people, unless, which is sometimes the case, they scruple infant baptism themselves.

§ 2. Insist not upon their bringing their children to meeting to be baptized.—If you have a mixture of baptists it may perhaps give offence, and private baptism will give you greater freedom in your address to the parents:—and for this reason do not baptize many children together, nor grudge an hour or two to any family on such an occasion.

§ 3. Engage the presence of two or three friends of some reputation in the society when you can;—both to prevent reflections, if the characters be dubious, and to preserve more solemnity in the administration.

§ 4. Before you baptize the child, visit the parents, if you have any opportunity, and talk seriously to them, that you may, if possible, bring them to a sense of the solemnity of the ordinance, and promote a proper preparation for it.

§ 5. Let the method of administration be generally this:—Begin with a short prayer, then deliver a brief discourse on some text of Scripture.—Keep a little catalogue of proper texts for such occasions: that you may have a proper variety, when you dispense the ordinance at different times, before the same persons; such as "I will be a God to thee and thy seed."—"I will make with thee an everlasting covenant."—"One generation shall rise and declare his works to another."—"Who am I, and what is my house, &c."—"Baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—"Suffer little children to come, &c."—"The promise is unto you and to your children."—"Baptism is not putting away the filth of the flesh."—Touch gently sometimes at the reason of infant baptism; but generally employ your time in addressing the consciences of the parents, and endeavour to raise such affections as are suitable to the occasion.—Then pray, confessing the original corruption of our nature, and the demerit of sin;—acknowledge also the goodness of God in sparing root and branch, and do it affectionately. Pray also that the parents may be suitably assisted in the discharge of their duty; and let all tend to fix proper impressions on their minds.——Receive the child from the hand of one of the parents, as soon as the prayer is ended, then ask them both, Whether it is their sincere desire to give themselves and their child up to God, and their purpose to educate it in the Christian faith and fear of God?—and on their intimating their intention, solemnly pronounce the words of baptism, taking care to pour some water on the child, and to pronounce the name of each person of the sacred Trinity, in a very distinct and audible manner.—Take care also that the name of the child be so mentioned that it may evidently appear the end of the ordinance is

not *giving* a name, but only that you might speak by that name to the child.—Then return the child to the parents, giving them a short charge to "Train it up in the way it should go." Then give them some particular directions and cautions for this purpose. Especially plead with those parents who have had a religious education, or for whom God hath done any thing remarkable in his providence.

Remind them of the obligations they are under to pray for the child, and to resign it to the divine will, that if it be taken from this life, the transactions of the baptismal day may be recollected as an engagement to Christian submission.—Conclude your discourse with an address to the spectators.—If there are any children belonging to the family old enough to be quietly present, desire that they may be, if possible,—and drop a word to them touching the meaning of the service. Then renew your thanksgiving and prayer; especially for the family, and the several branches of it, as well as for the families of the friends present, and the interest of Christ in the rising generation.—Conclude all with a benediction.

§ 6. In the entertainment which generally follows, "Let your moderation appear to all;" and endeavour to conduct the conversation so that good impressions may be promoted, rather than, as they too frequently are, weakened and erased. Remember you have many eyes upon you, and much of your reputation will depend on your conduct at such seasons. Allow yourselves intervals of moderate cheerfulness, but rather err on the grave extreme; and always retire as early as you conveniently and decently can.

§ 7. Keep a *register* of all the children you baptize, and the time when you administered the ordinance, which will be a means of preserving the state of families in your minds, and will lead you into proper inquiries about the state of the youth of your charge;—it may also serve to settle some disputes arising with regard to the age of children.

§ 8. Lastly, When you baptize persons of riper years, talk seriously with them, chiefly on the nature of the ordinance;—and if they insist upon being baptized by immersion, do not absolutely refuse them, but rather intimate your desire that it may be done by another person.—Admit none to this kind of baptism, but those whom you and the church are satisfied in admitting to church communion.

LECTURE XX.

On Administering the Lord's Supper.

§ 1. Labour to prepare your own hearts for the ordinance with all possible care.—Begin with some suitable reflections for the purpose early in the week.—Pray earnestly for divine assistance, and let the day before be commonly observed as a day of solemn fasting and prayer.

§ 2. Choose some evangelical and practical, some comfortable, subject for experimental days and bestow some extraordinary trouble on the sermon, especially the devotional parts of it.—Sometimes, however, a faithful address to those who are under a religious profession to walk worthy of it, is extremely proper.

§ 3. In the interval between the close of the general service and the administration of the ordinance, be very earnest with God for his presence, and labour to come to the table as devout as possible.—Much depends on the temper with which things are begun.

§ 4. Introduce the administration with some extempore meditations on some select texts of Scripture;—generally such a text as hath some connexion with the subject, or at least the ordinance.—In these addresses, avoid critical niceties by all means, and pursue a strain the most pathetic.

§ 5. In the prayer before receiving the elements, as well as in all the rest, be moderately short;—dealing much in confession of sin;—this may generally be connected with your extempore discourse before.—Take due care to introduce a variety of thoughts in prayer and speaking.—In the prayer before the cup renew your covenant engagements.—Drop some pious hints afterwards, before you receive the cup, as well as while you are breaking the bread and pouring out the wine.—Here it may be proper to take occasion to explain, enforce, &c.—After singing a suitable verse with thanksgiving, and be particular in praying for the church of Christ in general, and especially that to which you are more immediately related.

§ 6. While the elements are being distributed generally continue to sing, in order to give room for the exercise of secret devotion.—Make a pause before receiving the elements, and exhort others to do so.—Address a word now and then directly to spectators, commend them also in prayer, and endeavour to offer the means of cherishing good impressions.

§ 7. Look round the table and congratulate other you have discarded whom you may conscientiously own as your fellow-christians, and join with them in such a manner as the circumstances of the persons as your own mind may require.—Throughout the whole of

dinance cultivate a *social* temper, and give the soul room to expand and soften itself into the most friendly sentiments,—not only towards those present, but the whole church of Christ. And do not forget those under persecution for religion, the afflicted, the dying, the poor, vacant congregations, &c.

§ 8. After the ordinance is over retire, if possible, immediately; recollect as much as you can of your meditations, and sometimes write them down with all the improvements that may be suggested to your minds.

§ 9. Let the whole of your discourse on a sacramental day be particularly spiritual and heavenly,—and as far as the infirmities of nature will allow, let every moment of it be devoted to God with the utmost zeal and care.

§ 10. Lastly, in your retirement, after you have been at the Lord's table, consider what you can do more for God.—Perhaps then you may find some schemes of usefulness dart into your minds, as well as things of importance with regard to your own souls, and the congregation, that had not before been thought of.—And take great care to act according to the resolutions you have formed, and without the least delay.

LECTURE XXI.

On Visiting in general.

§ 1. Look upon this as a considerable part of your pastoral work.—It obliges your people, it gives you an opportunity of serving them not only by your private discourse, but, by letting you into their circumstances, you may be the more capable of making a proper application to them in public.

§ 2. Endeavour to get proper information as to the state of your congregation and church.—For this purpose, when you come to a place, take a catalogue of the names of the persons that subscribe, statedly attend,—church members,—and the poor.—Make it a rule to see each of them at their own houses.—Let two or three of the most judicious be chosen, with a view of getting information with regard to the characters of the rest.—Entreat them, moreover, to inspect the behaviour of their brethren and friends,—and to inform you of such things as, upon the whole, they think you ought to know.—This, however, will not be necessary, if you have any persons solemnly set apart by the congregation for this purpose, which to me appears a rational and scriptural thing.—Have proper times of meeting with the persons appointed to this work,—to talk over church affairs,—and always conclude your conference with prayer.—Every Monday before the sacrament will be a very proper time for this business.—Consult with them before you propose any to communion.—Do not despise flying stories;—either they have a foundation, or they have not,—if they have, they ought to be regarded,—if not, care should be taken to remove the reproach, and fix it on those who raised it.—At the same time, however, do not be too ready to believe them. A general caution may be grounded on a flying story.

§ 3. Make a pastoral visit to each family,—at least once a year.—In this visit talk to the master and mistress of the family. Renew a solemn charge to them to take a religious care of their family.—Then inquire into the state and character of their children and servants.—Set down the names of both, the first pastoral visit you make,—and alter the list as occasion may require.—If you have an opportunity, talk with the several members of the family.—At a proper time charge upon them a due regard to their eternal concerns, especially the tender branches of the family.—Proper addresses weekly or monthly to the members of your own family will fit you for the regular discharge of your duty on this head.

§ 4. After you return make some memorandums how you find things.—keep a catalogue of cases, disposed under different particulars. This book must be kept secret.—Let no one in the world see it.—Make it unintelligible to every one but yourselves.—Let there be one catalogue of those who appear unconverted,—another of those under serious impressions,—another of those who seem of hopeful disposition,—another of those who are proper to bring into communion, when occasion offers;—and another of those who have generally acted very well, but in some instances need to be admonished and censured.—On your day of fasting and prayer, which may be about once a quarter, look over this book, and see what is necessary to be done for the service of religion among your people.

§ 5. In your occasional visits call frequently upon persons of great importance in your congregation,—especially if you live near them;—but endeavour to proportion your visits not merely to the external circumstances of the family,—but to the opportunities of usefulness.—Visit frequently those under any extraordinary affliction,—and those in whose circumstances there has been lately any peculiar change.

§ 6. In all your visits take a great deal of notice of children. Give them texts to learn,—and little rewards for learning them. This will often furnish matter for good discourse, and will engage the affections of children, which may be of importance to your future life, and their eternal welfare.—Some

children will listen to a minister, who will not regard a parent.

§ 7. In all your visits, remember to behave like a minister, grave and serious. Though sometimes pleasant, yet never too much elevated with mirth.—Take heed at entertainments, not to be very much charmed with any thing you eat or drink. Be pleased with all, but do not indulge too much a palate. Drop some serious hints,—and take care if you have a convenient opportunity, to conclude with prayer.

§ 8. Be very careful that you retire in time,—and do not outstay the spirit of conversation.—nor spend so much of your time in visiting as to lead people to suppose, that your time hangs heavy upon your hands.—A loitering, idling, tattling minister is a contemptible character.—Rather appear properly full of business, and let it not be mere affectation.—Every hour will be well filled up if you attend strictly to the various duties of your office.

§ 9. When several of your congregation meet at a private house, be amongst them if convenient,—partly with a view to regulate their hours,—and to oblige them with your company.—You may also have an opportunity of making conversation useful. By all means spend some time in prayer before you separate.

§ 10. Engage your people sometimes to visit you; and always, on those occasions, entertain them with a prudent hospitality,—but never affect grand entertainments.—Set apart one day in the week to attend to those who wish to come to you upon spiritual accounts.—Talk seriously and tenderly to such, and pray with them at large.—Recommend their peculiar cases to the divine regard in the most affectionate manner;—this will have a tendency to make you experimental preachers.

LECTURE XXII

On Visiting the Sick

§ 1. Under this head I would first make a few preliminary remarks.—You will remember that this part of a minister's work is very important. With regard to some it is the only good office you will ever be able to perform for them.—Perhaps if you neglect it, they may go into the presence of God with a testimony against you.—Sometimes you will have to visit persons, who have been entirely regardless of religion,—to whom you may prove of singular advantage.—Another reason may be, that they may end life in a manner more comfortable,—and more honourable to religion, on account of it,—or if they live, they may make a better improvement of their future moments.—Do all you can to [illegible] with them in health, which may at the time existing call to their remembrance, and not be entirely without a good effect on their sick bed.

But let not this relax your vigilance of visiting them at those times, more than when they are healthy; you ought to attend to them at all times, that when sorrow enters the heart drop, God's good and saving truth.

§ 2. Remember that visiting the sick is a very difficult part of your work.—It is not sufficient merely to put up a hearty prayer to God,—but we ought to be concerned to make a solemn preparation for the work.—Ministers [illegible] ministers should take such care to prepare their sermons, and never take care what they should say to sick people.

§ 3. You should not wait to be sent for,—but when you hear that any of your congregation are ill, take the first opportunity of visiting them;—for diseases often take a quick turn.—Generally take the beginning of the afternoon for this purpose.—It will be proper to allot a certain portion of the day to this work, if you are in a large congregation.—This will be like laying aside a bag for charitable uses.—Keep a catalogue of the sick.

§ 4. Let your visits be frequent,—and not too long;—and be very solicitous that they may turn to the best account.

§ 5. Before you go, consider seriously [illegible] you ought to be,—what is to be said [illegible] and pray that God would go with you.—Remember how very difficult it is to do good.—And be sure to preserve a good conscience on these occasions.

§ 6. More particular directions respecting the manner in which visits to sick people are to be conducted.

§ 7. First, I shall give you some hints relating to the precautions to be taken, in order to know the case of the sick.

§ 8. For this purpose some use may be made of [illegible] Conversation [illegible] and [illegible] of others their public character,—especially from those who are best acquainted with them,—and more of those religious persons,—whose [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

state of his soul.—Inquire what his hopes are, and especially on what foundation they are built.—When you have asked him a few questions on these heads, leave him room to talk;—perhaps he may freely and fully tell you his state.

§ 10. If he does not, ask him such questions as these.—Has sin ever been your grief and burden?—What have you done to get rid of it?—In what view has Christ appeared to you?—What are your thoughts of the covenant of grace?—Have you kept up secret prayer?—Have you felt the power of Scripture upon your heart?—have you been concerned to give your thoughts and affections to God, as well as your external actions?—Have you felt a struggle with the temptations of Satan,—and the corruptions of your own heart?—Have you inquired after the remedies of the particular distempers of your own mind?—And so far as you have understood them, have you endeavoured to use them? &c.

§ 11. Secondly, I would now offer a few remarks on the advices to be given them, and discourse to be held with them.

§ 12. If their sickness be threatening, some advice as to their *temporal* affairs may be needful;—but your main business relates to their spiritual concerns.—As to temporal affairs, advise them, as briefly as possible, to make a disposition of them by will.—Sometimes this is of great importance,—at others, however, it is not. If there be any suspicion of ill-gotten wealth or property, urge them to an immediate restitution, as absolutely necessary;—and should they refuse, warn them of their danger and pray for them;—but in other respects show them but little attention.—Be very cautious that you do not give the smallest intimation that you wish to turn the will into such a channel as may be most for your own interest.—When you know that legacies are designed, have as little as possible to do with the will.

§ 13. As to *spiritual* concerns, your advice must be regulated by the state and character of each individual;—there is the bad, the dubious, and the comfortable.

§ 14. 1. You will find some whose conduct is *bad*,—and that are really in a state of condemnation and misery.—Here your duty is plain, though the execution of it will be difficult.

§ 15. 1. Labour to convince such, that their case is very dangerous.—In doing this, you are to rest your arguments chiefly on Scripture, with their own representation of their case.—If you find that there is any one sin prevalent in their character, rest your charge upon that.—If drunkards, liars, &c. bring such texts as prove they will be shut out of heaven.—Represent the aggravation of their sins, particularly the religious advantages they have enjoyed.

§ 16. 2. Rather lament over them upbraid such persons.—Severity will produce hatred;—and probably they will not wish to have any thing further to do with you.

§ 17. 3. Be careful you do not drive them into despair,—especially when you see that they begin to be awakened to a sense of their danger.—While they appear unconcerned, urge the most dreadful things,—represent to them the wrath of God, as inexpressibly dreadful,—borrow images from present and familiar things,—such as the burning of a fever,—the tossings of a restless night, &c.—By these, endeavour to impress upon them some idea of the excruciating and everlasting pains of hell.—But, as I have said before, do not drive them to despair; but as soon as you conceive they need consolation, exhibit to them the riches of the mercy of God in Christ.—Repeat the most consolatory passages of Scripture that you can recollect,—and let them clearly see that you have pointed out their danger, only to prevent their ruin, and lead them to the Saviour.

§ 18. If you conceive that you discern something in them that looks like genuine, evangelical repentance, be not too ready to administer consolation,—except as conditional;—there is a great danger in authoritative absolution.—Tell them plainly that if they do not rest their souls on Christ, there is no room for hope.—Remind them of the treachery of their own hearts, that they may maintain a due jealousy over themselves, and see to their sincerity before it be too late.—Represent to them the peculiar aggravation of their sins,—particularly the misimprovement of a religious education, means of grace, afflictions and temporal enjoyments. After all, perhaps, little will be done, the first visit;—but repeat it,—and particularly as your hearts charge you with past neglect of such unhappy creatures.

§ 19. II. You will be called to visit others, whose characters are *dubious*.

§ 20. 1. Exhort such to a very diligent scrutiny into their state.—Point out the importance of their being acquainted with their case, and especially inculcate the doctrine of human depravity and the deceitfulness of the heart.

§ 21. 2. Advise them to be willing to know the worst.—Tell them they cannot make their case better by shutting their eyes,—but on the contrary, it will be worse if they entertain false hopes;—and that a strict examination of themselves can do them no harm,—nor renewed acts of repentance be of any injury, even if they are real Christians.

§ 22. 3. Assist them in this work by particular representations of the religious dispositions, desires, fears, hopes, and pursuits of good men. Go over again what was said to them, while you were sounding their consciences;—and in proportion to the dubiousness of their case, urge these things more strongly.

§ 23. 4. Give them your own pulse—pray truly and seriously.—Remember, when you pray with them particularly to offer up earnest petitions to God to lead them into the knowledge of themselves.

§ 24. III. See what should be done for them of whom you have a *good hope*.

§ 25. 1. Endeavour not only to support them, but to raise them to a cheerful, animated, and thankful frame.—If they are afraid of death, point out to them the great promises of the gospel.—Endeavour to raise in them admiring and adoring thoughts of divine grace.—Nothing can be more reasonable as well as scriptural, than that a Christian should go out of the world cheerful—rising like a guest satisfied with his provision, and thankful to the master of the feast.

§ 26. 2. Exhort them to bear an honourable testimony to religion with their last breath, and to recommend it to all who come to see them, as a thing of the first importance.—Death-bed addresses have often been very useful.

§ 27. 3. Urge upon them the proper exercise of patience and resignation; and that they carefully avoid peevishness and ill-nature.

§ 28. I now come to say something about the manner how to *pray* with the sick.

§ 29. 1. Take care that your prayers are not too long.—Never notice public affairs, unless when praying with dying Christians of eminent characters.—Rather enlarge on the general interest of Christ in the world; and pray for a more extensive revival.—Good men love always a zeal for it, but even on this head be not too long.

§ 30. 2. Let your prayers be as serious and spiritual as possible.—Labour to get yourself into a good frame.—Lift up your heart to God for the influences of his Spirit.—His teachings will make this work pleasant to yourselves, and delightful to real Christians who may join with you.

§ 31. 3. When the person seems to be in an unconverted state, represent his case awfully before God, and earnestly beg of him to have mercy on him.—Here you are to endeavour to "save him with fear, plucking him out of the fire."—Pray that God would give him a little more time, and that he may be reprieved before the sentence of death be executed upon him.—This may awaken some in an extraordinary manner.—It may also prepare them.—A contrary method will tend to harden those of the same character.—Take care how you call them the servants of God;—our brother or sister is rather more proper on these occasions;—this, however, may have a bad effect,—and it is what we object to in the funeral service.

§ 32. 4. When you pray with a dying Christian, be much in expressions of faith and assurance of praise for him.—Acknowledge the favours God has bestowed.—Praise him for his gracious [illegible]

mercy to sinners,—magnifying redemption by the Spirit,—promise of future [illegible]—to speak to surviving relations—to [illegible] be enabling him to [illegible] to the end.—Thy grace be sufficient for him,—support like Stephen.—Praise God for [illegible] received to [illegible] for the [illegible] and peace with [illegible] and [illegible] nal world, and for the hope, that though he dies to us, he will live to God.

§ 33. 5. Do not forget, on these occasions, to pray for those of the family who may join with you,—and particularly that they may be prepared for the will of God, and that the affliction may be sanctified to fit them for sickness and death.

§ 34. Take the following hints by way of supplement.

1. If we neglect the directions here given, to [illegible] the illness does not seem dangerous,—[illegible] further prompts may be needed with [illegible] [illegible]—Set [illegible] upon the work, and it may turn to good account. To habituate yourselves to these rules is of great importance.

§ 35. 2. If the person received [illegible] with your earliest [illegible].—Visit him in his recovery; remind him of former convictions and [illegible]—pray the renewed God will [illegible] upon him. Pray with him, and remind him how eternity appeared to him in his affliction, and what thoughts he had of another world.

§ 36. 3. If it please God to remove the sick person, be sure to visit the surviving relations;—at least, two or three times, will a visit of [illegible] them to a due improvement of the providence;—thus endeavour to co-operate with divine Providence, and you may, perhaps, find divine grace co-operate with you;—under such circumstances they will be the more ready to attend to your advice.

LECTURE XXIII.

General Remarks for Conversation.

§ 1. Endeavour to [illegible] and prayerful to distinguish their characters.—Do not suspect all, or any [illegible] of.—Never put [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] sins.—Judge in one way [illegible] of a suspected [illegible] is given, especially if it [illegible] from the life of an [illegible] friend, or a [illegible] person.—Observe every [illegible] alteration of [illegible] conversation and behaviour, particularly in [illegible] company.

§ 2. Behave with constant [illegible] to all.—Never [illegible] your [illegible] to avoid the [illegible] of your [illegible] upon public occasions.—Nay, let the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

quested. Do not appear highly satisfied, nor much displeased, with your own performances; to find fault with them appears like inviting praise, and to discover a good opinion of them will always be construed into pride. Do not therefore even make them the subject of conversation. Boast not of the labour you bestowed on your compositions, nor of the ease with which you despatched them. Do not repeat the substance of your discourses unsolicited.—Upon the whole, neither appear to hunt for reputation, nor to despise it.

§ 3. Treat every body with condescension and complaisance, but not with the same sort. Remember that the rich tradesman generally stands more upon ceremony than those who are of the highest birth and most refined education. – Frankness pleases country people, to whom formal bows are very contemptible.—Never depend upon merit without complaisance.—As you must at times refuse invitations, study to do it in the most obliging manner. Be nearly upon a level with your company, and do not attempt to outshine them too far.—Remember to send people away as well pleased with themselves as you can without flattery, which is always to be abhorred. And for this purpose endeavour to think as well of others as you reasonably can; and be not too sharp-sighted to discover faults, nor too severe in censuring them.

§ 4. Preserve a character of strict fidelity. And for this purpose be exact, but not confident, in repeating facts.—Take heed not to talk too much.—Promise little, and when you have made promises, be punctual in performance; rather do more than you have promised than less, and sooner than later.—Take heed of seeming to be every bodies' man.—Never show so much complaisance in one company as to be inconsistent with what you show in another.

§ 5. Have no quarrels, if possible, with *any*; but especially with persons of eminent reputation,—or of no reputation at all.—If you have received any injury, forgive it heartily, and not merely seem to do it.—If you remember it, let it be only to make you cautious; and do such persons all the kindness you can. This is the best way of taking revenge.—When you have, through negligence of heart, done any thing that may justly offend another, frankly confess it and ask pardon.—If you have asserted any thing that you find to be a mistake, confess it, and be thankful for better information.

§ 6. Affect not to pry into the circumstances of families, you have business enough of your own, and be not forward to give directions to them in their worldly affairs; but if you see they are going to ruin, reprove them seriously at proper seasons. Sometimes a plain serious address may save a family.—Labour, on such occasions, to get such a knowledge of their circumstances will enable you to give suitable counsel. Be not however too forward in giving it. When your people are distressed, do all you can to comfort and assist them.—Keep up your acquaintance with substantial persons by whose assistance you may be a help to others.

§ 7. Affect not a priestly authority.—If you fix with a church of a congregational form, give them all the satisfaction you reasonably can. Wean your people insensibly from an excessive attachment to particular forms; especially by expositions on detached portions of Scripture. When you speak to the church as such, do it always with a mixture of tenderness and respect.—Remember Christ has given his ministers no power over men's persons, possessions, or judgment.—All we have to do is to advise and admonish.—Remember what a disgrace it is to quarrel with a society under your care,—and endeavour to avoid whatever has the least tendency towards it.

§ 8. Live above all appearance of worldly-mindedness; and not only the appearance but the thing itself.—Be satisfied and thankful for what you have, but do not make a great show of plenty; especially before those of known generosity, or great covetousness.—Manage your expenses with frugality.—Keep an account of what you receive, and what you expend.—Remember that a minister loses much of his respectability and influence when he has the character of one who spends too fast, unless it evidently appears that it is owing to nothing but excess of liberality; and an excess even in that does not, on the whole, raise his character.—Be sure, however, to lead the way, as far as you prudently can, in all generous expenses.—All you have is, in one way or another, to be devoted to God;—and to him you are to trust to provide for you and yours.—Do not attempt to screw up your people to a subscription beyond their power; if they do not give you what is necessary, it is a just cause for removal.

§ 9. Talk not of leaving your people till you see your way clear; and after all be very cautious. If you are in a large congregation, where you are beloved and useful, and have the conveniences of life in any moderate degree, the increase of income, provided it be not absolutely necessary to your support, is a wretched reason for leaving a charge. Nor is the pleasantness of situation, or a desire to be nearer your relations, much to be regarded, if you have your health.—The presence of God, and success in your labours, are the main things to be attended to.

§ 10. When differences arise, do your utmost to compose them. Plead with each of the parties by themselves, but side not hastily with either. Avoid arbitration, lest you make yourselves enemies, and rather procure some other person to arbitrate the affair, than expose yourself to censure, and your usefulness to danger.

§ 11. Be cautious in undertaking any thing, and resolutely persuing what you have begun. Smother some flying reports of a thing before you do it, that you may see what people find out.—Stake not your reputation upon any thing you undertake.—Use proper instruments for things not very reputable to the church and congregation or neighbourhood, whenever it be necessary such things should be done.—Leave room for an honourable retreat, and appear not to be much impressed with the disappointment.

§ 12. Observe proper times for talking.—Reprove very tenderly and respectfully, when you do it personally.—Let it always be in secret.—Sometimes you may drop a hint, which may give a person room to reprove himself, or unveil complaints: especially if you have reason to believe he is not aware you know his fault.—Have proper stories and passages from authors for this purpose.—Sometimes lend books, and mark the most remarkable passages

LECTURE XXIV

Rules of Conduct towards those to whom you Preach, under Care and Reward as [illegible]

§ 1. First, to deacons, or those who stand in their place. Their business will be to provide for the Lord's table, for yours, and for the poor's.—Let such persons be chosen to this office if possible, whom you can entirely trust, and who are esteemed and beloved in their place.—Leave charitable cares to them, and consult them before you propose any to communion.—For this purpose have a meeting with them at some private house once a month, a little before the preparation day.

§ 2. Secondly, towards other persons of eminence in the congregation, whether on account of age, circumstances, or character, discover a very tender regard. The aged visit and pray with.—Bear to hear their stories of what passed when they were young,—and if there be any remains of wisdom in them, you may profit much by their conversation.—As to persons of wealth, honour, and learning, do not idolize them; nor give yourselves so much to their company as to neglect others.—yet you will do well to remember, that some peculiar honour and attention are justly their due.—Never forget, that while the common people are not to be despised, they are not to be too much trusted.—Eight or ten of the most substantial and intelligent persons in a congregation often turn the whole.—endeavour therefore not only to secure the affection but the reverence of such. This can only be done by a prudent and steady conduct, and by solid and strong

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notoriously bad, pronounce sentence at the table of the Lord with great solemnity.—Pray for such persons seriously and affectionately, and make them one pastoral visit afterwards.—If they repent after a proper time of trial, restore them tenderly, but awfully; and let the confession be public, if the offence has been so.—Have a strict eye upon them afterwards, and admonish them frequently if you perceive them wavering or going astray.

LECTURE XXV.

Our Behaviour to other Ministers, and Miscellaneous Remarks in the Conclusion.

§ 1. On this interesting subject I shall offer, First, observations relative to your own brethren.

§ 2. 1. Treat them with respect. Think as honourably of them as you can, and speak well of their labours.

§ 3. 2. Avoid every thing that looks like sheep-stealing.

§ 4. 3. Assist them as much as you can in their temporal affairs.—For this purpose keep up a correspondence with people in good circumstances, and those who can inform you of legacies, &c.

§ 5. 4. Employ the most popular of them in your absence, especially those who are dearest to your people.

§ 6. 5. Encourage meetings of ministers.—Take heed however they do not grow up into authoritative synods—and that they be not burdensome to the places where they are kept.—Let the entertainment be moderate, and days of fasting and prayer for the success of the ministry be kept, wherever they are.

§ 7. 6. Encourage a society for books.—This may be of use to you and your brethren, and lead to frequent and profitable interviews.

§ 8. 7. Have but few intimate friends.—If friendship must be broken off, let it be civilly;—do not drop it abruptly, but insensibly.

§ 9. I shall now give you, Secondly, some observations relative to those of the establishment.

§ 10. 1. Be very prudent in their company; as in the nature of things you cannot expect them all to be sincere friends to you as dissenters.

§ 11. 2. Treat them on all occasions with respect. Do not enter into controversies with them, much less rail against the establishment, either then or at any other time.

§ 12. 3. Protest, if it be necessary, that you are conscientious in your dissent, and appear ready to be informed on any point of the controversy, but having the chief reasons of nonconformity at hand, do not fail to produce them if you are forced to defend yourselves.

§ 13. 4. Never join with any of them who expose your weak brethren.

§ 14. 5. When you meet with any truly pious, humble, and peaceable men in the establishment, honour them,—and be on free and friendly terms with them if they wish it.

§ 15. Thirdly, some observations relative to lay preachers.

§ 16. 1. Do not contend with them, nor inveigh against them.—God has used many of them for excellent purposes, and we must not tie him to our rules.

§ 17. 2. If there be any in the congregation over whom the great head of the church may place you, avoid intimate friendship with them—but let them be treated kindly. Do them good and no harm.

§ 18. 3. Endeavour to outdo them in what is good in their own way. Consider what makes them popular—viz.—Preaching Christ—Free grace—Visiting—Religious conversation, &c.—Let all these be your care, for they are all your duty.

§ 19. Miscellaneous remarks. In your settlement follow and do not force providence.—Avoid by all means standing candidates with others.—Never go to any place but on a considerable majority.—Keep your old friends, and get new ones.—If a few of reputation are uneasy do not accept a call.—Go to a place at first where you do not intend to spend your lives, if it may be the means of making you easy for a time, and place you in a situation for usefulness and improvement.—Labour to keep your people in as good a humour as possible. If any thing grieves or offends them, alter it if you can with a good conscience.—Remember when a minister is despised his usefulness is at an end, and no pulpit talents can support him without prudence.—In conversation be lively, but always have some useful hints to show that you are a Christian and a man of sense.—Never be ashamed of religion, nor seem to hear a wicked jest when you cannot reprove it.—Consider yourselves as weak fallible creatures.—Be thankful for instructions.—Review former miscarriages for your caution, and earnestly seek wisdom of God to direct all your future steps.—Beware of the reputation of a great politician.—Let integrity and uprightness preserve you.—Read over these rules once a year at least, and enrich them with the best remarks you can.

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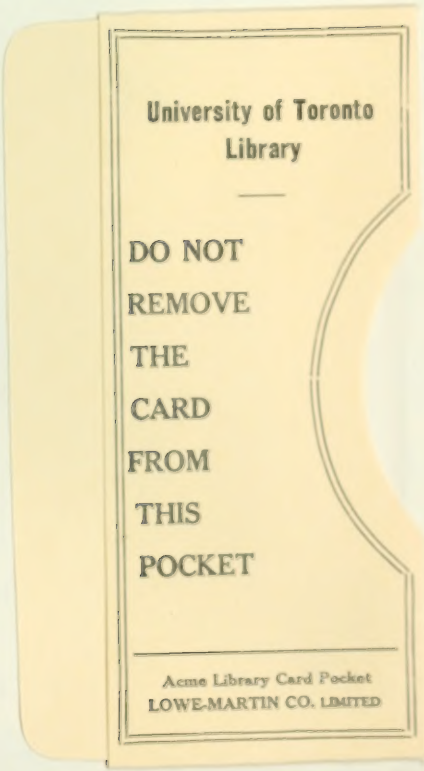

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